

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Ages
12 and up

THE EMBASSY ROW SERIES by *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR **ALLY CARTER**



 SCHOLASTIC

Extension Activities for the Embassy Row Series

In *All Fall Down*, Ms. Chancellor tells Grace, “While you are in this building, you are on American soil. This is your country. This is your home. But step outside these walls and you are a visitor in Adria—a visitor with a very important job. We must respect our host country and we must respect our neighbors. Sometimes the walls that stand between us and our neighbors are all that stand between our country and war.” Consider the role of embassies and the ambassadors who represent individual countries and research the following:

- How are embassies established?
- What rights and protections are given to countries, embassies, and ambassadors?
- How are ambassadors selected and are there term limits?
- What do embassies/countries do to guarantee their security within the hosting country?

After completing your research, share what you’ve discovered.

Working in groups, select a favorite scene from one of the novels in the Embassy Row series and, using a created social media tool (Snapchat, Twitter, or Facebook for example), retell the selected scene using a social media platform of choice. Alternatively, have students set up a “Fauxbook” profile for a specific character from Embassy Row and create a number of posts as that selected character.

Throughout the course of events in the Embassy Row series, Grace learns that she and her brother are part of the royal lineage to the Adria throne. Using library and Internet resources, select a present royal family and investigate the dynamics of royal houses, making sure to learn about the following:

- When did this family ascend to the throne?
- Are there notable figures of this family and what are their accomplishments?
- What scandals or tragedies have plagued the family?
- Did you discover any interesting trivia about the family?

Upon completion of your research, share your findings with others either informally or in a presentation.

While the novel focuses on the experiences of Grace, Ally Carter introduces us to a number of secondary characters who face their own hardships or need opportunity to have some self-awareness. Select a secondary character in Embassy Row and write a letter of advice to him/her. You can choose to be serious or funny—just make sure your advice fits the character’s needs.

As the series progresses, Grace learns more about the Society that her mother was a part of. Many cultures have exclusive and secret societies. Using a variety of research resources, explore to learn more about secret clubs or societies and select one to fully investigate, considering the following:

- How was the society founded?
- Who were the original members?
- What was their purpose and mission?
- Does the society still exist and if it does, in what ways?
- What other notable information did you discover?

Synthesize what you’ve learned in conducting this research and share it with others.

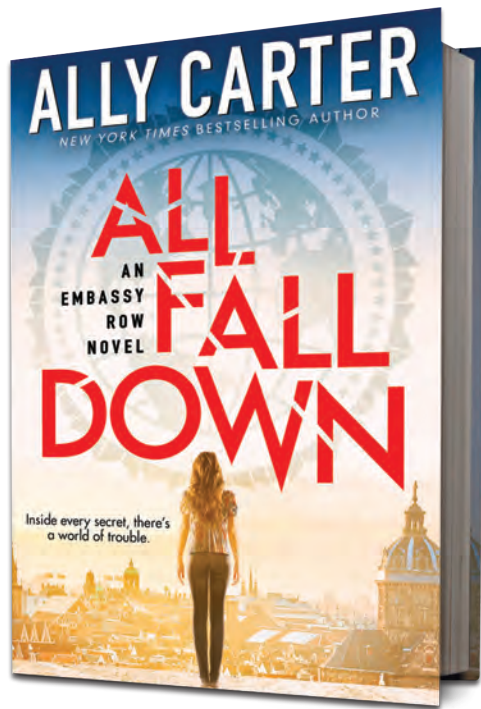
Readers are offered great insight about the experiences of Grace and Alexei from the events in the books of Embassy Row. Assume the role of one of the secondary characters and draft a diary entry detailing what you experienced and witnessed. To prepare, create an outline using the five W’s (who, what, when, where, and why). Remember to write in first person and give special attention to sensory imagery (what you saw, smelled, heard, etc.)

Common Core Connections for Discussion Questions

Reading Literature: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1, S.L. 8.1, S.L. 9–10.1, S.L. 7.2, S.L. 8.2, S.L. 9–10.2, S.L. 7.3, S.L. 8.3, S.L. 9–10.3.

Common Core Connections for Extension Activities

Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1, R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9–10.1; Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1, W. 8.1, W. 9–10.1, W. 7.2, W. 8.2, W. 9–10.2, W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9–10.3; Writing: Production and Distribution W. 7.4, W. 8.4, W. 9–10.4.



About *All Fall Down*

Grace Blakely is absolutely certain of three things: She is not crazy. Her mother was murdered. And someday, she is going to find the killer and make him pay.

