

Please Ignore Vera Dietz

by A.S. King
 Knopf/Random House
 Children's Books
 Oct. 2010
 Young Adult Fiction
 \$16.99 US / \$19.99 CAN
 336 pages/ Ages 14 +
 ISBN: 978-0375865862 (HC)
 ISBN: 978-0375865640 (PB)

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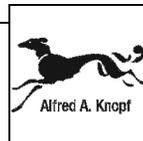
PLEASE IGNORE VERA DIETZ

"The writing is phenomenal, the characters unforgettable."—VOYA

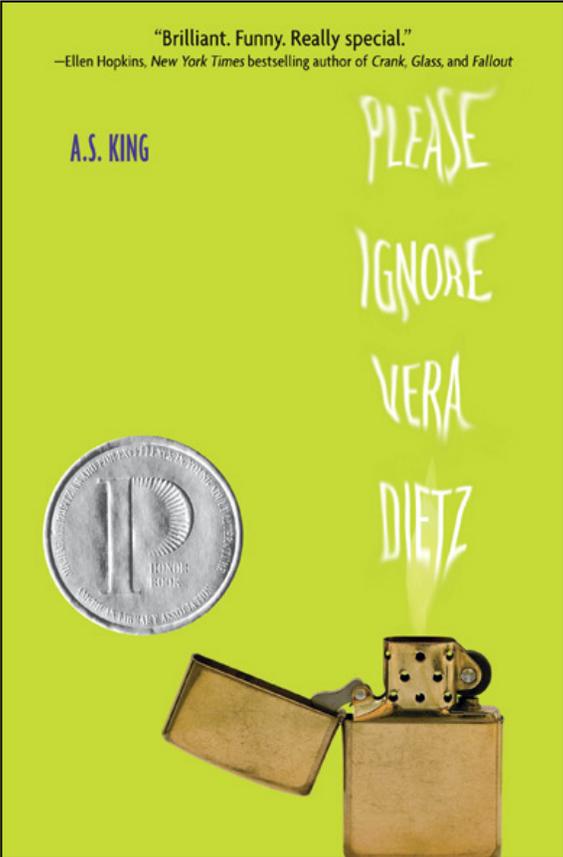
"Vera's struggle to put Charlie and his besmirched name behind her are at the crux of this witty, thought-provoking novel, but nothing compares to the gorgeous unfurling of Vera's relationship with her father. . . . [An] arresting tale." —Booklist, Starred

"The book is deeply suspenseful and profoundly human."—Publishers Weekly, Starred

"A harrowing but ultimately redemptive tale of adolescent angst gone awry. The author depicts the journey to overcome a legacy of poverty, violence, addiction and ignorance as an arduous one, but Vera's path glimmers with grace and hope."—Kirkus Reviews, Starred



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Discussion Guide

- Is it okay to hate a dead kid?
- Even if I loved him once?
- Even if he was my best friend?
- Is it okay to hate him for being dead?

Eighteen-year-old Vera's spent her whole life secretly in love with her best friend, Charlie Kahn. And over the years she's kept a lot of his secrets. Even after he betrayed her. Even after he ruined everything.

So when Charlie dies in dark circumstances, Vera knows a lot more than anyone—the kids at school, his family, or even the police. But will she emerge and clear his name? Does she even want to?

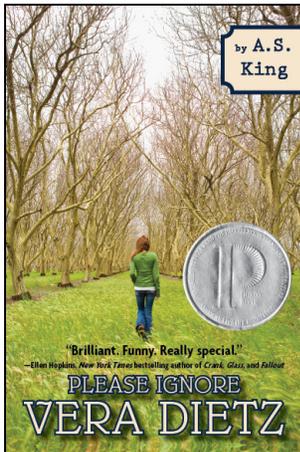
An edgy, gripping story, Please Ignore Vera Dietz is an unforgettable novel: smart, funny, dramatic, and always surprising.

A 2011 Michael L. Printz Honor Book

A Junior Library Guild selection for Fall 2010
 An Edgar Allen Poe Award nominee

YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults pick
 Indie Next List Pick for Teens

Kirkus Reviews Best Books for Teens 2010
 Cooperative Children's Book Center's CCBC Choices 2011



Discussion Questions

1. When Vera saw Charlie (the 1000 Charlies) was he really there?
2. Why do you think that the book was told from multiple perspectives? How did this add to the reader's understanding of the story? How would the story have been different if it was only told from Vera's perspective?
3. Could Charlie and Vera ever have had a successful relationship? (Why/why not?)
4. Do you think that Jenny Flick really hates Vera? (Why/ why not?)
5. Is Jenny Flick really all bad? (Why/ why not?)
6. Why do you think Vera drinks? Do you think that she is really an alcoholic? Is she a binge drinker? Is there a difference?
7. What are Vera's fears? Are they justified? What are Vera's father's fears?
8. Is Vera's dad a good dad? Was Vera's mom a bad mom?
9. What does it mean to be a good parent? What does it mean to be a daughter? What does it mean to be a good friend? Who in this book was/wasn't a good parent/daughter/ friend? Who redeemed himself/herself?
10. Why does Vera want people to ignore her?

11. What do the flow charts tell us? What do they show us? Why are they in the story?
12. Why doesn't Vera call the police on the pervert who answers the door?
13. Did Vera ever stop loving Charlie? Can Vera ever stop loving Charlie?
14. Was there bullying in the book? What do you think the effects of bullying are? (Short term/long term?)
15. Why do you think the adults in the book seem to ignore everything? Do you think it's an accurate portrayal of real life adults? (Why/ why not?)
16. What do you think will happen to Vera in the future?
17. What was so significant about the Pagoda's story? Would the story have been the same without it, and how has the story benefited from it?
18. Why do you think the Pagoda tells us how many children in the town are hungry? What does this have to do with Vera's story?
19. What role does domestic violence play in this book? Why do you think the author chose to make Charlie's parents the way they were? Do you think the violence at home affected Charlie? How? Why is that significant to the story?
20. What was most surprising in this book?
21. What do you feel *you* learned by reading the book?

22. Regarding the abuse going on in Charlie's home: Why did neither Vera nor her parents report the abuse they witnessed and heard over the years? What concerns might they have had that stopped them? What do you think you would have done if you were in their situation? What resources can someone in Vera's family's situation utilize in such a situation?
23. Students, take a minute to page through the book and find a section that you liked because it was meaningful or well-written. Be prepared to read it aloud to the class and say why it matters to you.
24. Group Activity: Is this book written in a linear or non-linear structure? Reconstruct the plot in chronological order and list which chapters reveal key events. Discuss why you think the book was written non-chronologically.
25. Make a flow chart for your own life. Include at least 3 steps with at least 2 options per step.
26. Can you think of a place in your town that might play the same role in your "story" as the Pagoda did in PLEASE IGNORE VERA DIETZ?



27. Write an essay and explain what you think your destiny is. Will you pursue it or avoid it? What will you need to do in order to pursue or avoid it?

The Reading, PA Pagoda
Photo: Matt Smith