educator's guide

GLORY O'BRIEN'S HISTORY OF THE FUTURE

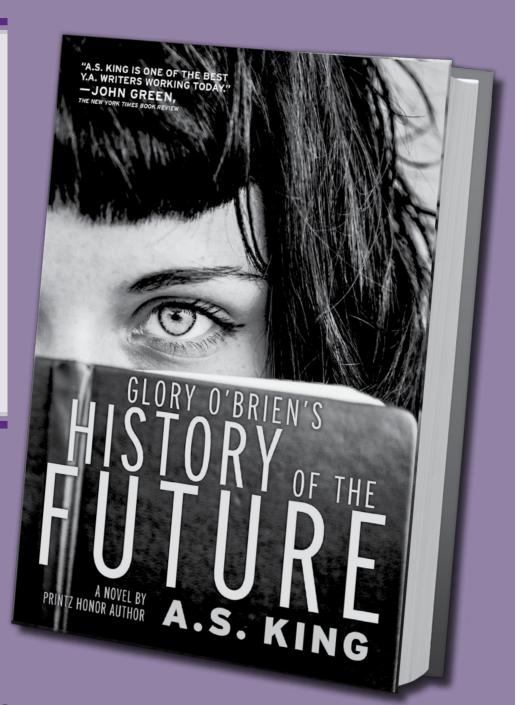
Curriculum connections

- Literature
- Psychology
- Women's Studies

Thematic connections

- Death and grieving
- * Family
- Friendship
- War

Ages: 15 and up



BY A.S. KING

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Darla O'Brien has been dead for 14 years. Why is she still the most important person in the lives of Glory and her father? Should she be?

A quote from the poet Walt Whitman begins the novel: "The future is no more uncertain than the present." What does Whitman mean by that? Do you agree with him? Why do you think the author opened her book this way?

Photographic terms, Glory discovers, can also be applied to real life. What does "max black" mean for pictures, and for people? What does it mean for a photo, and for a person, to be exposed but not developed?

"The Origin of Everything" is the name Glory gives to her sketchbook. Why do you think she chose such an ambitious title? Is she being serious? Sarcastic? What is the purpose of Glory's sketchbook?

"Why People Take Pictures" was the title of Darla O'Brien's sketchbook. Why did Darla O'Brien take pictures? Why does Glory? Why do you?

"Complicated" is how Glory describes her friendship with Ellie (page 2). How is that an understatement? What does Glory like about Ellie? What does she dislike? At the end of the novel, why does she give Ellie such a generous gift? What do you think Ellie will do with it?

Petrified bat juice isn't anyone's idea of a treat, so why do Glory and Ellie drink it? What drew them to the dead bat in the first place? What makes them think the bat might be God?

Can you draw any parallels between the capabilities of bats and the powers that Glory and Ellie gain?

"Free yourself," Ellie says on the night they drink the bat juice (page 51). "Have the courage." What does Glory need to free herself from? What about Ellie? Does each find the courage? Why or why not?

Ellie's mother tried to keep her daughter away from popular culture, but according to Glory (page 41), "Ellie knew what all girls knew—we were here to be whatever men wanted us to be." Do you agree? What makes it difficult for a young woman to be who she wants to be, not what some men may expect her to be?

Glory envisions a second American Civil War, the result of deep divisions within the country about the role of women. How divided do you think America is right now? How deep are regional differences about women's rights? How plausible do you find Glory's vision of the future?

Why do you think Darla O'Brien killed herself? What role did her husband play in her unhappiness? Her neighbor? Her daughter? Her gender? Her photography?

Why is Peter smiling at strangers in the mall? How does Glory's reaction to his experiment change both of their lives?

"I didn't know how to have fun," Glory claims at the start of her surprise party (page 254), yet she does have fun. How does the party affect her opinion of her classmates? Her aunt? Herself?

By the novel's end, Glory is convinced that her transmissions from the past and the future were true. What is her proof? Do you agree? What else might explain her visions?

Why is Glory writing "Glory O'Brien's History of the Future"? Who is she writing it for? How does she become the hero of her story?

