

FEED Study Guide

Characters

Titus

Titus is the narrator of the novel. He is a teenager who has a feed, or transmitter implanted into his brain. He is from a wealthy family and can easily afford to take trips to the moon. He parties with his friends like a normal teenager and engages in forbidden activities such as drinking and horseplay. The feed dominates his life, as it does with every teenager in the novel, and the feed controls his mind completely. When Titus thinks about something or wants something, the feed will send out advertisements, media announcements and shows to him. He and his friends decide what is trendy by the feed. As the novel begins, Titus is a typical, immature teenager living a normal life. He is bored by everything, which is also very normal for a teenager.

As the book progresses, Titus meets his love interest, Violet. Her traditionalist influence rubs off on him and he starts to have deep emotions for her. He starts to rethink the way he thinks about the feed and how silly his friends seem. This self journey and a traumatic experience with a hacker turns Titus into a mature, thoughtful person. Titus is also beautiful, as his parents genetically modeled him from the physical features of a television star. He is also not smart, since his parents did not model him with intelligence. Due to dealing with Violet's impending death, he begins to have insightful thoughts and becomes even more mature. He falls in love with Violet and cares for her deeply.

Violet

Violet is the girl that Titus meets at the Ricochet Club on the moon. She is the most beautiful girl he has ever seen. He is instantly attracted to her. She is dressed in gray wool, which is an old-fashioned outfit. She is an observer. She comes from a poor family and lives a traditionalist or old-fashioned lifestyle, due to her college professor father's influence. The father believes people are becoming stupid and simple because of the feed. So does Violet. Violet is rare because she has experienced life without the feed. She did not have the feed implanted into her head until she was seven years old. So she knows how to read and write, which Titus and his friends hardly know how to do. Violet is extremely intelligent. She is homeschooled and studies constantly about all different kinds of knowledge. Violet obsesses over the fact that the feed turns everyone into mindless idiots. She wants to change this and does a project to confuse the feed. Due to the hacker trauma, she is slowly dying. She becomes paralyzed at times and must face her impending death with Titus at her side. Violet has not experienced a lot of the world, as opposed to Titus and his friends, due to her family's financial situation. Her mother lives in South America. She left when Violet was young. Violet holds on to her father's idea of the feed and tries to fight the feed in the only ways she can.

Link

Link is Titus's friend. He is ugly, tall and very rich. His feed signal attracts other people, so everyone wants to be friends with him.

Marty

Marty is Titus's friend. He is good at everything.

Calista

Calista is Titus's friend. She is blond, beautiful and comes off as very important to others. She can usually get into bars due to all these traits, despite the fact, she is a teenager.

Loga

Loga is Titus's ex-girlfriend. Originally, she didn't want to talk to Titus after their breakup, but they are friends now.

Steve, Titus' Father

Steve, Titus's father, is a businessman. He checks on Titus in the hospital, but does not give him any answers as to when he can leave the hospital.

Quendy

Quendy is usually second fiddle to Calista's beauty and charm, and she knows it. Quendy worries about a huge lesion on her forehead, but then learns to embrace lesions.

Old Man

The old man hacks into Titus and his friends' feeds, causing them to get their feeds shut off and a stay in the hospital.

Smell Factor

Smell Factor is Titus's six-year-old brother. He likes to play with toy birds, plays baseball and is coddled by the mother.

Violet's Father

Violet's father is a college professor. He is a traditionalist who reads, writes and studies dead languages. He is what humans used to be without the feed. He speaks in very complicated sentences with difficult vocabulary that no one can understand.

Objects/Places

Unettes

Unettes is a space, slang term for girls.

Upcar

An upcar is a flying car that transports characters in the novel from place to place.

Bonesprocket

A bonesprocket is a derogatory word for a kill joy, or someone who does not partake in the fun around her/him.

Feed

A feed is a transmitter implanted in the characters' brains.

Ricochet Lounge

The Ricochet Lounge is a nightclub on the moon where party goers wear space suits and crash into each other due to the no gravity and low gravity atmosphere.

Unit

Unit is a space, slang term for dude or man, a.k.a. a friendly greeting among teenagers.

Cro-Magnon

Cro-Magnon is prehistoric man.

Feednet

A feednet is a feed network that allows those with feeds to listen to their feeds and chat, or telepathically speak amongst one another.

Weatherbee & Crotch

Weatherbee & Crotch is a clothing store that comes on Titus's feed. It is a satirical name for the real clothing store Abercrombie & Fitch, which is popular among American teenagers.

