

The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks Study Guide

**The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks by
E. Lockhart**

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Plot Summary

E. Lockhart's "The Disreputable History of Frankie Laundau Banks" is a young adult novel that follows the adventures of Frances (Frankie) Landau-Banks, a fifteen-year-old sophomore at the prestigious Alabaster Academy in Massachusetts. The summer between her freshman and sophomore year, she fills out in all the right places, and back at school, catches the attention of Matthew Livingston, a senior boy whom she begins dating.

She discovers that Matthew is a member of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, a secret society on campus responsible for lighthearted pranks and mischief. Frankie's own father was a member when he was in school, and Matthew's closest friends -Alpha and Dean- are also members. At the same time, she takes a class about cities and learns about secret societies and their functions.

Frankie comes to envy the bond between Matthew and his fellow Hounds and wants the same kind of bond. She is put off by Alpha, who seems to be at war with her for Matthew's time. When Alpha goes home for a few days, Frankie creates a fake e-mail address for Alpha and uses it to direct the Order of the Basset Hounds to play a series of pranks. Yet, the final prank -the theft and later return of a guppy statue- goes too far, and Alpha is accused of spearheading the stunt.

Frankie confesses what she has done to Matthew, who breaks up with her immediately and goes to the headmaster. Frankie is put on academic probation as is Alpha. Some people shun Frankie while others think that she is legendary.

A Piece of Evidence

A Piece of Evidence Summary

E. Lockhart's "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau Banks" is a young adult novel that follows the adventures of Frances (Frankie) Landau-Banks, a fifteen year-old sophomore at the prestigious Alabaster Academy in Massachusetts.

In a letter to Headmaster Richmond and the Board of Directors at Alabaster Preparatory Academy in Massachusetts, Frankie Landau-Banks takes responsibility for a series of incidents created by Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. She says she is the ringleader and is alone responsible for what has happened, despite what Porter Welsch states in his confession.

Frankie furthermore will not name names of other members of the Order. She contends that much of what she has done has been social-criticism.

A Piece of Evidence Analysis

E. Lockhart begins her book in a very interesting and attention-catching way with a confessional letter. The letter reveals that the protagonist of the book has been involved in a number of elaborately-named events and incidents that have taken place at school. Furthermore, Frankie takes sole credit for these events and incidents, leading the reader to wonder how widespread these incidents are.

Swan

Swan Summary

Frankie and her family live in New Jersey. The summer after Frankie's freshman year, she fills out in all the right places. Frankie had been a scrawny girl who got by at Alabaster Preparatory Academy by being the little sister of Zada. Zada had watched out for Frankie. Frankie joins the debate team through Zada. Frankie has furthermore never been in love.

Swan Analysis

The reader receives background information about Frankie who transforms from a slightly geeky girl into a knock-out debater over the course of the summer. The reader also learns that Frankie is closest to her sister Zada and Zada will prove important in the coming chapters.



A Chance Encounter that Would Prove Seminal

A Chance Encounter that Would Prove Seminal Summary

After Zada goes off to Berkeley for college, Frankie and her mother, Ruth, go to the Jersey Shore to spend time with uncles and cousins. Frankie tries to convince her mother to let her go off on her own to the center of town. Uncle Ben cautions against this, because Atlantic City isn't far away, and Uncle Paul thinks Frankie should be allowed to go on her own. Ruth, who calls Frankie "Bunny Rabbit", disagrees. Frankie instead decides to go down the boardwalk.

On the boardwalk, Frankie gets some frozen custard and meets a boy going into twelfth grade. She gives the boy the rest of her custard. The boy tells her he lives in New York City, and Frankie tells the boy where she attends school. Frankie's phone rings, and her mother is looking for her because one of the cousins has stepped on a jellyfish.

A Chance Encounter that Would Prove Seminal Analysis

The ocean reveals the difference between Frankie's opinion of herself, and the opinions of her relatives. Her mother treats Frankie as if she is still in middle school, whereas Frankie knows she is older and can be independent and act responsibly on her own. Frankie wins out against her mother and goes to the boardwalk in nothing but a bikini, which she later regrets. She meets a mysterious boy whose appearance is not an accident.



Old Boy

Old Boy Summary

Frankie's father is named Franklin and he was hoping that Frankie would be a boy. When she wasn't, Franklin names her Frances, calling her "Frankie" for short. Frankie's parents are divorced. Her father is an atheist medical professional, and her mother is a conservative Jew. It was through her father's insistence means Zada and Frankie will attend Alabaster and then Harvard, the way he did.

Frankie's father also wants her to get in with the right people. Frankie was himself a member of a secret society on campus. As Frankie's parents drive her to school, she wonders if Matthew Livingston will notice her in the coming year.

Old Boy Analysis

In an example of patriarchal dominance at home, Frankie's father Franklin has decided that his daughters will attend Alabaster Preparatory School the way that he did. Readers also discover that Franklin wanted Zada and Frankie to attend Harvard, but Zada has opted to attend Berkeley instead. This demonstrates to Frankie that not everything has to be the way her father expects it to be, and proves consequential later on with respect to the patriarchal hierarchy at Alabaster.