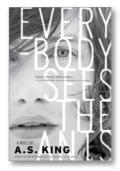
also by A.S. King



ASK THE PASSENGERS by A.S. KingHC 978-0-316-10468-6 PB 978-0-316-19467-9

Also available as an ebook

- * "Another thoughtful, and often breathtaking, achievement for King, whose star is ascending as quickly as one of Astrid's planes." —Booklist, starred review
- * "For kids struggling with their own truths, it can be hard to believe how much light there is once you come out of the cave. This is a book that knows and understands that, and it's one that readers will believe." —The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, starred review
- * "A furiously smart and funny coming-out-and-of-age novel." —The Horn Book, starred review
- "Quite possibly the best teen novel featuring a girl questioning her sexuality written in years."
 -Kirkus Reviews. starred review
- "At once much more than a coming out novel and one of the best coming-out novels in years....Funny, provocative, and intelligent, King's story celebrates love in all its messy, modern complexity."
 - -Publishers Weekly, starred review
- * "King's thoughtful, sad, funny, and frank book...will appeal to any mature teen resisting the pressure to conform or rebel [and] anyone who wants to define herself on her own terms."
 - -School Library Journal, starred review



EVERYBODY SEES THE ANTS by A.S. King

HC 978-0-316-12928-2 PB 978-0-316-12927-5 Also available as an ebook

- "Blending magic and realism, this is a subtly written, profoundly honest novel about a kid falling through the cracks and pulling himself back up."
 —Booklist, starred review
- ★ "The unusual and occasionally comic juxtaposition of the POW experience with Lucky's victimization... [offers] compelling food for thought about the things we can control and the things we can't, and how that distinction ultimately determines the need for action." —The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, starred review
- * "King's themes of torture, physical and emotional imprisonment, and bullying connect in satisfying ways in this improbably witty and heartwarming story." —The Horn Book, starred review
- "A smart, funny, and passionate novel that embodies the idea that 'It Gets Better'—when you take action." —Publishers Weekly, starred review
- * "King's heartfelt tale easily blends realism and fantasy....A haunting but at times funny tale about what it means to want to take one's life, but rising above it so that living becomes the better option."

 —School Library Journal, starred review
- * "King remarkably channels fifteen-year-old Lucky, creating one of the most believable teen male characters in young adult fiction....This unique coming-ofage story will hold tremendous appeal for reluctant male readers." —VOYA, starred review



REALITY BOY by A.S. King

HC 978-0-316-22270-9 • PB 978-0-316-22271-6
Also available in downloadable audio and ebook formats

- * "Heart-pounding and heartbreaking....a compulsively readable portrait of two imperfect teens learning to trust each other and themselves."
 - -Kirkus Reviews, starred review
- * "King offers a compelling look at possible long-term effects of reality shows....thought-provoking and ultimately optimistic."

 -Library Media Connection, starred review
- * "A nuanced portrayal....This is a story about healing."
 —Publishers Weekly, starred review
- * "King's trademarks—attuned first-person narrative, convincing dialogue, realistic language, and fitting quirkiness—connect effectively in this disturbing, yet hopeful novel." —School Library Journal, starred review
- * "King's writing is tighter, more focused, and better than ever....[An] intense and incredibly fresh plot." –VOYA, starred review

about the book



GLORY O'BRIEN'S
HISTORY OF THE FUTURE
by A.S. King

HC 978-0-316-22272-3 Also available as an ebook In this masterpiece about freedom, feminism, and destiny, Printz Honor author A.S. King tells the epic story of a girl coping with devastating loss at long last—a girl who has no idea that the future needs her, and that the present needs her even more.

- "Elevating herself above the pack and imbuing her novel with incredible nuance, King artfully laces themes of disintegrating friendship, feminism, and sexuality into the narrative, as well as some provocative yet subtle commentary on the male gaze and the portrayal of women in our culture. This beautifully strange, entirely memorable book will stay with readers."
 - -School Library Journal, starred review

about the author



A.S. King is the author of the highly acclaimed Reality Boy; Ask the Passengers, a Los Angeles Times Book Prize winner; Everybody Sees the Ants; and the Edgar Awardnominated, Michael L. Printz Honor book Please Ianore 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 Pennsylvania with her husband and children. Visit her online at AS-King.com.

* "King performs an impressive balancing act here, juggling the magic realism of Glory's visions with her starkly realistic struggle to face her grief, feel engaged with her own life, and learn anything that she can about her mother....Another powerful, moving, and compellingly complex

coming-of-age story." -Booklist, starred review

- * "An indictment of our times with a soupçon of magical realism....Prickly, heartbreaking, inwardly witty and utterly familiar." —Kirkus Reviews, starred review
- * "A novel full of provocative ideas and sharply observed thoughts about the pressures society places on teenagers, especially girls." —Publishers Weekly, starred review