



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

Only Child by Rhiannon Navin

1. In the opening lockdown scene, Zach repeatedly focuses on external sensations: the stuffiness in the closet, popping sound coming from the hallway, etc. What does this tell us about how Zach perceives the world?
2. After overcoming her shock, Zach's mom campaigns against the parents of the shooter in an attempt to hold them accountable for their son's actions. Do you agree with her? Do you think she was out of line?
3. Zach uses colours to help him understand his emotions better. What do you think about Zach's justifications for his choices?
4. Do you think Zach should have returned to school earlier, or do you think he was sent back before he was ready? What role does Miss Russell play in helping Zach heal? Do you think Zach learns to trust school as a safe place again?
5. Zach suffers from survivor's guilt after Andy's death, and he feels that everyone might have been happier if he'd died instead. How does Aunt Mary help Zach work through these feelings? What does she teach him about family?
6. Zach's TV interview is traumatic for him. If you were in his mom's position, would you have put Zach on camera? Why do you think she insisted, and why didn't any of the other adults intervene?
7. If you had to trade places with any of the characters, who would it be and why?
8. If you could give Zach one piece of advice to help guide him as he grows up, what would it be?

The above questions were adapted from <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/557646/only-child-by-rhiannon-navin/9781524733353/readers-guide/> to enhance your discussion of the book.

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