



**Discussion Questions for
ALICIA AFTERIMAGE**
by Lulu Delacre

1. Consider what it means to define a character or person fully. Who was Alicia? How do her friends and family describe her? What were her interests? What were the most defining aspects of her personality? How does the author convey who Alicia was without listing character traits?
2. In chapter 2 (page 9), Papá writes, “. . . we all have our special Alicia memory, one that she gave only to each and every one of us.” What are some of the most important memories for Alicia’s family and friends? What do these memories teach us about the significance of everyday conversations, actions, and events?
3. In chapter 5 (page 35), Gaeb says that he feels anger along with his grief. Why do some people become angry during times of sadness or trauma? What causes their anger? What are some other grieving processes people usually go through when dealing with the loss of someone they love?
4. In chapter 14 (page 99), Chad describes a college interview in which a school dean asks him about the idea of change versus sustainable change. What is the difference between the two? Give an example of each. How had Alicia initiated sustainable change?
5. In chapter 15 (page 114), The Driver thinks about his actions and wonders if the accident was really all his fault or if everything that happened was just bad luck. He asks himself, “Do dumb choices deserve this punishment?” What punishment is he referring to? How would you answer his question?
6. Throughout the book, several teens describe seeing or keeping physical evidence that symbolizes Alicia to them (e.g., ladybugs or cards). How are these mementos tied to sentimental meaning or spiritual matters? What role do these mementos play in helping the teens cope with their grief?

7. In chapter 16 (page 117), Mamá describes a dream that affected her grief deeply. What does the dream mean to her, and how does it change her? How does it help her heal? The Driver also has a dream, and so does Lauren, one of Alicia's closest friends. What impact, if any, do their dreams have on them?
8. In chapter 16 (page 119), the text says, "Mamá understood that everyone has hidden pain, and she sensed that each person had to follow his or her own path toward healing." Compare and contrast the healing processes of several people in the book.
9. The idea of an afterimage frames the entire book. Although Alicia is gone, many of her friends feel as though she is still close by; and Mamá feels Alicia's presence and spirit, and sees her face. What do you think about the idea that a person's actions and presence "live on" after she or he dies? How are the afterimages Alicia's friends and family experience like a physical phenomenon? How are they like a spiritual one?
10. In the Author's Note (page 127), Lulu Delacre says that part of the reason she began to write this book was to find out "who [Alicia] was" to her friends. What did Delacre mean by this? Why do people sometimes act or behave differently when they're with different people?
Delacre also asked Alicia's friends, "Do you think there was a reason for [Alicia's] death?" How do you think the teens answered? Give examples from the book.
11. Delacre also says in the Author's Note (page 128), "As the interviews progressed, I learned how isolated teens feel in their grief." Why do you think Alicia's friends felt so isolated? Did talking about their feelings sometimes help alleviate their sadness? Why is it sometimes hard for a grieving person to talk with others about what he or she is experiencing?
12. The word *believe* appears on the last page of the book. What do you think the word is referring to? What does it mean in the context of this story? Notice the way in which the word is positioned by flipping back and forth between the last and next-to-last pages. What is the significance of where the word is placed?
13. Do the photographs, collages, and Alicia's artwork have an effect on the story and how you read it?
14. Delacre used the third person to write the first and last chapters about herself. Why do you think she did this? Do you think it was an effective technique? Why or why not?
15. What does it mean to have "closure"? To what extent do the people in the book find closure? On pages 130 and 131, the author tells what the teens profiled are doing four years after the accident. What does this information tell you about closure? Can a book like this help provide closure?
16. How might this book be useful to others who have experienced the death of someone close to them?

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Video Interview with Lulu Delacre on *Alicia Afterimage*:

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