

Black Flowers, White Lies: Sample Discussion Questions

Below are some sample discussion questions. Special thanks to Marcie Colleen for creating this guide to help educators use *Black Flowers, White Lies* for classroom study, book clubs, and independent reading. To download a free copy of the complete educator's guide, containing over fifty discussion points, activities, and writing prompts, visit Yvonne's website at YvonneVentresca.com.

- Authors often begin novels at a point of conflict or change in the life of the protagonist. What is changing in Ella's life that would be considered a point of conflict at the beginning of the book?
- Ella's says, "being in the cemetery brings me peace, quiets the anxious thoughts that often scurry through my mind." Explain what she might mean by this. Why might Ella's recent visit to the cemetery disappoint her mother?
- Shortly after Blake arrives, he says he always wanted a sister. At that point in the story, how is Blake being a good brother to Ella? After you've reached the end of the novel, how do you view that same behavior?
- Ella chooses to wear the rose-colored dress her mother picked out for her instead of the strapless, yellow dress Blake bought for her. Do you think she made the right choice? Why or why not?
- When Gavin visits the shelter, Ella thinks he is not being entirely honest. What are some of the red flags that raise her suspicions? Did you think he might be lying when you read this chapter? Why or why not?

- Do you believe Ella's accounts of what has happened? If not, she might be an "unreliable narrator." What books or movies have unreliable narrators? How does the reliability of the narrator affect the reader's or the viewer's experience?
- Many of the characters in *Black Flowers, White Lies* try to deceive each other. Blake lies about his early arrival into town. Ella hides the truth when Grace asks her about Blake and Beautiful Boy. And Ella's mother kept a big secret for much of Ella's life regarding Oscar. Select one character and trace their lies throughout the story.
- If you were Ella, what evidence and other items would you want to take with you when you escaped the apartment? Explain why you chose each item.
- Throughout the story, Ella believes that Henry doesn't like her. What does she learn about Henry in the final chapter? Have you ever learned additional facts that make you reevaluate your initial opinion of someone?
- How has Ella changed from the beginning of the novel to the end?