In mal

In mal is when a person with a feed is in malfunction. In other words, when the feed is not working properly. It is illegal to go in mal, much like doing an illegal drug.

Oh? Wow! Thing!

Oh? Wow! Thing! is a show the teenagers like to watch on their feed.

Themes

Boredom

Titus complains of boredom as the novel opens. He thinks the moon is boring and Mars is boring. Like a typical teenager, everything is boring. Even the feed constantly running through his head is boring. Then he meets Violet and she is the opposite of boredom. The way she can push juice out of her mouth and make it float in front of her is not boring. The way she dresses, in an old-fashioned, gray wool outfit is interesting. Titus is instantly attracted to Violet because she is not the norm. He is struck by her traditionalist ways, and Violet starts to consume him instead of the feed. He becomes less bored. When they are in the hospital, they must keep from being bored at all costs, especially since the feed is shut off. They play with hypodermic needles, make a mess out of the hospital ward and even one boy ties himself to the bed and tries to stand up. Everything is a game. Everything is done with the mission to not be bored. Later in the novel, Titus's friends who live and die by the feed are always bored and invent new things to amuse themselves. The boys are constantly inventing silly games to keep themselves occupied. The girls change hairstyles several times a day to keep from being bored. They also shop for trendy clothes, and change their look constantly to stay exciting. In fact, they are so bored at times, they go in mal, or malfunction, which is a forbidden action, or in other words, used like an illegal drug. Their boredom continues to a party at Link's house. They decide to immerse themselves in a very immature game

of spin the bottle just to be entertained.

Technology Ruins America's Youth

M.T. Anderson provides a host of social commentary for this novel. One major theme is how technology, including media and advertising, ruins America's youth. Since the feed is in the teenagers' head, they live and die by the feed. Everything they want is instantaneous. They no longer have a reason to think as individuals and increase their intelligence. Instead, they are content with having technology do everything for them. They cannot even read or write because everything they need is done by the feed. In School, teenagers learn about the feed, how to find the best bargains, how to get a job and how to decorate their rooms. Regular subjects such as literature and math are not in School. Thus, the feed or technology ruins America's youth by dumbing them down. The constant advertisements running through their heads also ruin the youth. Instead of thinking and deciding for themselves, the feed decides what they should buy, how to dress, what trends to follow, what shows to watch and what music to listen to. The feed is controlled by corporate America. School is also run by corporate America. Therefore, it is the corporations who control the youth. In addition, parents genetically create their children to be perfect, beautiful specimens in regard to physical appearance. Intelligence is not a priority because the feed controls their brains anyway. There is no need for intelligence in this world. It is only Violet, a girl who once lived without the feed, who understands what intelligence and thinking mean and how dangerous it is that the feed controls everyone's mind. But she is a rarity because the feed controls most of America's youth, thus ruining them.

Journey of Self-Exploration

As the novel begins, Titus is a normal teenager. The feed controls him as it does his friends. He does immature things such as horseplay and giving into the whims of his unintelligent friends. He thinks everything is boring, even trips to the moon and Mars. He is a vapid character who cannot think for himself. Instead, he lets the feed think for him. However, when he meets Violet, who is a traditionalist, he begins to think. Violet makes him think about things he otherwise never would. Instead of the feed choosing everything for him, he starts to go on a self-journey. He realizes there is more to life than the feed due to Violet. She can read, write and sew—all things a normal human without a feed can do. He is fascinated by this and delves into her world. He begins to discover other things besides the feed, such as books, writing, different neighborhoods and landscapes. He sees the world as more than the feed. He feels in love and he has deep emotions for Violet. He discovers new words as Violet has an extensive vocabulary. When a traumatic event happens to both of them, both he and Violet are changed, while his friends remain immature and silly. He sees his friends as silly and pulls away from their world. Instead, he is more and more attracted to Violet's world and becomes more mature. He continues his journey of self-exploration as he begins to think about the feed for what it is, and not just blindly accept everything the feed tells him. This is all eventual preparation for Titus's completed journey of learning to resist the feed.

Style

Point of View

The novel is told from a first person point of view. Titus, the narrator of the novel, gives the reader a close, first person point of view. Titus gives the reader access to his most private thoughts, including those he does not even share telepathically with Violet or his friends. Titus provides details similar to those of a normal teenager. He relays observations and details about his surroundings from a teenager perspective. In other words, through Titus's first person point of view, the reader receives descriptions of things that Titus notices as being "cool" or interesting. For example, when he meets Violet, she can push juice out of her mouth and suspend it in midair. Those are the type of details Titus provides, whether they are about a juice trick, trendy clothing, nightclubbing or horseplay with his friends. Thus, the point of view is adolescent and tends to lack any sort of depth or maturity until Titus goes through a trauma, and then finds out Violet is sick.