Alabaster

Alabaster Summary

Porter Welsch was Frankie's boyfriend from October through May of the previous year. Her roommate is Trish, a blonde, friendly girl. Her boyfriend is Artie, a member of the Audio Visual Technology Club, and because of this, he carries keys to most rooms on campus. The campus is wired for wireless internet. The campus also contains a number of buildings, used and unused, and all buildings are connected by underground steam tunnels. In the main building, there are paintings of prominent writers, teachers, headmasters, and board presidents -all of them men.

Alabaster Analysis

In this chapter, readers discover more about Frankie's romantic past, as well as more information about the school campus. All of the information that E. Lockhart provides in a numbered list in this chapter is pertinent and crucial to the coming chapters. Readers should therefore pay careful attention to this information.

The Geek Club Conglomerate

The Geek Club Conglomerate Summary

All of the clubs considered geek clubs -Chess Club, Spy Club, Science Olympiad, Horticulture Club, and others- all came together to pool money to throw a party to raise awareness for themselves, and to encourage new members to join in October of Frankie's freshman year. Debaters are not considered geeky in the same way as the other geek groups. The debate team is invited to join, and Frankie makes the point that they would be outnumbered by the other clubs if they chose not to join, and it would be better not to anger the other clubs by attending the party. A vote is taken, and the debaters join the party.

At the party, Frankie meets Porter. They date until May, when Frankie walks in on him fooling around with a junior named Bess Montgomery.

The Geek Club Conglomerate Analysis

Most of Frankie's insecurity about herself comes from her relationship with Porter, who not only was demanding, but cheated on her. Frankie's insecurity and her desire not to be alone, largely stem from this event and will prove some insight into the future.



Matthew

Matthew Summary

Frankie likes Matthew Livingston, a senior with wavy black hair and black-rimmed glasses. He is well-proportioned, hijacks golf carts, has late-night parties, is editor of the school paper, and fifth seat on the crew team. When she catches sight of him the second day of school while riding her bike, she stops paying attention and crashes. Matthew helps her up.

Matthew introduces himself, but does not remember meeting Frankie the year before. He begins flirting with her, and continues walking with her.

Matthew Analysis

Frankie begins talking to Matthew, a popular guy on campus, a senior, editor of the paper, and a member of a wealthy family. He claims not to remember meeting Frankie the year before, but Frankie isn't so much bothered by this because he is talking to her. Matthew's entry into the story provides a new dimension, because Frankie, who is not only seeking maturity, but is very mature herself, finds the same level of maturity in Matthew.

Alpha

Alpha Summary

Alessandro Tesorieri, nicknamed "Alpha" because of his alpha dog status, is a friend of Matthew's. Alpha spent the last year in New York Public schools because his single mother couldn't afford to send him to Alabaster. He has come back on scholarships. Matthew explains that Alpha enjoys breaking rules, and so he enjoys Alabaster. Frankie discovers to her surprise that the boy she met on the boardwalk is Alpha. He is in the gym with a mutual friend named Dean.

Dean likewise does not remember Frankie, and it makes her angry. But it also appeals to her how self-confident the three of them are.

Alpha Analysis

Frankie discovers the boy she met at the beach on the boardwalk is actually Alpha, a legendary, popular student. Alpha is similar in many ways to Frankie, and she grudgingly admires him. This admiration is piqued when Matthew explains that Alpha enjoys breaking rules. It is another step in the evolution of Frankie's coming plans.



The Ladies

The Ladies Summary

Frankie tells Trish about meeting Alpha over the summer. Frankie wonders if she likes Alpha, or Matthew. Trish believes that both boys have their eye on Frankie.

The Ladies Analysis

Trish, Frankie's roommate, is also Frankie's friend. They talk about Alpha and Matthew not remembering her, and Trish believes they do, but she also believes that both boys have their eyes on Frankie. Frankie's feelings are not yet clear, but she doesn't wholly accept the fact that both boys are after her.



The Panopticon

The Panopticon Summary

Though Frankie doesn't see much of Matthew for the next few weeks, she can't stop thinking about him. She also takes a class called "Cities, Art, and Protest", taught by Ms. Jensson. They study city planning, architecture criticism, a history of Paris, and learn about the panopticon, a design of philosopher Jeremy Bentham's, which allows a guard to watch over prisoners without the prisoners realizing when they are or are not being watched.

She reads Michel Foucault, who argues Western society is the same way- that it feels as if someone is always watching you.

The Panopticon Analysis

E. Lockhart's ability to effortlessly include philosophy and ideas into the novel begins here with the use of Bentham's Panopticon, and Michel Foucault's idea that people are always being watched and judged. Frankie doesn't like being watched or judged and this dislike of being judged will influence her future activities.

