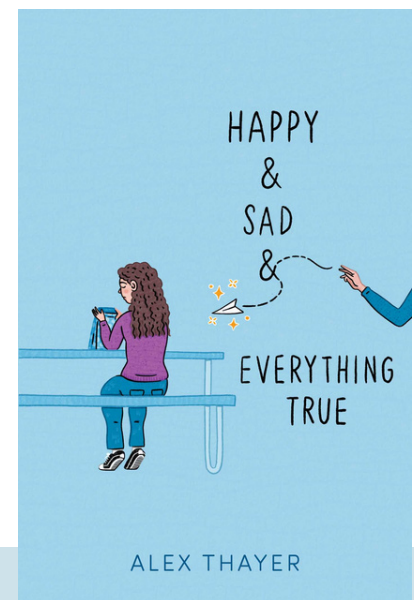


EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Activities, tools & resources for learning with this book!



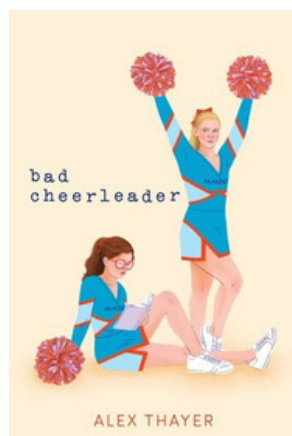
Meet Alex Thayer

Alex Thayer grew up on a tiny island in New England. In fourth grade, she wrote a story called *The Weirdos* with her friend Bunty. In sixth grade, Alex was the only girl on the boys' basketball team. After graduating from Wheaton College and the National Theater Institute, she moved to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career. She spent many years working as an actress, appearing on the television show *Grey's Anatomy* and starring in the film *December Ends*. Alex now lives in New England with her two sons.

Learn more about Alex [ONLINE](#).

The Coachella Review [INTERVIEWS](#) Alex Thayer, author of *Happy & Sad & Everything True*.

Read more from Alex:



EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

LET'S BEGIN!

Before reading the book...

Use the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) below to orient readers, and to help guide a group discussion. Begin by taking a quiet moment to look closely at the book jacket, allowing time for observation and contemplation of the images.

- What is going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that? (provide evidence)
- What more can we find?

Watch this [VIDEO](#) for a quick VTS demo. If you have any questions please email Alison Johnson at Island Readers & Writers, ajohnson@islandreadersandwriters.org.

LET'S BUILD BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE!

Before reading, explore vocabulary through discussion and activities to help students build understanding and prepare for the text.

- confide
- empathy
- confidence
- identity
- perspective
- compassionate
- belonging
- betrayal
- conflict
- courage
- harmonium
- kitchouri
- opportunity
- superficial
- inappropriate
- plucky
- anonymous

Try These Activities!

- **Act-it-Out-** Act it out.
- **Quick Sketch-** Draw the meaning.
- **Guess the Word-** Give clues.
- **Vocabulary Hunt-** Find words in text.
- **Word Map-** Connect ideas.
- **Word Builder-** Draw • Define • Use.

STANDARDS

Covered throughout this
Explore More Book Guide:

SL.1. Prepare for and participate in conversations across a range of topics, types, and forums, building on others' ideas and expressing their own.

SL.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

SL.3. Present information and supporting evidence appropriate to task, purpose, and audience so listeners can follow the line of reasoning and incorporate multimedia when appropriate.

R.4. Read various texts closely to determine what each text explicitly says and to make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the texts.

R.5. Provide an accurate summary of various texts; determine the central idea(s) or theme(s) and analyze its development throughout each text.

R.6. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.8. Analyze the structure of various texts, including how the features and components relate to each other and the whole.

R.9. Assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of various texts.

LET'S TALK!

