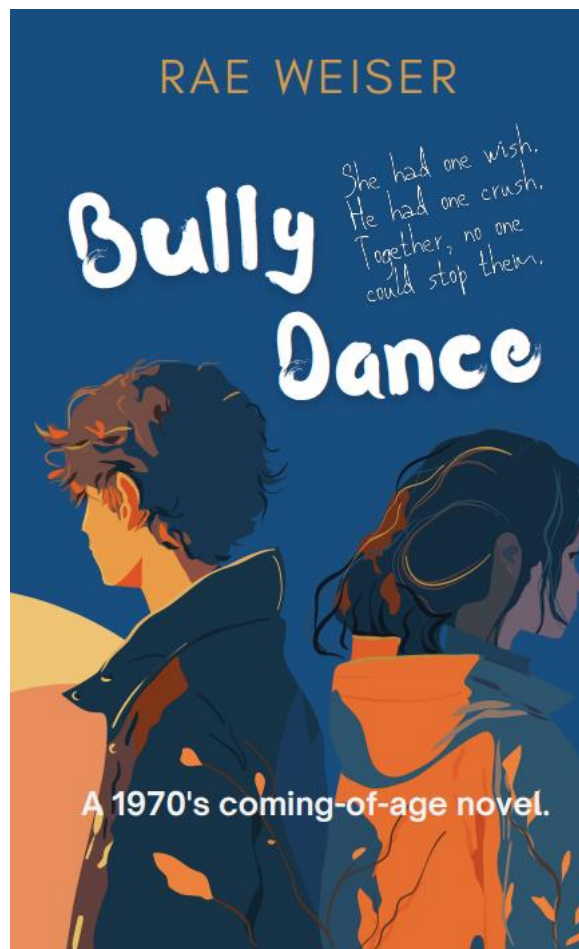




La La Land Press

Bully Dance

Book Club Resource



Bully Dance - Reading Group Discussion Topics:

1. Set in the 1970's, the story deals with difficult subject matter, but at the core is still about a young girl wanting to know her father. **Do you believe there is a biological drive to find a parent or that it's not driven by a biological need?**
2. **Dawn suffers loneliness**, even though she's around kids in the neighborhood. What do you think is the core driver of her loneliness? Is it her mother's inability to connect with her? Is it due to being abandoned by her father? Is it due to her not having an extended family that can support her? And is this trend in the 1970's of single mothers and women going into the work force – the evolution from the traditional American nuclear family – that is part of why she is lonely.
3. **Dawn's bullied at school**, but bullying in the 1970s wasn't dealt with as it is today. Are there benefits of kids having to set boundaries with other kids and stand up for themselves, or is our sensitive environment today too far the other way?
4. **Dawn and Mark's relationship** develops organically as they have similar issues of abandonment and being outsiders, but Mark pushes her to go after what she wants – which goes too far eventually with the night with her father and Chuck. Do you think Mark was right to be the catalyst of her getting her to find her dad and go to the dance, or is this something she should have been left to discover herself in a time that works for her? She nearly lost her life. Was it worth it?
5. **Nancy is a complicated woman**, easier on her diner patrons than she is to her own daughter. Is she a bad mom? Is she just a stressed single parent? Why is she so hard on Dawn, when she is the only one Dawn has to lean on?
6. **Henry gets a second chance at a new life when Dawn and Nancy come into his life**, but for this to happen, he must embrace the truth about his son he's been trying to protect and make live right because he loves him but what he did to Dawn was too far. Discuss

the way Henry must feel to finally accept the truth – that his son will never straighten up no matter how hard he tries to help him, and that the only thing he can do is let him go and save himself. Discuss how a father must feel to be in this predicament.

7. **The theme of exclusion and wanting to fit in** is what fuels this story at its core. It is about a school father-daughter dance, but that is just the reason in this story. Discuss the ways that you had an experience of feeling excluded. Discuss the time it was important to fit in with a group, but you were an outsider. Does tapping into this universal feeling we all have many different times in our lives, help you to relate to Dawn better?
8. **Dawn is a tomboy**, driven that way to protect herself from all the dangers in her life. She lives in a neighborhood with some creeps, like the Circle K cashier, but she keeps the guys she comes in contact with in-line. But she's a young girl. Do you think this edge had to be developed in her personality for her to survive? Do you think she is like her mother in this regard?
9. **Chuck is the guy who represents** all the guys or girls in the world who are a friend to someone but just brings them down. Friendship can be dangerous, as it ended up being for David. Do you think David would have gone down the wrong path if Chuck didn't come into his life? Or do you think David has the responsibility to be who he should be and Chuck is not responsible.
10. **Death of David's mother** is a dark cloak over his life. Do you think if his mom hadn't passed away that he would not be the way he is? Are there some deaths that people cannot come back from? And is that okay for them to stop fighting for their lives because of a death? because of Oklahoma pushing her to live her life as she wanted and the pressure she felt from people closest to her.
11. **Where do you see Dawn when she's thirty years old?**
12. **Do you think Dawn and Mark will know each other when they are thirty-years old?**

www.lalalandpress.com

lalaland@lalalandpress.com

To request Rae Weiser to visit your Book Club in-person or virtually, please email

lalaland@lalalandpress.com



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