The Invitations

The Invitations Summary

Pale blue envelopes begin appearing around campus. In the library, she sees Dean, Matthew, Alpha, and another boy named Callum all talking. Matthew tells her she should check her mailbox, and in it, Frankie discovers a pale blue envelope. She has been invited by Matthew Livingston to the golf course ten minutes after curfew on Saturday night.

The boys are members of the Bassets, a secret society that had prominent alumni.

The Invitations Analysis

Frankie is invited to a party being hosted by the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, an all-male secret society on campus. Matthew, specifically, has invited Frankie. She is thrilled by this. She has also taken her first real step into Matthew's world, beyond meeting his friends, because he has invited her to be a part of it.



The Woods

The Woods Summary

There is not much security at Alabaster. Frankie tells Trish about the party, but Trish is unimpressed. She has been to some parties, and doesn't like them because all that happens is guys get drunk and show off.

She and Matthew meet up and hold hands as they travel. Frankie learns that Alpha always has a girlfriend, and that he is hard to impress. Matthew makes Frankie promise not to tell anyone that he and Alpha organized the party.

The Woods Analysis

Readers see that, despite their friendship, there is marked difference between Frankie and Trish. Trish is a more traditional girl, who prefers to stay home instead of attending parties and watching guys get drunk. Frankie is more enamored with the idea of being invited to a party. She is even more enamored when Matthew confides in Frankie that he and Alpha organized the party.



The Golf Course

The Golf Course Summary

Within an hour, nearly everyone is cold. People are drinking, smoking, and walking around. Matthew is making rounds, and Frankie has no one to talk to. Frankie begins to realize that forgetfulness -such Dean forgetting he had also known Frankie the year before-is a power play.

Frankie at last talks to Star, Dean's boyfriend. Claudia, one of Star's friends, comes over to stand with them. Then they both leave Frankie alone. When Matthew walks Frankie back, they kiss.

There are three kinds of girls: girls like Trish, who prefer feminine and domestic things; girls like Star, who hang with the boys despite boredom, because they are girlfriends or could be girlfriends; and the third group of girls who embrace guy activities. Frankie falls into none of these categories. She wonders if she had thrown the party, how could it have been different.

The Golf Course Analysis

Attending the party allows Frankie to think about the different kinds of girls there are. She draws a clear distinction between herself and Trish, herself and Star, and herself and the girls who embrace guy activities in order to be with the guys. Frankie falls into none of these categories and she finds that the party on the golf course is far from exciting.

A Garlic Knot

A Garlic Knot Summary

Alpha comes to Frankie's room the next morning, inviting her to get pizza. Matthew is waiting in the car. Frankie doesn't want to get caught, but Alpha pressures her into going. Frankie gets dressed and hops in with Matthew and Alpha. Alpha smokes a cigarette as they drive. They talk about pizza and girls. At the pizza parlor, the guy who makes pizza hasn't come in to work, so all that is available are garlic knots. Matthew, Alpha, and Frankie get some to go.

Alpha mentions custard, and it seems to Frankie that he is letting her know he remembers the day on the boardwalk.

Frankie talks to Zada on the phone about Matthew. Zada says Matthew tries to compensate for his wealth by trying to be normal, but then invites random people to his house in Martha's Vineyard in order to be the center of attention.

A Garlic Knot Analysis

Frankie, who is further drawn into Matthew's world by going out to get garlic knots with him and Alpha, questions her sister about Matthew. Zada does not have a high opinion of Matthew, but Frankie thinks Zada is thinking too much. Frankie's affections for Matthew are obscuring her ability to objectively look at him, and this will prove telling in the future.

A Triangle

A Triangle Summary

Alpha's girlfriend (the "she-wolf") is Elizabeth Heywood, who has also been to Matthew's house on the Vineyard. Elizabeth is a former child actor, popular, and a floater -she doesn't fit in with just one group. Frankie begins eating lunch with Matthew at the senior table.

Frankie also learns although that Matthew welcomes people into his own world, he doesn't enter anyone else's. He rarely goes to Frankie's dorm room, for example. Frankie also notices that Matthew begins ditching her to hang out with Alpha instead, who Frankie theorizes is marking his territory. Yet nevertheless she accepts this, and enjoys hanging out around all the guys as well.

A Triangle Analysis

Frankie begins to see that there are areas of darkness in her relationship with Matthew. He is self-centered, doesn't care to understand others, and ditches her to hang out with Alpha. Frankie, who couldn't see his attitude at first, is now beginning to realize that Matthew is not everything she thought he was, but that is not enough to make her want to break up with him.



The Neglected Positive

The Neglected Positive Summary

Among the things that contributes to Frankie's behavior is a book she is reading for fun called "The Code of the Woosters" by P.H. Wodehouse. The novel has to do with a club of rich young men called the Drones who have fun and play jokes. One of the words Wodehouse uses is "gruntled" and Frankie uses it to ask Matthew to kiss him so she won't be "disgruntled". But Matthew shows her it is not a neglected positive. It annoys her that Matthew has to prove he is right.

