

educator's guide

REALITY BOY

HE'S NOT THE BOY
YOU SAW ON TV.

REALITY BOY

A NOVEL BY PRINTZ HONOR AUTHOR

A.S. KING

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Media Studies
- ❖ Family
- ❖ Mental Illness

Ages: 15 & Up

BY A.S. KING

REALITY BOY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What is Gerald's nickname? How did he earn it? What message was he trying to send with his behavior? Who was he trying to reach?

Do you watch reality TV shows? If you do, what do you like about the shows? If you don't, what keeps you from them? Hannah believes that *schadenfreude*—a German word that means taking pleasure in another's misfortune—drew viewers to *Network Nanny*. What do you think about her theory?

The Faust family shares its last name with a famous literary character who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for worldly success. Has Gerald's family made a similar deal? What precious things have they given up? What did they receive in return? Who is their devil?

What is Gersday? When does Gerald go there? Why? What are the benefits of being in Gersday? What are the drawbacks?

Why does the Hockey Lady hug Gerald? Afterwards, why does he "make a pact with myself to never let anyone hug me again" (page 39)?

Tasha is dangerous and cruel, yet Mrs. Faust is always defending her behavior. Why? Lisi is convinced that her sister is a psychopath. Do you agree? Why or why not?

How did Mr. Faust lose control of his own family? Why doesn't he stand up to Tasha? How does he cope with his own unhappiness?

"I don't know how to demand," Gerald realizes in the middle of the novel (page 151). "Demanding isn't something I do." By the end of the novel, how has that changed? What does Gerald start demanding for himself?

Roger, an anger management coach, tells Gerald to avoid girls: "Relationships make you think you deserve things, Gerald. Deserving leads to resentment" (page 24). Why is this terrible advice, especially for Gerald? What does he deserve?

Gerald's family lives in a gated community. Why does this suit his mother so well?

Gerald doesn't need to be in a Special Ed class, yet his mother insists upon placing him in one. Why? For Gerald, what are the disadvantages of being in a SPED class? What are the advantages?

How did Lisi and Gerald help each other when they were children? How does Lisi protect herself now?

Why were Gerald and Hannah attracted to each other? What makes their relationship so volatile?

"I am not a big fan of confrontation," Gerald says (page 102). Do you agree? When does Gerald seek confrontation? When does he avoid it? How do the other members of his family respond to confrontational situations?

After a discouraging conversation with his father, Gerald asks himself, "what's crazy and what's sane when everything is possible but nothing ever happens?" (page 139). How would you answer his question?

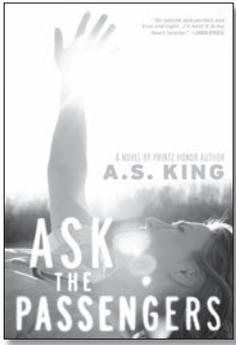
Take another look at the texts that Hannah receives from her mother. What do they tell you about Hannah's home life? How do they explain her desire to run away?

Network Nanny ran for two seasons. How did Nanny change over time? What did she understand about the Faust family in the second season? Why didn't she do more to help Gerald?

Why do you think the author decided to use typographic symbols, not words, when Joe Jr. and Joe Sr. are swearing at each other? How about when Joe Jr. and Gerald swear at each other?

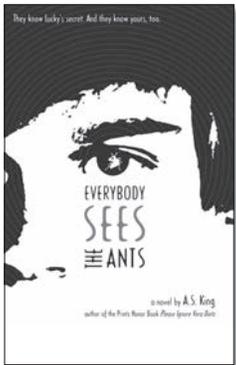
"You have choices," Joe tells Gerald (page 330). "You have so many things you can do." Try to imagine Gerald in ten years. What do you think he'll be doing with his life? Will he be happy?

also by A.S. King



978-0-316-19468-6 hc
978-0-316-19467-9 pb
AR 3.9

Astrid Jones copes with her small town's gossip and narrow-mindedness by sending love to the passengers in the airplanes flying overhead. Maybe they'll know what to do with it. Maybe it'll make them happy. Maybe they'll need it. Her mother doesn't want it, her father's always stoned, her perfect sister's too busy trying to fit in, and the people in her small town would never allow her to love the person she really wants to—another girl named Dee. There's no one Astrid feels she can talk to about this deep secret or the profound questions that she's trying to answer. But little does she know just how much sending her love—and asking the right questions—will affect the passengers' lives, and her own, for the better.



978-0-316-12928-2 hc
978-0-316-12927-5 pb
AR4.2

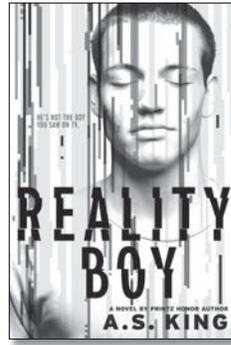
Lucky Linderman didn't ask for his life. He didn't ask his grandfather not to come home from the Vietnam War. He didn't ask for a father who never got over it. He didn't ask for a mother who keeps pretending their dysfunctional family is fine. And he didn't ask to be the target of Nader McMillan's relentless bullying, which has finally gone too far. But Lucky has a secret—one that helps him wade through the daily mundane torture of his life. In his dreams, Lucky escapes to the war-ridden jungles of Laos—the prison his grandfather couldn't escape—where Lucky can be a real man, an adventurer, and a hero. It's dangerous and wild, and it's a place where his life just might be worth living. But how long can Lucky keep hiding in his dreams before reality forces its way inside?

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about the book



978-0-316-22270-9

Gerald Faust knows exactly when he started feeling angry: the day his mother invited the *Network Nanny* reality TV crew into his five-year-old life. Gerald's way of rebelling against these conspiring adults was captured by the cameras and earned him the lifelong nickname "The Crapper." Twelve years later, he is still haunted by his rage-filled youth—and his anger issues have resulted in violent outbursts, zero friends, and clueless adults dumping him in the special education room at school.

No one cares that Gerald has tried to learn to control himself, and even the girl he likes seems to have no idea how he feels. Everyone's just waiting for him to snap...and he's starting to feel dangerously close to doing just that.

In this fearless portrayal of a boy on the edge, highly acclaimed Printz Honor author A.S. King explores the desperate reality of a former child "star" who finally breaks free of his anger by creating possibilities he never knew he deserved.

about the author



A.S. King is the author of the highly acclaimed *Reality Boy*, *Ask the Passengers*, *Everybody Sees the Ants*, and the Edgar Award-nominated, Michael L. Printz Honor book *Please Ignore Vera Dietz*. She is also the author of *The Dust of 100 Dogs*, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults. When asked about her writing, King says, "Some people don't know if my characters are crazy or if they are experiencing something magical. I think that's an accurate description of how I feel every day." She lives in rural Pennsylvania with her husband and children. Her website is AS-King.com.