Discussion Questions

1. Loneliness is an important theme throughout the book. On page 2, Dee says, “It’s way better to feel alone by yourself than alone in a crowd.” Why do you think Dee feels this way? Have you ever felt lonely even when you were surrounded by other people?
2. How would you feel about being partnered with one of your parents for a three-legged race? What do you think would make it fun—or challenging?
3. Why do you think the grate in the bathroom is significant to Dee and her friendship? Have you ever had a special or secret meeting place with a friend? What made that place special?
4. On page 26, Dee says, “If Bernadette were my mom I would like her rules... I’d like how much she cared about me.” Do you think having more rules means that a parent cares more about their child? Why or why not?
5. Compare and contrast the way Dee describes Juniper’s house with the way she describes her own house. (Chapters 4 & 8)
6. **Character development & growth:** Think about how the characters grow and change throughout the book. Why is character growth important to a story? Which character do you think grows or changes the most? What makes you think so?

Character Development:

represents observable changes in an individual’s characteristics over the course of a narrative.

Character Growth:

how the character evolves - becomes better- over time

7. What does it mean to be courageous? Which character, if any, do you think shows the most courage? What does that character do that demonstrates courage?
8. On pages 248–249, Dee learns that things can look one way on the outside but be very different on the inside. Why do you think this is an important lesson? Have you ever discovered that something or someone was different from what you first expected?

LET'S CREATE!

Book-Inspired Art

1. Dee discovers that she has a talent for listening and giving advice. Create your own newspaper advice column using Appendix A! Write a letter from someone who needs advice and then respond with thoughtful advice of your own. The template on page 5 explains what to do in each section. Page 6 is a blank version for every student.
2. What would your very own Snack & Stretch look like? Choose your favorite healthy snack and create a list of stretches or simple movements to go along with it. Then invite a friend join you!

3. Create a diorama of the bathroom from the book. Include details you remember, such as the tiles, grate, and other important objects or features. How many details from the story can you include?

4. Dee is working on learning her state capitals! Find a method that works for you to learn them all. Try repetition, flashcards, songs, rhymes, or another creative strategy to practice the capitals. Try this [SONG](#) to help!

5. Do you love cats—or another type of animal? Visit a local animal shelter or research an animal you'd like to learn more about.

Learn about your animal's:

- Personality & Habits
- Favorite foods
- Favorite activities
- Likes and dislikes

Then draw or create a portrait of your animal and share what you learned.

6. The chapters in the book have images that help represent them. Choose several chapters—or all of them and draw your own image or symbol that represents each chapter and explain why you chose it.

7. Dee and the other students in 6B get creative with their art supplies. **Now it's your turn!**

Look at Mr. Hicklin's art supply list on page 114.

Choose at least two materials from the list and use them to create an imaginative piece of art.

Give your artwork a title and write a few sentences explaining what inspired your creation.

- watercolor
- markers
- oil pastels
- colored pencils
- cardboard
- masking tape
- glitter
- glue
- paste
- modeling clay
- calligraphy pens



LET'S DIVE DEEPER!

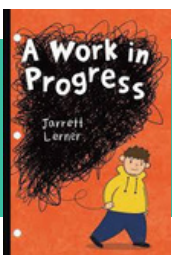
Explore More

Grab a notebook and a pencil and [LISTEN](#) as Alex reads chapter 3 which ends with a writing prompt idea for you!

LET'S READ MORE!

Text to Text Connections

Click the Explore More Book Guide icon below selected titles to view its resources on our website.



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NEWSPAPER NAME

MAIN HEADLINE- SOMETHING CATCHY RELATED TO YOUR ADVICE COLUMN.

DEAR ADVICE COLUMN,

I have a problem. (write out the problem)

What should I do?

HAPPY • SAD • EVERYTHING TRUE

WHY I THINK THIS WILL HELP

Write your reasoning and details to support your opinion.

Draw a picture that goes with your advice column.

THE ADVICE

Dear Reader, My advice is...

WORDS OF WISDOM

One piece of advice you think everyone could use.

DEAR ADVICE COLUMN,

HAPPY • SAD • EVERYTHING TRUE

WHY I THINK THIS WILL HELP

THE ADVICE

WORDS OF WISDOM