The Neglected Positive Analysis

Another flaw in Matthew's character appears: his need to always be right. This anger Frankie, but she believes she might just be being immature, and decides to push her anger under the rug. Also telling to Frankie's future is a novel she reads about a secret club that plays pranks and jokes.

Cheese Fries

Cheese Fries Summary

A series of e-mails are transcribed for the reader between Porter and Frankie. Porter apologizes for what happened with Bess and proposes to meet Frankie for food at the Front Porch on Wednesday. Trish tells Frankie to tell Matthew about the meeting, which she does. Matthew doesn't want Frankie to go, and is jealous. Matthew tells her he will let her go see Porter, which angers Frankie.

Cheese Fries Analysis

Matthew emerges as the dominant member of the relationship. Frankie, who tells Matthew that she is going to meet her ex-boyfriend, has Matthew turn the situation around on her by telling her she is allowed to go see her ex-boyfriend. This further annoys Frankie and helps feed her impulse to want to break out of the rules and out from under Matthew's dominance.

The T-Shirt

The T-Shirt Summary

In Matthew's room, Frankie notices a basset figurine, worn with age, that she touches and Matthew tells her not to. Frankie is a little hurt, so Matthew gives her his Superman T-Shirt to wear.

When Frankie tells Zada about the t-shirt, Zada says it is Matthew's way of marking his territory. Frankie believes the t-shirt is an act of submission.

The T-Shirt Analysis

Frankie is enamored with the gift of a t-shirt that Matthew gives her, and believes it is his way of saying he is sorry. Zada believes that it is Matthew's way of marking his territory, and exerting more influence Frankie. Frankie's happiness with the shirt, and with Matthew, obscures her objectivity in the situation.

The Suicide Club

The Suicide Club Summary

Ms. Jenson is attempting to rouse student interest for term papers, and Frankie reads an article about the Suicide Club of San Francisco. They take their name from a Robert Louis Stevenson short story about a small society of people who have agreed to kill themselves due to social restrictions. The San Franciscans club has nothing to do with suicide, but the abandon of restrictions. It is later renamed the Cacophony Society. They have a number of points, including going to places where they cannot be watched, and doing things to infuriate watchers.

She writes the paper about them. Among the things they do is break into abandoned buildings and dress as clowns for work commutes in the morning.

The Suicide Club Analysis

Frankie learns more about groups and societies that break rules or play harmless pranks -or both. This further inspires her, and further guides her character. Her understanding of protest through her class, and through her research, will prove especially important when she is in a position to use her knowledge.

Monster

Monster Summary

Frankie meets Porter for lunch. She feels insecure, the way she did when she found out that Porter had been cheating on her. Porter tells Frankie not to let Matthew take advantage of her. This angers Frankie, who lashes out at Porter, who leaves. Frankie feels better, and worse, for acting like a monster.

Monster Analysis

Frankie's insecurity again rises to the surface when she meets Porter, who warns her against Matthew. She feels insecure because of what Porter did to her, and Porter's warnings about Matthew further unnerve Frankie. She lashes out at Porter because of this. She is not as emotionally mature as she believes herself to be.

The Loyal Order

The Loyal Order Summary

The Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds is for rich, popular, or cool kids on campus. They aren't particularly defiant or ill-intentioned. They focus mainly on how to get beer and get into and out of dorms without being caught. It also cemented friendship between them.

The previous year, she'd stumbled upon the Bassets swimming naked in the pond, and discovered Matthew was the leader of the Bassets because Alpha was away in New York.

The Loyal Order Analysis

What Frankie knows about the Basset Hounds is discussed in this chapter. She realizes that the Basset Hounds are not living up to their full potential. Instead of using their power to protest and to make points, the Bassets are mostly concerned with getting beer and sneaking into and out of girls' dorms. She believes the Basset Hounds are not living up to their full potential, and this proves to be galvanizing for Frankie.



A Sea Horse

A Sea Horse Summary

Frankie, at lunch, notices that Matthew and the others are late. Students are not allowed to sit at tables outside their own grade unless invited by students of that grade. Frankie breaks this rule and sits by herself at the senior table waiting for Matthew. When Matthew shows up, Frankie is aware that Matthew and Alpha have been arguing about her -whether or not Alpha is jealous of Frankie taking Matthew, or Matthew taking Frankie, she doesn't know.

They also discuss the idea of groups, of males acting independently of one another, and females sticking together. The girls at the table, Star and Elizabeth, are unhappy with guys who rag on each other.

Frankie worries that her sitting at the senior table has something to do with the division between Matthew and Alpha.

A Sea Horse Analysis

As time goes on, not only does Frankie worry about her relationship with Matthew, but she realizes that there is something going on between Matthew and Alpha that she worries also has to do with her. Frankie's first small act of rebellion -sitting on her own at the senior's table without being invited- is a harbinger for future acts of rebellion and protest.

