

# FLAMER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about the title, FLAMER? Why do you think it was chosen for this book?

What associations does that word have for you?

2. Talk about the use of color in the book. Most of the art is black and white, but reds, oranges, and yellows appear throughout. Where in the book do you think the color has the most impact? Why?

3. Aiden has a complicated home life. What do you think about his relationships with his parents? Did your perspective on those relationships change at all by the end of the book? If so, how?

4. Who is Violet, and why is her friendship so important to Aiden? What do you think of letter-writing as a storytelling device?

5. On page 125, Aiden thinks “I know I’m not gay. Gay boys like other boys. I HATE boys. They’re mean, and scary, and they’re always destroying something or saying something dumb or both.” What do you think about Aiden’s rationale here? What are some of the factors that have contributed to him feeling this way?

6. Discuss Aiden’s patrol mate, Mark. Would you say he is a friend to Aiden, or is he another bully? Were you surprised by what happens between Mark and Aiden starting on page 205? Why or why not?

7. FLAMER begins with Aiden daydreaming about Elias, his best friend at camp. Why do you think Aiden is unable—or unwilling—to recognize his crush on Elias at first? How would you describe Aiden and Elias’s relationship?

8. Early in the book, Aiden mentions that he loves campfire. “It’s pretty cool ‘cause we’re all singing together, and it’s like we all have one voice. It makes me feel like I’m a part of something.” Discuss this idea of being “a part of something,” or belonging. Why do you think this is so important to Aiden? Where or when does Aiden feel like he doesn’t belong?

9. Ted, a camp counselor, is fired when someone outs him as gay. What effect do you think this has on Aiden? What do you think was important about Ted as a role model?

10. On pages 266 to 267, Aiden overhears adult leaders discussing Ted’s dismissal. What effect does their argument have on Aiden? Have you ever overheard adults talking and wanted to be a part of the conversation but felt like you couldn’t say anything? What were they discussing, and what do you wish you could have said?

11. When Aiden goes to the chapel at the end of the book, he’s prevented from harming himself by the “fire of life” within him. Discuss the imagery in this scene. What does the outline of the phoenix symbolize, and how does it relate to some of Aiden’s fantasies earlier in the book?

12. As Aiden shares his fears about his family and friends—his feeling that they won’t accept him—the personification of his soul tells him, “Even if ALL of them were to forsake you . . .

You ARE ENOUGH.” What do you think about this message? Why is it so vital for Aiden to hear?



**FLAMER: BURN BRIGHT**