As certain as Grace is about these facts, nobody else believes her—so there's no one she can completely trust. Not her grandfather, a powerful ambassador. Not her new friends, who all live on Embassy Row. Not Alexei, the Russian boy next door, who is keeping his eye on Grace for reasons she neither likes nor understands.

Everybody wants Grace to put on a pretty dress and a pretty smile, blocking out all her *unpretty* thoughts. But they can't control Grace—no more than Grace can control what she knows or what she needs to do. Her past has come back to haunt her . . . and if she doesn't stop it, Grace isn't the only one who will get hurt. Because on Embassy Row, the countries of the world stand like dominoes, and one wrong move can make them all fall down.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- As the novel opens, Grace tells Ms. Chancellor, “When I was twelve I broke my leg jumping off the wall between Canada and Germany. My brother said that the fall would probably kill me. But it just broke my right femur in three places. I totally showed him.” Based on this introduction to Grace, what can readers infer about her character? Does she seem like a typical teenaged girl to you? Explain your opinion.
- Why do Grace’s grandfather and Ms. Chancellor hope that “trouble” doesn’t have Grace’s change of address? In what ways do they believe that moving Grace to Adria will provide her a fresh start? Do you think their choice to bring her there is a wise one? Why or why not?
- Grace shares that “the embassy looks smaller” than she remembered. Why does she react that way? What does her recollection indicate? Have you ever revisited something familiar from your childhood? In what ways were your memories different than your fresh observations?
- Based on your early thoughts of Grace, how would you describe her character? Describe how those who are part of her support system view her. In what ways does their vision of who she is differ from her own self-perception? Why is it so difficult for Grace to feel like a “normal” teenager? In what ways would her life be different had her mother not died?
- Describe Grace’s reaction to seeing “the Scarred Man” for the first time? How does learning Dominic’s real involvement in her mother’s death change Grace’s perception of him?
- Using textual examples, what are some of the specific ways each of the characters in Embassy Row fights to discover the truth about Grace’s mother’s death and the larger conspiracy at play? How does this shared quest impact their relationships with her and with each other?
- Describe Noah, Lila, Rosie, and Alexei. What makes them dynamic characters? What are their greatest strengths as people? What are their weaknesses? Using examples from the text, support your position. Are they the type of people you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
- Noah takes Grace for a “real tour” of Embassy Row and Grace thinks, “He’s looking at me like I’m a normal girl, and that stops me. No one has looked at me that way in a long, long time.” Why is having this “normal” experience so good for Grace? How does building these relationships with Noah and the other teens help her begin to slowly heal from the trauma she’s experienced?
- *All Fall Down* is told in first person narrative; how would the story be different if someone other than Grace were also telling it? Do you think changing the point of view would make the story better or worse? Why?
- Grace’s grandfather tells Alexei, “Grace has had a difficult time of it, young man. She’s not the same Gracie who used to tag after you and Jamie, I’m afraid.” Do you think the ambassador’s assessment of Grace is accurate? How has she changed? Why might her grandfather want to keep the two of them apart?
- In what ways does Grace’s grief present itself as a character in the novel and to what degree does this loss play a significant role throughout the story? In considering the other characters, what are the ways in which each of them deals with their pain from the loss of Grace’s mother or their own personal hurt?