Star

Star Summary

Star and Dean break up suddenly, and Star relates this to Frankie after history class the next day. Star also relates that now because she and Dean are broken up, the seniors act as if she doesn't exist. Star is horrified with how sudden it happened, and Frankie worries the same thing could happen to her.

Star Analysis

Frankie's insecurity again bubbles to the surface after Dean breaks up with Star. They have been in a wonderful relationship, and the sudden end to it makes Frankie feel as if she is also expendable -just the way she was when she dated Porter.

A Broken Date

A Broken Date Summary

Frankie decides to go see "The Muppet Movie" with Matthew at the campus theater instead of going to the Geek Club party. She and Trish get together to paint nails and dress up for their evenings. They talk about Frankie's bout with Porter, and Trish theorizes that maybe Porter still likes Frankie. Frankie doesn't think so.

Frankie meets up with Matthew, who breaks his date with her because he says Alpha has reminded him of a prior obligation. Frankie thinks that Matthew is mad at him, and the breaking of the date is a consequence. She kisses Matthew, and deliberately tells him it's alright, that she will go to the Geek party with Trish and Porter in order to make Matthew jealous.

She sees Matthew leave and then follows him.

A Broken Date Analysis

Frankie's insecurity only increases when Matthew breaks a date with her to go hang with his buddies. Frankie believes that her small act of rebellion in the cafeteria is being punished. This encourages her to follow Matthew when he leaves. Whereas Frankie seems to be in a war to keep Matthew's attention with Alpha, Frankie is also engaged in a mental war with Matthew (who is unaware of it) in order not to become the submissive party in the relationship.

The Old Theater

The Old Theater Summary

Frankie follows Matthew to the old theater. She climbs in through a window, moves around the building, and hears the boys in the auditorium. They are discussing what to do for Halloween. Matthew reports that last year, a pumpkin carved in the shape of a basset hound was left at the headmaster's office. Alpha thinks this isn't enough.

Alpha also mentions two important things. The first is that there is no written history of the Basset Hound Order (which Frankie knows to be untrue because her own father was a member, and several others had told her about the history); and the younger members must carry out the prank so the older members aren't in danger of not being able to get to college.

It is also discussed that Porter will be the future Basset Hound King, which makes Frankie realize that Porter has a connection to Matthew. She realizes Matthew has seen through her ruse, and goes to the Geek party to say she had been there. She also wonders why Porter had warned her about Matthew.

The Old Theater Analysis

Frankie listens to the Hounds plot for Halloween and decides they are still not living up to their potential. She discovers, further, that Porter is a member of the Loyal Order. This means that Matthew has seen through her Geek Club ruse, and that she has automatically lost one particular battle.

The Oath

The Oath Summary

Frankie knows a war has been declared for control of Matthew between her and Alpha. Alpha invites Frankie and Trish to sit at the senior table, which they do. Matthew has no idea Frankie has spied on their meeting.

Frankie begins following Matthew around campus. She discovers that the meetings bond all of the members in friendship and togetherness, and she wants to be a part of it. She also realizes that the oath that the boys recite before every meeting is a riddle to where the history is hidden.

The Oath Analysis

Frankie, for all of her intelligence, realizes the Basset Hound oath is not just an oath, but a riddle to the location of the hidden history of the order. At the same time, Frankie recognizes that there is indeed a war going on for Matthew's attention between her and Alpha. This makes her angry with Alpha and this anger will prove consequential shortly.



The Crown of Alabaster

The Crown of Alabaster Summary

Frankie cuts all of her classes the next day to begin a search. She goes to the Founder's House on campus, which was one of the first two original buildings and houses books, china, and a widow's walk at the top to see the entire campus and look west, which is what the oath directs. When she gets to the top, she finds Alpha waiting there, looking west.

The Crown of Alabaster Analysis

Through her intelligence, Frankie begins piecing together clues and following leads. She ultimately heads to the Founder's House, where she can see the entire campus and look west. She is startled there by Alpha's presence, which serves as an ill-omen. This omen will be fully explored in the coming chapters.



Look to the West, Boys

Look to the West, Boys Summary

Frankie is worried Alpha has figured out that she has figured out the oath is a code, so she pretends she has come up to see the changing colors in the trees and to survey the campus for her Cities class.

They talk about the signs that tell students to keep off the grass. Alpha is surprised the sign doesn't annoy Frankie. But Frankie says that if she wants to rebel, she doesn't want to do something minor. Downstairs, Matthew meets them. Frankie goes back inside to get her books, and she overhears Alpha questioning Matthew about how much Frankie knows, but Matthew denies she knows anything at all.

Look to the West, Boys Analysis

Frankie is now in something of a three-way war. In the first war, she is struggling with Alpha for control of Matthew. In the second war, she is struggling with Matthew for dominance in their relationship. In the third, undeclared war, she is in a struggle against Alpha to find the hidden history book.



