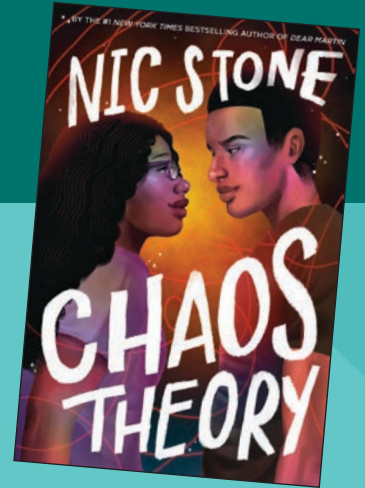


# READING BANNED & CHALLENGED BOOKS

## CHAOS THEORY BY NIC STONE

The #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Dear Martin* delivers a gripping romance about two teens: a certified genius living with a diagnosed mental disorder and a politician's son who is running from his own addiction and grief.



- Discuss the structure of the novel. How do the text messages contribute to the conflict and advance the plot? What do we learn learned about Andy and Shelbi from the text messages? The novel is divided into phases. Explain the purpose of these phases.
- Describe the complicated relationships in Andy's and Shelbi's families.
- Explain why Shelbi is reluctant to make friends. Why does Shelbi develop a friendship agreement? Analyze each part of the document. What is Andy's reaction to the contract? Which aspect of the agreement is most remarkable? Why? Why do you think Andy signs the contract?
- Discuss the moment when Shelbi falls in love with Andy. What are her thoughts on failing to comply with point 6 of the friendship agreement?
- How does Andy blame himself for the death of Emma? Why does it take his mother so long to tell him that the accident wasn't his fault? Explain why Andy's mother is so oblivious of his immense guilt.
- Cris Criddle, Andy's mother, is a politician. Explain why Dr. Augustine, Shelbi's dad, dislikes Cris Criddle. What is Dr. Augustine's first reaction to Andy? At what point does he change his mind and formally accept Andy?
- Who is Stephanie Locke? What went wrong in Andy and Stephanie's relationship? Why was he so upset with her dad for forcing her to get an abortion? How does Shelbi help Andy deal with this part of his past? Explain why giving the aborted fetus a name helps Andy.
- When does Andy realize that his mother is having an affair with Mr. Locke, her campaign manager? Why can't his mother give him a straight answer about Mr. Locke? Explain what she means when she says that the relationship is complicated. Discuss Andy's father's reaction to the affair. Discuss how Andy feels when his mother leaves.



- Shelbi’s mom writes urban romance fiction. Why does this embarrass Shelbi? Andy is forced to admit that he is an alcoholic. How does Shelbi’s mom help Andy? Explain why he is surprised by her confession.
- Shelbi is bipolar. How do her parents deal with her disorder? When does she reveal her disorder to Andy? How does he respond?
- Explain the title of the book.
- At the beginning of the novel, Nic Stone warns that it contains triggering content. What does she mean by *triggering*? Some libraries want to place trigger warning labels on books. Debate whether such labels are a good idea. Discuss an alternative.
- Some adults disapprove of books that deal with mental health. How might teens find Shelbi’s story hopeful? Explain why it is important to have stories like Shelbi’s.
- The current debate about abortion has caused some people to want to censor books that even mention the topic. Do you think this is reasonable? Why or why not?

**Guide written by Pat Scales, children’s literature consultant**



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