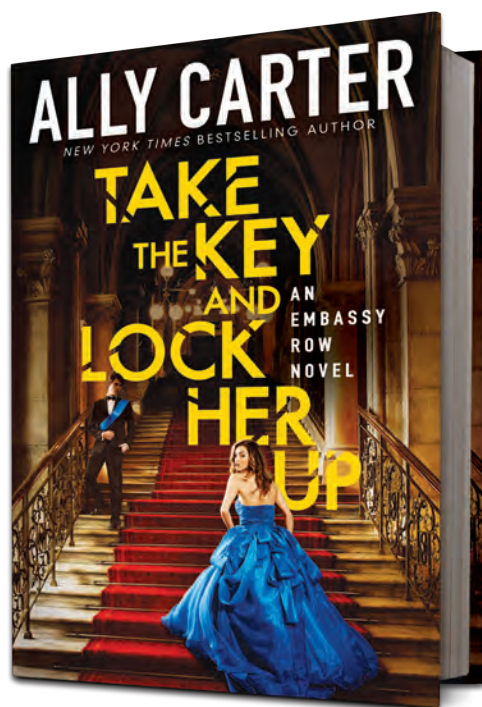


About *See How They Run*

Master of intrigue Ally Carter returns with *See How They Run*, Book #2 of the *New York Times* bestselling series Embassy Row. A clever mix of international intrigue, psychological thrills, and swoon-worthy cross-cultural crushes, *See How They Run* continues the story of Grace, the rebellious granddaughter of a powerful ambassador. After spending years trying to unravel the mysterious circumstances of her mother's death, Grace uncovered a terrifying worldwide conspiracy. Now she finds herself in the crosshairs. Will Grace fall into the traps set for her or will she reveal the truth, when both choices threaten to destroy her entire world?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- After Noah tells Grace he doesn't trust Dominic, Grace tells him, "He's just a man with a scar. Not all people with scars are evil." How does the knowledge of the real identity of the Scarred Man impact Grace? In what ways does Dominic become an integral part of her life? Do you believe knowing of his relationship with her mom complicates matters?
- From what you learn in *See How They Run*, describe the Society. What makes this secret organization so powerful and potentially dangerous? Do you think it's in Grace's best interest to become more involved with it?
- Do you think their grandfather and his staff treat Jamie differently than Grace? If so, in what ways? In your opinion, what's their motivation to do so? Do you agree with that choice?
- Jamie tells Grace, "You're my little sister. Protecting you is my job, so I'm not going to apologize for not telling you the truth." Do you believe Jamie made the right decision to keep the details of her involvement in their mother's death a secret from Grace? Why or why not?
- How does Grace's relationship with Alexei impact his relationship with her brother, Jamie? In what ways does the death of Jamie's friend Spence increase the tension between them all?
- After Grace tells Noah, "I was wrong, you know. About the Scarred Man. I was wrong for years, and Jamie knows it. He knows that finding out the truth has been hard on me. He's worried about me." Noah replies by sharing, "Just so you know, he's not the only one." Do you think Noah is smart to be worried about Grace? In what other ways does Noah prove that he is a good friend to Grace? What about Grace's other friends on Embassy Row—how do they show their support of her?
- In discussing people leaving Adria after World War II, Grace's grandfather shares, "A lot of people left then. Those were dark days of Adria. But they passed, I'm happy to say. The dark days . . . they always pass." Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not? Though his comment is part of the general dinner conversation, why does Grace feel as if her grandfather is speaking directly to her with this statement?
- In what way does the tension between Alexei and Spence prove to have disastrous results? Do you think Grace is right to feel at fault for Spence's death? In what ways does it increase tensions between the government officials from Russia, the US, and Adria?
- Consider the tradition of the Festival of the Fortnight in Adria. What did you think of this dark tradition being celebrated? Ultimately, what makes it such a dangerous place for Grace and Jamie to be?
- In what ways does Dominic continue to protect Grace and those she cares about most? Reflect on his motivation for doing so—what can be inferred by his choices?
- After Grace tries to get Jamie to return to West Point and his life, Jamie tells his sister that he doesn't believe her to be okay but shares, "I don't blame you, Gracie. You know that, don't you? I don't blame you for what happened to Mom." Why isn't his absolution enough for Grace? What do you believe it will take for Grace to forgive herself for the death of their mother?
- Analyze the ending of *See How They Run*; based on how the novel closes, predict what will happen in *Take the Key and Lock Her Up*, the final installment in the Embassy Row series.



