



ANDREW CLEMENTS **Things Not Seen**

Discussion Questions

- How do you think you would react to finding yourself invisible? Would you like it or not? What would you do that you cannot do now being visible? Would life be easier or more difficult? Have you ever felt invisible?
- Discuss the title of the novel. What does it refer to in the story?
- Alicia tells Bobby that he's judging the popular people the same way he says they judge him. Do you agree or not? Why do people judge others?
- Do you think Bobby and Alicia commit a crime at the Sears offices? Why or why not? Is anything worth breaking the law for? Explain.
- Does Sheila's choice to stay invisible make sense to you? Would you make the same choice? Why or why not?

Don't miss the companion books:

- *Things Hoped For*
- *Things That Are*

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ANDREW CLEMENTS **Things Hoped For**

Discussion Questions

- Discuss the role that music plays in the story.
- Do you consider Bobby's relationship with Gwen cheating on Alicia? Explain your thinking.
- Gwen refers to herself as the brave one. What is bravery? Who is brave in this story and what do they do that shows their bravery?
- How would you describe Uncle Hank? Is he a good or bad person? What makes you think so?
- What do you think about Gwen's grandfather's choice about his own death? Did he help Gwen or not? Explain.
- Do you think Gwen succeeds in getting into a music college? What do you think happens to her after this story ends?

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HOW TO START YOUR OWN BOOK CLUB

Think it would be hard to start your own book club? Think again!
All you need is a little bit of organization and some friends who are as excited about the books they read as you are.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

The best way to find people to be in your book club is to ask your friends.

Think of all the people you know who like to read, and ask them to join. If you still don't feel like you have enough people, ask each of your friends to bring someone else. You can usually get a good discussion going with 6–8 people, but any number that is comfortable for you will work. If you're having trouble finding enough cool people to form your book club, check with your school, local library, or bookstore to see if there's a group that you can join.

Figure out when and where you want to meet.

Some groups meet once a month, some meet every other month. You could get together at someone's house, in a park, on the beach, or in your school's library. If it sounds too official and overwhelming to decide all the "wheres" and "whens" right now, don't worry! It's YOUR group and so YOU get to make all the decisions. All you have to do is get together once, and you can work out the rest of the details later.

Decide how you will choose books, and how the discussions will be run.

This is another one that sounds a little scary but totally isn't. Maybe you have a favorite author that you and your friends would like to focus on. Or maybe you want to take turns picking your favorite book. Maybe one person likes to talk and would like to lead the discussion, or maybe you would rather just get together and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (try the publisher's website) or at your local library or bookstore.

The most important thing to remember is that there's no right or wrong way to have a book club. Do what you're comfortable with and always have fun, and your group will be a success!

For more discussion guides to get your group going, visit
www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians

A novel full of adventure, romance,
and mystery—a story about learning to trust
the things we know but cannot see.



Things That Are

by Andrew Clements

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Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

Follow Bobby and Alicia's
story from the very beginning . . .



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Praise for *Things Not Seen*

An ALA Schneider Family Book Award Winner
An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

A New York Public Library Book for the
Teen Age Selection

★ "A readable, thought-provoking tour de force, alive with stimulating ideas, hard choices, and young people discovering bright possibilities ahead."—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ "The first page is electrifying . . . Readers will easily be able to imagine what it must be like to have the world disappear."

—*Booklist*, starred review



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Discussion Guide ISBN: 978-0-399-25133-7 (bundles of 10)



Things Hoped For

ISBN: 978-0-399-24350-9 (HC) • \$16.99

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Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

Praise for *Things Hoped For*

★ "A riveting story line, engaging characters, and intriguing insights. . . "

—*Booklist*, starred review

★ "Clements hits no false notes in this beguiling sequel to *Things Not Seen* . . . Not since *Frindle* has Clements's writing achieved such near perfect pitch."

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

DISCUSSION GUIDE

ANDREW CLEMENTS

things
that
are



ABOUT *THINGS NOT SEEN*



Fifteen-year-old Bobby thinks he knows what it's like to be invisible—he's used to being ignored by the popular kids at school (especially the girls). Even his parents hardly seem to notice whether he's home or not. Then one morning, Bobby wakes up to find that he IS invisible. For real. Now Bobby is all alone, and he can't stop wondering if he'll ever reappear. How can he survive in a world where he can't be seen? One thing's for sure: Bobby's not going to just wait around to see if his body will decide to show up again on its own. He's got to take action. Fast.