The story is told through exposition and dialogue. Titus gives descriptions of places and people, but he also has a lot dialogue. Some of the dialogue is actual speaking. The rest of the dialogue is chat, or a telepathic way Titus communicates with his friends. Both forms of dialogue read the same, but chat is in italics.

The reader also gets access to the feed in Titus's brain. However, the feed is from a third person point of view. When the readers see the feed, it is a garble of advertisements, feed shows, radio, music and political news. The third person of the feed allows the reader to get a full perspective of the world in which Titus lives, and sheds light on what happens in the actual world, besides what happens in Titus's teenage microcosm.

Setting

The novel is set in somewhere in the United States a hundred or so years in the future. Titus mentions flying his upcar over Nebraska, but the reader is not told exactly where he lives in the US. At the beginning of the novel, Titus and his friends party on the moon. They go to a no gravity/low gravity nightclub and bounce around. After the hack, they are in a moon hospital. It is similar to a regular hospital and has more gravity. After they leave the hospital, they return to Earth. For Titus and his friends, their homes are all very upscale, since they come from wealthy families. Each of their homes is situated inside a pod. The pod controls the seasons. Inside their homes, it is normal. Their houses have utensils for eating, dishes, furniture and attics.

Titus travels to Violet's neighborhood and house. It is poor. It has regular streets for when cars were down on the ground. It does not have pods to control the seasons. Inside Violet's house, he is shocked by how much writing he sees. There are newspapers, books and posters with writing on the walls. Since the feed, writing and reading is primitive. Violet's house is a representation of the old world, as the reader knows it.

On Earth, forests are cut down for air factories. There are virtually no trees. When Titus and Violet visit a farm, it is a maze of meat, but they do enjoy eating donuts. Therefore,

some parts of Earth are completely the same, while others are drastically different.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is very informal. Since it is written from a teenager's point of view, there is a lot of slang. However, the slang is a futurist slang the author invents. For example, instead of saying, "dude" or "man," Titus and his friends say "unit" to each other. There is also a good amount of swearing from Titus and his friends. However, the interesting part is that Titus's father also speaks like one of the kids, as he swears and uses their slang. The language is very simple. Since the feed controls everything and most people are illiterate, the language they speak is very simple and without frills. Due to the feed, no one has extensive vocabulary except for Violet and her father, who study language. They use extensive vocabulary words, especially the father, and are shunned for doing so.

Descriptions are not extensive, but they come in necessary places. Descriptions of the moon and Earth are necessary because otherwise the reader will not understand. Description creates this futuristic world for the reader to inhabit. Strange behaviors are also described, such as Violet's juice trick, or when Titus and his friends are hacked into.

The most interesting part of the language in this novel is it is very reminiscent of J.D. Salinger's masterpiece, *The Catcher in the Rye*. Titus's voice is almost identical to the voice of Holden Caulfield, especially when Titus says everything is boring all the time, which is similar to Holden saying everything is lousy all the time. Perhaps J.D. Salinger's writing rubbed off on M.T. Anderson because Titus seems like a futuristic version of Holden.

Structure

This novel is comprised of four parts. Each part has a name, which displays the overall theme for each part. Chapter length varies from one page to approximately twelve pages long. Each chapter is not numbered. Instead, each chapter has a name alluding to an event that happens within the chapter. The chapters have short paragraphs with minimal description. The book has a very certain timeline. It follows Titus's life day by day, and only short spans of a few days or so to move time along. The reader knows exactly where s/he is in the timeline. The plot of the novel is simple and without subplots. The novel is about Titus's life as a teenager on Earth and how he lives and dies by the feed until he meets Violet. Violet makes him think differently about the feed, and they must grapple with her impending death.

The novel's pace is normal and moves moderately. It is neither fast-paced or slow. It is the right speed for a modern day, young adult reader. It is a very easy read with some difficult vocabulary interspersed throughout the story. There are swearing and slang terms. When the reader sees the feed, it is always on a separate page, at the end of the chapter and with bullets and italics. The plot engrosses the reader into this world of the feed and futuristic Earth. Back story is virtually nonexistent except for a few explanations of the characters' childhoods. The novel is a relatively easy read and entertains as a whole.

