Fingerprints In The Water by Lawrence Nault

Book Club Discussion Guide

Overview

In this powerful YA novel, a global network of dragon-bonded teens takes on one of the most urgent issues of our time: water contamination. As microplastics threaten ecosystems and communities, the Young Dragons rise to lead grassroots change—armed with knowledge, science, and the deep emotional connection shared with their dragons. *Fingerprints In The Water* explores youth power, environmental justice, and the legacy of action across generations.

? Discussion Questions

Themes & Big Ideas

- 1. What role does youth play in leading change throughout the novel? How does the story frame the strengths—and challenges—of teen-led activism?
- 2. How is water contamination portrayed in the book?
 What did you learn about plastics, microplastics, or pollution that you hadn't considered before?
- 3. The dragons are powerful presences in the story, but not magical solutions. What do they represent to the characters? How do they contribute without overshadowing the human action?
- 4. This book focuses on grassroots change rather than top-down solutions.

 Do you think that's realistic or idealistic? What does the book suggest about systems vs. community?
- 5. **How do the characters process grief, frustration, or burnout?**What does the book say about resilience and emotional sustainability in the face of global problems?

♦ Characters & Growth

- 6. How does Kai grow throughout the book?
 - What challenges push him forward, and where do you see his leadership evolving?
- 7. Amy plays a key role in organizing and grounding the group.

 How is her strength different from Kai's? What leadership qualities does she demonstrate?

8. How do the side characters—from the Young Dragons network to adult allies—help shape the story?

Which characters stood out to you and why?

Real-World Connections

9. Did the story change the way you think about your own relationship to water or pollution?

Are there habits, systems, or solutions you'd now want to explore?

10. What parallels do you see between the Young Dragons' movement and real-world youth-led climate action today?

How does fiction help us imagine new ways forward?

Activities & Extensions

- **Host a local cleanup:** Inspired by the novel, organize a shoreline or park cleanup in your area.
- **Do your own water test:** Research how to conduct a basic water quality test or microplastic audit at home or school.
- Create a "dragon ally" journal prompt: What wisdom would your dragon offer you? What change would you fight for together?
- Compare with real movements: Research youth environmental movements like Fridays for Future or Water Protectors, and compare their goals with those in the book.

Final Reflection

What "fingerprints" do you want to leave behind? After reading this book, what's one small action you feel inspired to take?