



TAKEN BY ERIN BOWMAN

A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR READERS

ABOUT THE BOOK

Gray Weathersby has grown up expecting to disappear at midnight on his eighteenth birthday. They call it the Heist, and it happens to every boy in Claysoot. Gray's only chance at escape is to climb the Wall that surrounds his town—an act no one has ever survived. After finding a note from his mother that makes him question everything, Gray must decide how much he is willing to sacrifice for answers. Should he sit back and wait to be taken, or risk everything on the hope of the other side?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 In what ways is Gray like his brother? In what ways are they different? How does their relationship affect Gray's opinion of himself?
- 2 Why does the Council arrange slatings for young Claysoot residents? Do you think the system is fair? How do gender roles in Claysoot differ or mimic those of our society?
- 3 Gray is very impulsive, relying on his gut feelings to guide him. Do you think this is dangerous? Before acting, is it smarter to trust your instincts or to analyze your options?
- 4 Before climbing the Wall, Gray wonders if "it takes going crazy to face the truth" (p87). Was his decision to leave Claysoot justified? Is it better to be ignorant or informed?
- 5 AmEast and AmWest are the result of the Second Civil War, in which the country fought over water resources and the western states seceded from the east. Do you think another civil war could ever occur in the United States? If so, what might it be fought over?
- 6 While contemplating the water thief's execution, Gray states, "No matter how obvious something may seem, there are two sides to every story" (p157). Can you recall a time when your opinion shifted after learning the other "side?" Explain.
- 7 What have the citizens of Taem given up for access to water and safety/shelter from AmWest? Would you have made the same sacrifices in their shoes?
- 8 Gray initially believes Harvey is responsible for the Laicos Project, and it is only later revealed that Frank twisted the truth. How much, if any, of Frank's information do you still trust? Who do you think is the greater evil: Frank or AmWest? Why?
- 9 Bree says to Gray, "The things you fight alone make you stronger" (p250). Do you agree? What does this quote tell you about Bree as a person?
- 10 After learning Harvey's true role in the Laicos Project, Gray realizes that "the actions [people] choose in the present are the ones that carry the most weight" (p241). Do you agree with this philosophy? Is Harvey's work forgivable? What does Harvey's decision to join the Rebels (not to mention his ultimate sacrifice in Part Four) say about his character?
- 11 What do you think Gray meant when he tells Emma, "Second chances are not the same as forgiveness" (p330)? Was it fair of Gray to treat Emma as he did? Why or why not?
- 12 Gray's friendship with Bree has a rocky start, but he later comes to rely on her and even finds his heart torn between Bree and Emma. Why do you think this is? What does each girl bring out in Gray, and does this mean one is a better match for him than the other?
- 13 What purpose do birds serve in the novel? Consider the crows that appear throughout the text and Gray's conversation with Emma regarding red-tailed hawks.
- 14 Why do you think the novel was split into four parts? How would the tone of the story differ without these divisions?
- 15 In what ways has Gray's view of the world changed by the end of the novel? How has *he* changed? What do you think is in store for the team heading west in *Taken's* sequel?

For more info about the book and author, visit embowman.com
