

DANIEL &
DINA NAYERI

ANOTHER FAUST



Teenagers around the world idolize fame, fortune, celebrity status, and talents they do not possess.

But to attain what they do not have, are they willing to sell their souls to the devil?

ABOUT THE BOOK



In *Another Faust*, Victoria, Belle, Valentin, and Christian choose just such a contract, and Belle's twin sister, Bicé, unwittingly becomes part of the bargain. Victoria covets honors, recognition, and the assurance that she is the best; Belle's desire is to be strikingly and singularly beautiful; Valentin yearns to be a famous poet; and Christian dreams of becoming a rich sports star. Bicé would be content to know a plethora of foreign languages, but she is unwilling to make any deals with the devil to learn them—or so she thinks.

Mysteriously, the beautiful Madame Nicola Vileroy arrives to fulfill all their dreams—for a price. After the children learn how to use their talents, they enroll in a prestigious high school, where they quickly rise to take top honors. However, it soon becomes clear that their rewards will be short-lived and that their fall is coming—and that no one can stop it, not even Madame Vileroy, with her spies and evil tricks.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. The title of the book, *Another Faust*, begs the question: Who is the first Faust? What does he or she symbolize?
2. Madame Vileroy reads *The Book of Human History* and wonders if humans are made entirely of pride and fear (page 23). Do you think this is true? If so, what would the implications be for the human race? How do the five children in the story reflect Madame Vileroy's musings about pride and fear? For Madame Vileroy, what other human contacts support her theory?
3. The children know that their lives are an illusion: that their talents are not gained through hard work and sacrifice, but are merely an impressive trick masterminded by Madame Vileroy. What does each give up in exchange for a "charmed" life?
4. Christian and Bicé are not willing players in Madame Vileroy's little game. How does Madame Vileroy induce and coerce them to accept her lies as truth and thereby entangle them in her snare? How do they escape her clutches?



5. On page 60, Madame Vileroy convinces Victoria that people with enough intelligence can disregard the rules; in fact, they can make their own rules. How does this belief work for Victoria? Is she successful at making her own rules? Why or why not? What other examples from the book illustrate Madame Vileroy's theory about rule-making?
6. Why does Madame Vileroy pit one child against another? As the mother of her "family," why isn't she attempting to build family bonds rather than tearing them apart? What does Madame Vileroy have to gain if the children are fighting against one another?
7. What talent does Madame Vileroy give each of the children in her care? How do they strengthen their talents? What does each one lose by gaining perfection in his or her talent?
8. On pages 221–222, Madame Vileroy reveals that she chose the children for their weaknesses. What are those weaknesses, and how do they help Madame Vileroy achieve her purpose? What is her ultimate purpose?
9. On page 232, Madame Vileroy says to Belle, "Never make the mistake of counting all lives as equal. Never." What point is she trying to make to Belle? How does Madame Vileroy prove the value of her admonition?
10. When Christian wins the show at the Hampshire Club (page 241), Madame Vileroy tells him, "If you don't get caught, you deserve everything you steal." Why is this statement false? What is Christian feeling that causes him to act out his distaste at what he has done?
11. Madame Vileroy not only walks through the city planting feelings of self-loathing and doubt into people's minds; she also moves people to commit petty theft and violence and causes strife in homes. Why does Madame Vileroy thrive on being evil and destroying all that is good?
12. When Christian is released after being locked in his energizing coffin for three days, he no longer has the black mark over his chest. Now neither he nor Bicc have the mark, while Victoria, Valentin, and Belle still do. What does this mark symbolize? What, if anything, can be done to erase the mark?
13. On page 276, Madame Vileroy states that love makes you lose control but that when love fades, control remains, growing stronger over time. She also believes that loyalty has its rewards and that success is hard won only for the weak. Besides Madame Vileroy, for whom does this sort of skewed outlook work? Show support from the book that such a belief system is valid in anyone else's life.
14. Where do Belle and Bicc derive their definitions of beauty and love from (pages 334–355)? How do they use this knowledge to help them accept what has happened to them in the home of Madame Vileroy?
15. Once Bicc discovers the truth of what Belle has done, she is devastated that Belle traded their happiness for her beauty. But Bicc quickly overcomes her anger. What is the ultimate cost of the languages Bicc has learned, and how is this ironic? How does knowing about this cost help Bicc overcome her anger at Belle?
16. The agelong battle between good and evil plays out completely in *Another Faust*. Why do Belle, Bicc, and Christian obtain the freedom to leave Madame Vileroy after making their deals with her? Why do Victoria and Valentin decide to stay?

ABOUT DANIEL AND DINA NAYERI



Born in Iran, Daniel Nayeri and Dina Nayeri are a dynamic brother and sister duo. About writing *Another Faust*, they say, "As teenagers, we wanted to achieve and do everything. Like our characters, we were immigrants, and our ideas of the future were a lot less laid-back than our friends'. In this book, we built each character from parts of ourselves, from other people we met over the years, and, of course, the original *Faust*. Along the way, we explored the fascinating line that separates accolades from genuine accomplishments."

Daniel received honors for *The Cult of Sincerity*, the first feature film to have its world premier on YouTube, and he is also an award-winning stuntman. He has worked as a book repairman, literary agent, bookstore clerk, children's librarian, story-time reader, editor, copyeditor, and professional pastry chef. He lives in New York City. Dina holds Master's degrees in both business and education from Harvard. Although she knew from an early age that her passion was writing fiction, she has worked as a consultant at McKinsey in New York City and as a project manager for Saks Fifth Avenue. She lives with her husband in Amsterdam. In her spare time, she loves to cook, travel, watch teen flicks, and write stories.



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This discussion guide was prepared by Susan Geyer, District Library Coordinator for Everman ISD in Everman, Texas.