Bind it Tight with Sticking Plaster

Bind it Tight with Sticking Plaster Summary

Artie has keys to the Founder's House because he has to fix the film projector located there occasionally. Trish agrees to get the keys from Artie without his knowing, and does so on the condition Frankie not lose them or copy them. Frankie takes the keys and

At the top of the widow's walk at the Founder's House, Frankie finds a bronze map of the campus, Searching around it as the oath instructs, she finds a small, leather-bound notebook: "The Disreputable History of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds".

Bind it Tight with Sticking Plaster Analysis

Frankie ultimately finds the "The Disreputable History of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds". One small act of rebellion -sitting at a table without being invited- has increased to breaking in to a building and copying keys. In order to find the History, she has broken several more rules, which will ultimately affect her in the future.

History

History Summary

"The Disreputable History of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds" is written in small print by different people. It records the history of the Hounds from their founding in 1951 until 1975, when most of the Hounds detailed getting high on marijuana. According to the last entry, Frankie's own father had written the oath to where the History was hidden, but had done it while stoned, so the oath came out vague and explains why the book was lost for thirty years.

Entries include hiding the stone guppy statue on campus, setting up a tent with nothing inside that said "Do Not Enter", and posting phony rules in the cafeteria that tells students to only walk on black tiles. Other pranks include toilet papering the headmaster's car and putting Jell-O in toilets. Frankie is struck by the sense of unity between the generations of Basset Hounds, and wants the same feeling of not being alone.

At the back of the notebook is a key to Hazleton, the library.

History Analysis

Frankie learns about the history of the Basset Hounds by reading the "Disreputable History". She is the first person to have seen the book since the year her father, high on marijuana, hid the book. Many of the exploits contained in the history strike Frankie as interesting or exciting, and they also serve to be inspiring to her. Furthermore, Frankie discovers a key in the back of the book which opens the way into the steam tunnels.



English Muffins

English Muffins Summary

Alpha goes home to visit his mother before Halloween, because his mother misses him so much. Frankie goes onto her laptop and creates an e-mail address called "TheAlphaDog" which she plans to use in some way for a Halloween prank, but how, she does not yet know. That night, a plan comes to her, and she Googles the word "parachute".

English Muffins Analysis

One very important event comes into play for Frankie: Alpha is leaving campus for a few days. She creates a fictitious e-mail address in his name, and then begins looking for a parachute online. All of her studies and research is slowly coming together.

How to Get Through a Closed Door

How to Get Through a Closed Door Summary

For her essay, Frankie writes about how underclassman, barred from senior skip day at the California Institute of Technology, would booby-trap or prank the rooms of seniors. The seniors respond by leaving their doors unlocked, but by getting the underclassmen to perform riddles or pranks on their honor to get into the rooms. In so doing, the seniors get the underclassmen to pull off their pranks for them.

How to Get Through a Closed Door Analysis

In a pivotal moment, Frankie learns and writes about how people can play pranks on themselves without realizing it. This proves intrinsic to Frankie's grand scheme.

Halloween

Halloween Summary

Writing from the e-mail address she has created, Frankie tells Matthew, Dean, and the others that their Halloween prank needs to be changed. Frankie tells each other Bassets to acquire something in particular, pay with cash, and do not get caught. She leaves copies to all the keys she has been given under Matthew's door. She names the mission "In Ladies We Trust."

On Halloween morning, students discover paintings of the founders with bras attached to them, statues wearing underwear, and the dome of the library covered in a parachute. The top of the dome is painted pink. A note has also been delivered to the mailboxes of all students and faculty members, saying that the campus has dressed up for the holiday. At the bottom of the notes are basset hound pictures.

By the afternoon, all the garments have been collected by the maintenance staff.

Halloween Analysis

Frankie's plan comes to action. She e-mails the Basset Hounds with instructions, and has them carry out a prank for her. Decorating the campus with bras is an attack on the patriarchal control of the academy, and is an attack on patriarchal control in general. The Basset Hounds have unwittingly just made a political statement against themselves without realizing it.

A Vamp

A Vamp Summary

Frankie spies on the next meeting of the Hounds when Alpha returns. The Hounds congratulate Alpha. Alpha takes all of the credit. Frankie is enraged, and vows revenge.

A Vamp Analysis

When Alpha takes credit for the prank, Frankie is enraged. This spurs her on not only to further action, but to take the fight directly to Alpha.



The Subsequent E-Mails

The Subsequent E-Mails Summary

In a series of e-mails, Frankie taunts Alpha with her identity. He makes several guesses, including that it is Frankie, but Frankie denies this. She tells him she has the History of the Order.

The Subsequent E-Mails Analysis

Frankie opens fire at Alpha through a series of e-mails where she taunts him with her identity. By doing this, Frankie knows -and demonstrates- that she has complete control of the situation. She has all the power, and Alpha is powerless against her.



How Much is That Doggie in the Window?

How Much is That Doggie in the Window? Summary

The Hazleton key at the back of the History book is a key to the steam tunnels beneath the campus. She goes exploring in the tunnels. Frankie leaves a copy of the key for Alpha, whom she instructs by e-mail to order giant glowing basset hounds and put them in the windows of the gym.

