



Reading Group Notes



Discussion Questions

- 1. Flipped! is set during the 2020 COVID lockdown. What are your own memories of the pandemic lockdowns and how do you think they affected you?**
 - 2. There are cliffhangers at the end of many of the chapters in this book, and some of them are quite audacious. How effective are they in making you want to keep reading?**
 - 3. Caveney often uses dream sequences in his books to create a sense of unease and to foreshadow important events. How effectively does this work in Flipped!?**
 - 4. Flip has never read Great Expectations, but he is aware of its iconic imagery, thanks to films, TV adaptations and poems (such as Carol Ann Duffy's Havisham). Does reading about classic literature in contemporary YA inspire you to read the original work? If so, why?**
 - 5. Flip is a very lonely character. His mum is at work all day, he is estranged from his dad and the lockdown means he can't see his friends. How does his loneliness affect his response to the strange new people he encounters on the marshes?**
 - 6. When Flip first sees Satis House, there is a "bold red KEEP OUT sign" - but he steps through anyway. Flip isn't usually a rule-breaker so why do you think he does this now? Would you do the same?**
 - 7. Old houses are a powerful trope in spooky stories, embodying themes of the past, decay and unresolved trauma. In Flipped!, the condition of Satis House changes, reflecting Flip's state of mind. How effective is this in conveying Flip's emotional journey?**
 - 8. In the first half of the novel, Flip is a stranger in Dickens' fictional world; in the second half, Dickens' characters are intruding into Flip's reality. Why do you think Caveney has structured Flipped! this way?**
- 
- 



Discussion Questions



9. Flipped! is not a straightforward retelling of Dickens' book: Caveney doesn't stick to the story of Great Expectations - Pip, Estella and Miss Havisham do things here that they don't in the original - but he uses the characters as a starting point for Flip's adventure. Do you think this is an effective choice?

10. In the novel, Flip meets Charles Dickens, who - believing that Flip is Pip - is horrified that his fictional character is no longer under his control. How far do you believe a writer is responsible for what their characters say and do?

11. What do you think of Flip's relationship with Estella? He's not as in awe of her as his fictional counterpart, Pip, but he still follows her instructions. Why do you think this is?

12. If you were casting a film version of Flipped!, which actors would you choose to play the different characters? Why have you selected them?

13. Flipped! is part-comedy, part-supernatural mystery, which makes it quite unusual. What effect do you think the mixture of comedy and tension has on your experience as a reader?

14. Although he is unreliable and often disappoints Flip, Dad eventually turns out to be quite a sympathetic character. Caveney treads a fine line, eliciting contradictory emotions in both Flip and the reader, so that we want Flip and his dad to reconnect. How does he do this?

15. An important part of the novel is the way in which the characters in Flip's 'real' world reflect their Dickensian counterparts. What do you think is the purpose of this mirroring?

16. Caveney is quoted as saying, "Great works of fiction exist in their own right. We have all heard about being 'lost in a book' - and so I wondered, what might happen if someone really did get lost in one? A story as powerful as Great Expectations has a life of its own and, although I enjoyed playing with the story, I felt I had to stay true to the heart of Dickens' work. Therefore, the ending had to be the same and Miss Havisham had to die in order to release Flip." What do you think Caveney means by this? To what extent do you agree with him?

