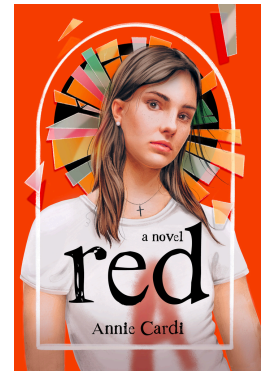


Red

Discussion Guide



About the Book

Moving to Hawthorne was something Tess and her mom never anticipated, but after Tess’s mom loses her job, it’s their only option. Tess’s grandparents welcome them into their home, but with the condition that Tess and her mom attend church, something Mom isn’t too pleased about. But Tess enjoys the church community, finding a place in youth group and the church choir. Faith fills a void Tess didn’t know she had.

After a very personal decision goes public, Tess faces daily harassment and rejection by her former friends, and singing in the church choir is no longer an option. When she meets some kids in the music room, her only place of solace in the school, who don't judge her for what's happened, she learns to find her voice again. Against the backdrop of the Spirit Light Festival, Tess will need to find the strength to speak out if she has any chance of ending a silent cycle of abuse in Hawthorne.



Discussion Questions

1. In the first chapter, Tess thinks, “When it’s over, I won’t have to talk about it or think about it, no one will have to know, it’ll be over...” Why does Tess want that to be the case?
2. Music and songwriting become an emotional outlet for Tess and ultimately help her share her story. In what ways can art be a tool for catharsis and connection?
3. How does Tess both find and form community for herself? How is community a source for good and bad in the book?
4. Tess and her mother have a close relationship. Why does Tess still feel like she can’t tell her mother the truth about her pregnancy?

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5. When Tess confronts Bri about how she got the picture, Tess thinks, “She wants to be friends with Tess, the quiet girl who went to prayer circles and youth group retreats, not the Tess who has to deal with something overwhelming and real.” In what ways do you need a friend in difficult times? How is it different to be a friend during difficult times?
 6. When she visits Pammy’s for the first time, Tess says, “...I listen to the next performers sing about heartbreak and loneliness and love and hope, and I feel like they’re all singing for me.” What makes a work of art feel personal?
 7. Tess spends most of the book believing she was in a consensual relationship with Alden. In what ways did he lead her to believe this was okay? What eventually makes Tess question his motives?
 8. When Tess first gathers people for the Scarlet Support Project, she says, “It feels important, all of us being together, sharing our experiences and telling each other we’re not alone.” How does community and conversation foster healing? How can it create action?
 9. How does the way Gram sees Tess change throughout the book? How are they able to finally reconcile?
 10. How does Tess’s relationship to God and faith develop during the novel? How is her faith contrasted with and supported by her experiences in church?
 11. Throughout the book, the red ‘A’ has different meanings. What are those meanings? Who defines them?



About the Author

Annie Cardi is the author of *Red*, which was chosen as Kids' Indie Next Pick by the American Booksellers Association, and *The Chance You Won't Return*, which received starred reviews from Kirkus and Publishers Weekly and was named a Bank Street College of Education Best Book of the Year. She currently lives in the Boston area. Find out more about Annie and *Red* at anniecardi.com.