She is very happy when the prank is successful and everyone talks about it.

How Much is That Doggie in the Window? Analysis

Another plot designed by Frankie is carried out flawlessly. Not only is she happy with the prank's success, but she is thrilled to hear people talking about the prank. She is making people take notice of things, and she wants to do continue to do so.

An Ignominious Fall

An Ignominious Fall Summary

In November, Frankie increases the amount of pranks that the Bassets conduct. They do everything from drawing basset hounds on chalkboards to putting stuffed basset hounds outside. When people howl during the choir concert, Alpha writes to Frankie, telling her taking on the administration is not a good idea. He still wants the book back, but Frankie will not respond to him.

An Ignominious Fall Analysis

Frankie engineers a host of new pranks, leading to an unprecedented amount of activity for the Hounds. But the first affront to the administration and staff -howling during a concert- is received negatively. Alpha is unhappy about challenging the administration, but Frankie doesn't care. She has an agenda she intends to see through.



The Canned Beet Rebellion

The Canned Beet Rebellion Summary

Headmaster Richmond announces that Sylvia Kargman, mother to student and a generous alumni, is coming to speak about following dreams. Because of her, all Snapple and Coke machines on campus have been replaced by Viva Soda machines, the company for which Sylvia is CEO. Because the Viva machines monopolize the school food budget, there is no salad bar. So Frankie has the Bassets order merchandise like shirts and buttons for students to wear. She also sends out a note that criticizes the Viva machines.

Sylvia's lecture is respectfully heard, but the next day, she realizes she has been mocked. Rather than demanding action, she sends more money to the school to create a salad bar. Richmond later addresses the students at large and tells them there is an appropriate and an inappropriate way to handle the desire for change.

The Canned Beet Rebellion Analysis

Frankie secures her first tangible, political victory in the form of the creation of a salad bar. It is a small victory, but it is significant because Frankie now realizes she can use the power she wields to make things happen. She is happy with the results and happy with her power.



The Return of Bunny Rabbit

The Return of Bunny Rabbit Summary

Instead of visiting Frankie for Thanksgiving, Matthew says Alpha wants him to go sledding in Western Massachusetts. When Matthew goes to the bathroom, Frankie rummages through his backpack and finds printed e-mails between herself and Porter. She is angry and feels guilty, but knows she cannot say anything about it.

Frankie enjoys Thanksgiving dinner at home.

The Return of Bunny Rabbit Analysis

Frankie goes home for Thanksgiving after having been ditched by Matthew who intends to spend the day after Thanksgiving with Alpha instead. She also knows that Matthew has more control over her than she figured, because Matthew has e-mails between herself and Porter. She knows she cannot say anything about them, or she will risk her relationship with Matthew.



The Fish Liberation Society

The Fish Liberation Society Summary

Frankie thinks about the e-mails she found. She believes Porter gave Matthew the e-mails.

In early December, the guppy statues is replaced with a basset hound. The guppy will be returned if student body meetings are moved from the chapel to the auditorium in the new arts building out of respect for people of all faiths who do not wish to have nonreligious meetings in a religious place. The meetings are moved and the location of the guppy -in the old, dry pool- is revealed.

Frankie tries to get Matthew to think about the symbolism -old values being useless- but Matthew, out of ignorance or feigned ignorance, doesn't agree.

The Fish Liberation Society Analysis

Apart from the feminist statement made on Halloween, Frankie takes an even greater step toward making a political statement. She illustrates the traditions of Alabaster as being useless, but the depth of the symbolism is lost on Matthew, whom Frankie most wants to impress. But political statements and ideas aside, the administration is not happy. Frankie has gone too far.



Twine

Twine Summary

Frankie realizes she has left twine in the tunnels, which she uses to find her way around. If maintenance finds it, the locks will be changed. As she begins winding up the twine, she feels lonely. She realizes the boys don't care about the pranks, but rather simply the ability to do them and be responsible for them.

She suddenly realizes that one end of the twine has gone slack because someone else is on the other end. She accidentally puts her arm on a steam pipe, hideously burning it, and rushes outside just as two security guards go past.

Twine Analysis

Sometimes, Frankie has to clean up after the Basset Hounds because they fail to completely do their job. On one such instance, Frankie encounters someone else in the tunnels, and rushes outside before two security guards head in. She has left behind several of her possessions, however, and the event precipitates Frankie's downfall.



Burn

Burn Summary

Frankie rushes into the bathroom and puts her arm in an ice cold shower. When Trish and Star come in, Frankie jumps all the way in. She listens to them talk about how angry Headmaster Richmond is. According to Richmond, Halloween pranks are one thing, but theft is something else. Richmond is determined to find the culprit. When they leave, Frankie returns to the room half-naked.

Back in the room, Trish sees the burn and Frankie's half-dressed state. She will not tell Trish what happened, even though Trish insists. She goes to get Frankie some ice for her burn.

