



## Discussion Questions: **Grace** by Richard Paul Evans

\*from Richard Paul Evans site

[http://richardpaulevans.com/wp-content/themes/rpe/images/guides/grace\\_guide.pdf](http://richardpaulevans.com/wp-content/themes/rpe/images/guides/grace_guide.pdf)

1. "It's been said that parents should give their children roots and wings." To what extent is this statement true of Eric and Joel's parents? How might Grace modify this expression to describe the role her mother plays in her life? In your experience as a child and/or parent, how do you interpret this statement?
2. Why doesn't Grace explain to Eric the true nature of her dilemma earlier? How does the author's decision to reveal Grace's character gradually affect your appreciation of her difficult situation? How does Grace's plight as a runaway make her especially prone to falling in love with Eric?
3. How does his father's suffering from Guillain-Barré syndrome facilitate Eric's concealment of Grace? How might having a relative who is seriously ill predispose Eric to behave with kindness toward Grace, when he first discovers her? In what respects is Eric an atypical teenager? How is he typical?
4. How does the threat of nuclear annihilation during the Cuban Missile Crisis intensify Eric and Grace's feelings for each other? How does the crisis affect Eric's immediate family? How does the author's decision to set these character in this era impact your appreciation of the novel?
5. How does their Halloween encounter with Stan, Grace's stepfather, affect Joel and Eric? Why does Stan abuse them verbally when they trick-or-treat? Why doesn't Grace's mother make more of an effort to protect her daughter from her husband?
6. "I just don't think God wants us to do good things because we're scared. I think he wants us to do good things because we're good." What does Grace mean by this remark? How is the morality of Eric's actions complicated by the depth of his feelings for Grace?
7. Why is Grace successful at concealing her pregnant condition from Eric and others for so long? How does the revelation of her pregnancy affect their relationship? To what extent is Eric justified in taking offense when Grace describes him as a naïve boy who believes everything everyone tells him?

8. "Hawaii was just someplace I've always wanted to be, the way some people think of heaven." Why does Grace lie to Eric about having come from Hawaii? Why is she so moved by Eric's recreation of a Hawaiian meal for her on Christmas? When Grace writes in her diary, "Eric is my Hawaii," what does she mean?

9. Why does Eric ultimately reveal Grace's whereabouts to the police? Why does he blame his parents for what ultimately happens to Grace, and to what extent do you agree with him? Why doesn't Grace say anything to Eric as she is led away by the police, and what does her silence suggest about her premonition of what will happen when she is returned to her home?

10. "My whole life I have hoped for redemption. Redemption and grace. I don't deserve it, but I still hope." How does Eric's career path as an adult reflect the enormous impact of his childhood friendship with Grace? To what extent does he seem to have found both redemption and grace in his chosen profession?

**Additional Questions:**

- In the beginning the author tells you the fairy tale by Hans Christian Anderson of the Little Match Girl. How does this reflect in the story of Grace? Do you feel he needed to tell us this classic tale?

- If this situation in the story was played out today, how different would it be? Could the consequences be the same? Do you think at that age you could of helped a stranger or if kids today would do the same thing?