

Alone
Discussion Guide
Grades 5 - 9

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Preview the content of the story using the author’s description on their [website](#).
- Engage your students in [an activity](#) to help them understand how difficult it would be to survive in a difficult situation from [crystalspringsfoundation.org](#).

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- Heaven
 - What plans do Maddie and Emma make, and how do their actions shape the events that follow?
 - What is Maddie’s experience like at her Grandma’s house, and how does it impact her emotionally or physically?
 - What strategies or habits does Maddie develop to cope with being alone, and what do they reveal about her character?
 - How does Maddie seek out or discover companionship, and what does this reveal about her needs and resilience?
- Exploration
 - In what ways does Maddie adjust to living on her own, and what challenges does she face along the way?
 - How does Maddie find and gather the resources she needs to survive, and what strategies or decisions are most important?
 - What do you think Maddie means when she says, "I am a ghost haunting this town," and how does this reflect her emotions or perspective?
 - What significant discoveries does Maddie make in her Mom's house, and how do they impact her journey?
 - How does Maddie’s perspective on her situation evolve over time, and what events or realizations lead to this change?
 - What steps does Maddie take to prepare for winter, and how do these actions reflect her resourcefulness or growth?
 - Why do you think the author chose to title this page "Darwin," and how does it connect to the story or themes?

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During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections. Cont.

- Peril
 - What does Maddie encounter on her way to Bullseye, and how do these sights influence her thoughts or decisions?
 - What events take place in the "Model Home," and how do they affect Maddie's journey or perspective?
 - How is Maddie's situation connected to Elliott's book report, and what does this connection reveal about the themes of the story?

- Desolation
 - How does the storm affect Maddie, and what does it reveal about her ability to cope with challenges?
 - In what ways does the Twinkie carry emotional or symbolic meaning in the story?
 - After Maddie makes an important discovery, how does her outlook on life or her situation change?
 - Describe Maddie's experience with the river and the realizations she has during or after it.

- Acceptance
 - How does reading poetry help Maddie gain new insights or shift her perspective?

- Reconciliation
 - When Maddie travels behind her Mom's house, how does this moment influence her journey or sense of identity?

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After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- How does Maddie's relationships with books shape her experiences, and in what ways do they help her navigate her challenges?
- Utilize RIF's [Figurative Language Graphic Organizer](#) to deepen students' understanding using specific phrases from the book.
- **Writing Activity:** Describe the writing style that Megan E. Freeman used to write the novel and the impact it had on the theme behind the story.
- **Character Development task:** Maddie's life undergoes significant changes from the beginning to the end of the story. Describe the key events that led to these changes and analyze how they shaped her character. How do these experiences influence her actions, thoughts, and perspectives? Use specific examples from the text to support your explanation of Maddie's growth throughout the story.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.
- Read the companion novel *Away* by Megan E. Freeman.