About *Take the Key and Lock Her Up*

Grace Blakely, the whip-smart protagonist of the Embassy Row series, has been desperate to find out the truth about her mother's murder for years. Grace's search led her to unearth an ancient web connecting international spies, assassins, and royal families. Grace has exposed the truth and made herself the next target of the conspiracy. Who can she trust on Embassy Row? Will she escape the mysterious cabal or become their next victim?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- When the novel opens, Grace observes Jamie and Alexei sparring; why does witnessing Alexei training a recovering Jamie upset Grace so much? In what ways is she keenly aware of what she almost lost?
- Throughout the novels of Embassy Row, many characters exhibit acts of bravery. Consider the individual actions of these characters. Who do you believe to be the most courageous?
- How does the appearance of the prime minister and learning she's been searching for Grace and Jamie prove the great danger they are in? What do you believe she and the Society ultimately expect of them?
- At the start of the series, Ms. Chancellor tells Grace, "I would like for us to be friends." Given what transpires while Grace is in Adria, how does Grace's relationship with Ms. Chancellor change throughout the course of the novels?
- Though readers never meet Grace's mother directly, a great deal of insight about her character is established through the recollections of other characters. Based on that information, what kind of person do you believe Grace's mother to have been?
- In considering Grace's growth, what do you feel she has come to learn at the end of the novel? In your opinion, what insights are gained by the experiences she's had so far?
- Upon visiting the remains of the antique store where their mother died, Jamie tells Grace, "Dad never sold it. It's still the same. I think he . . . I think he was afraid to change anything without her permission, you know? It's still hers. In his mind, it will always be hers." How does visiting the place where their mother died ultimately impact both Grace and Jamie? Given what they discover about their mother's work and research, do you feel like this visit was worthwhile?
- Considering Grace's perspective, in what ways is Embassy Row a series about things that have been lost? What does she find along the way?
- How does Grace's relationship with her family and friends change throughout the course of the Embassy Row series? How does learning the truth about her mother's death and her role in the Society impact their lives and future?
- As the Society members determine what their position will be in regard to helping Grace, one whispers, "Just like her mother . . ." In what ways is that so? Do you find the reactions of the individual members who serve as part of the Council of Elders of the Society surprising? Are they right to feel the way they do?
- Grace tells the Council, "I'm kind of hard to protect—even from myself, if you haven't already figured that out." What do you believe she means by this statement? Do you agree with her self-assessment? Why or why not?
- How does learning Princess Ann's real intentions motivate Grace and allow her to focus on learning the truth and making sure justice gets served? In your opinion, how effective is Grace's solution to the issue of her lineage and her ties to the throne?
- From your perspective, what are the moral questions raised by this series? How are grief, anxiety, and self-doubt handled by Ally Carter? In your opinion, in what ways do these serious elements enrich the story of Embassy Row? In what ways is she able to take these books and deftly make Grace's story into one of survival, new beginnings, and hope?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ally Carter is the *New York Times* bestselling author of many popular YA books, including Embassy Row. She writes about spies, thieves, and teenagers in her other books as well, including *Heist Society*, *Uncommon Criminals*, and the popular Gallagher Girls series. She lives in Oklahoma where her life is either very ordinary or the best deep-cover legend ever. Visit her at www.allycarter.com and on Twitter @OfficiallyAlly.



THE EMBASSY ROW SERIES

This compelling and thrilling series focuses on Grace, who can best be described as a daredevil, an Army brat, and a rebel. She is also the only granddaughter of perhaps the most powerful ambassador in the world, and Grace has spent every summer of her childhood running across the roofs of Embassy Row.

Now, at age sixteen, she's come back to stay—in order to solve the mystery of her mother's death. In the process, she uncovers an international conspiracy of unsettling proportions, and must choose her friends and watch her foes carefully if she and the world are to be saved.



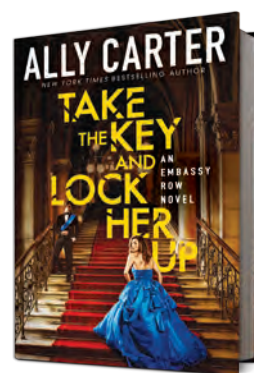
All Fall Down
(Embassy Row Book #1)

Scholastic Press • Ages 12 & up
Hardcover: 978-0-545-65474-6 • \$17.99
Paperback: 978-0-545-65480-7 • \$9.99



See How They Run
(Embassy Row Book #2)

Scholastic Press • Ages 12 & up
Hardcover: 978-0-545-65484-5 • \$17.99
Paperback: 978-0-545-65493-7 • \$9.99



Take the Key and Lock Her Up
(Embassy Row Book #3)

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Hardcover • 978-0-545-65495-1 • \$17.99

All books also available as ebook and audio.

PRAISE FOR THE EMBASSY ROW SERIES

A New York Times Bestseller

"Carter knows how to construct a gripping thriller."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"Action packed and meticulously plotted, *All Fall Down* keeps readers guessing."—*Booklist*

"With its intrigue and clever plot twists, this series opener will leave readers hungering for more."—*School Library Journal*

"Will appeal not only to psychological-thriller fans, but to those who want a little glamour, some A-list social politics, and a bit of high school nastiness mixed in with their suspense."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Readers will love this first book in what promises to be an exciting, thrilling mystery series."—*Voice of Youth Advocates*

"A clever mix of international intrigue, psychological thrills, and swoon-worthy cross-cultural crushes."—*Justine magazine*

"An immensely alluring novel."—*RT*

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor in Library Science Department in the College of Education at Sam Houston State University who specializes in children's and young adult literature.