ABOUT *THINGS HOPED FOR*



When Gwen's grandfather disappears from their home in New York City, he leaves a message saying not to worry—but it is hard not to when Gwen has upcoming violin auditions at Julliard! Then she meets Bobby, a fellow musician, and things seem to look up. At the same time, there are other forces in motion, like the scary great uncle who keeps coming by, and the strange man Gwen sees one day when shopping. Then there's the even *stranger* story Bobby tells her about what she saw. The discovery about where Gwen's grandfather really is brings their worlds to a halt, uniting Gwen and Bobby in ways neither of them could have foretold.

ABOUT *THINGS THAT ARE*



Alicia's total blindness is a harsh fact. But she still sees what's going on. She sees how her parents want her to be independent, but can't quite let go. She sees Bobby edging closer, sees their relationship approaching new territory. And she sees William, at first just another invisible form, a voice—except William is invisible to everyone, not just Alicia. And his demands are a threat to her, to Bobby, to both their families. Perhaps even a threat to global security. At least that's what the FBI thinks. But is he? Could Alicia's normally sharp instincts be wrong—dangerously, disastrously wrong?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ANDREW CLEMENTS is the celebrated author of over fifty books for young people. Mr. Clements has always loved writing and reading and children. The father of four grown sons, he was a teacher for seven years and still enjoys speaking to students and educators. Andrew Clements lives in central Massachusetts with his wife. To learn more about Mr. Clements and his work, visit him at www.andrewclements.com

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *THINGS THAT ARE*

- Describe Alicia and Bobby's relationship at the beginning of the story. What are the qualities that make someone a good friend? Would you be friends with Alicia in real life? Why or why not? Are Alicia and Bobby just good friends? How does their relationship change over the course of the novel?
- Even though she can't see, Alicia says she had to choose whether she wanted to be blind or not—and that she chose not to be. What does she mean by this?
- Discuss how Alicia's character changes from the beginning to the end of the story.
- Why do you think Andrew Clements has Alicia speak with an internal voice? What does this voice do for her and how does it contribute to the story?
- Discuss the title of the novel. What do you think it means?
- Something happened to Bobby—invisibility—and he was able to reverse it. Something happened to Alicia—blindness—and she was not able to reverse it. How did Bobby handle being invisible? How does Alicia handle being blind?
- Have you ever experienced a substantial change? How did you handle it? What did you learn from the situation? Is there something about yourself or your life that you wish you could change? How do you handle things as they are for you? Explain.

- Alicia and Bobby try to tell the truth as much as possible and are careful when they feel they have to lie. Do you think there is anything worth lying for? Why or why not? What would you have done in their situation?
- Discuss the various meanings that the word invisible has throughout the story. Describe the roles that invisibility and vision and sight and insight play in the story.

- Alicia's father explains that he and Bobby's father are working to figure out how to reverse invisibility because of the “rule of unintended consequences” (page 73). What does he mean?

- Do you think that invisibility is a potentially dangerous weapon? In what way? Can you think of ways that invisibility could be used to achieve good?

- Discuss the important role that decision making plays in the novel and how the characters and their worlds are directly affected by the choices they make.

- Do you agree with Dr. Van Dorn's decision to kill the mice? Why or why not? What would you have done in the same situation?

- Alicia decides to let William into the house and hide him. What do you think about this choice? What else could she have done and what might another choice have led to?

- What does being invisible do to William? How does it change his personality? Discuss how his character evolves.

- Do you think William felt forced to drug Gertie? Did he have alternative choices?

- Bobby never trusts William. Alicia eventually does. Do you think you would trust William if you met him? What personality traits and actions indicate whether a person is trustworthy? What does this novel say about trust?

- In Alicia's final exchange with her internal voice, the voice tells her to deal with now rather than focusing on her future plans. Do you agree or disagree with this approach to living?

- At the very end of the final chapter, Alicia says that she likes what she sees. What does she mean by this?

- Fast forward ten years from the end of the novel. Where do you think Alicia is? Describe her life. Do the same for Bobby.

What would you do if your world began to disappear?

A story about music, friendship, and love.

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author of the bestselling
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