Burn Analysis

Despite Frankie's desire not to tell Trish what has happened, Trish still behaves valiantly, like a true friend, by going to get ice for Frankie. Trish's friendship is very telling here, because she does not let her frustration with Frankie's vagueness stop her from helping her friend. It is, ironically, a sort of friendship that Frankie believes she is lacking, yet because of the situation, Frankie does not recognize it.



A Perpetrator

A Perpetrator Summary

The guards discover Alpha in the basement, trying to roll up the twine. They also find a book, a peacoat, and some other possessions. The book is the "Disreputable History of the Basset Hounds", accidentally left behind by Frankie. Alpha is the number one suspect. He is charged with theft, trespassing, and a number of other serious allegations.

Matthew tells Frankie about all of this when she is in the nurse's office for her burn, but no one knows the possessions in the tunnels were actually Frankie's. The school board has voted to expel Alpha, which could endanger Alpha's early acceptance to Harvard. Porter has turned in e-mails to Richmond, further implicating Alpha.

She confesses to Matthew her involvement. Matthew is enraged, believing Frankie has lied to him and has targeted Alpha. Matthew says he is going to Headmaster Richmond, and leaves the nurse's office.

A Perpetrator Analysis

The tenuousness of Frankie's relationship with Matthew is fully revealed when he breaks up with her instantly over her confession to him. Not only does he break up with her, but he betrays her to the headmaster in favor of protecting and saving Alpha. Frankie has, all along, been nothing but expendable to Matthew. The irony of the situation is also apparent: Frankie has come to have her arm healed in the hospital ward, but her relationship is beyond fixing.



The Letter, Again

The Letter, Again Summary

Frankie is called to the Headmaster's Office, and she writes a letter explaining her involvement. She calls Zada, to tell her about everything.

Porter comes to talk to Frankie, and explains he's hated Alpha since Alpha broke his sister's heart. In danger of failing a class, Porter was asked by Headmaster Richmond to get into the Basset Hounds, and let him know if anything was up. Porter has been something of a double-agent, and still feels some sort of protective loyalty to Frankie. If he had known Frankie was "TheAlphaDog", he says he would never have turned in the e-mails.

The Letter, Again Analysis

Anger toward Alpha isn't confined to Frankie. Porter also has his own vendetta against Alpha, and it was Porter who turned Alpha in and confirmed suspicions that he was plotting the pranks. This is also the chapter wherein Frankie pens the confession letter that comprises the first chapter of the novel.

Some More E-mail

Some More E-mail Summary

The board reconsiders Alpha's expulsion and put both Alpha and Frankie on probation. Over Christmas break, Alpha sends her an e-mail both condemning her and praising her for her work.

Some More E-mail Analysis

There is a tense moment of closure between Frankie and Alpha through an e-mail. Alpha both praises and condemns Frankie, telling her he is impressed either way. Frankie, for all of her efforts, has managed to make small changes -such as the salad bar and changing the meeting place of the Monday morning student body sessions- but beyond that, she has faced an even greater downfall.



After the Fall, Spring

After the Fall, Spring Summary

When Frankie returns to Alabaster, she is something of a celebrity for her exploits. While the Basset Hounds, Star, and Elizabeth refuse to have anything to do with Frankie, Trish defends Frankie without hesitation. Frankie knows she has made an impact.

She also sees a school counselor, who pushes her to play field hockey, and to meditate.

Frankie offers to give Matthew back his shirt, but Matthew is disgusted and dismisses it. She decides it is better to be alone, than be with someone who doesn't see who she is.

After the Fall, Spring Analysis

The results of Frankie's efforts are mixed. Many despise her, others love her. Either way, she has established a reputation for herself. And despite everything she has done, she regrets that it has cost her her relationship with Matthew. Yet, despite all of it, she believes that she is better off alone.



Characters

Frances Frankie Landau-Banks

Frances "Frankie" Landau-Banks is the main character and protagonist of the novel "The Disreputable History of Frankie Laundau-Banks. She is fifteen years old, very intelligent, and her figure is well-formed. She is an atheist and a feminist, and attends the prestigious Alabaster Academy. She is the younger sister of Zada, who graduated the year before. Frankie, in her freshman year, was nerdy, thin, and not much to look at. Zada makes sure that Frankie met the right people and fell in with the right groups, and Frankie survives the year thanks to Zada. The following summer, she fills out, and in the fall catches the attention of Matthew Livingston, a senior boy and newspaper editor. She is roommates with Trish, a pretty and humble girl who is very loyal to Frankie.

Frankie and Matthew begin dating and she discovers he is a co-leader of the secret society of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. She discovers Alpha is the other co-leader, and Alpha is vying with her for time with Matthew. Frankie comes to admire the bond between Matthew and the fellow Hounds. At the same time, she is taking a class called Cities, Art, and Planning. This allows her to do more research on secret societies, and helps her to form an opinion against the patriarchal leadership of Alabaster. When Alpha heads home for a few days, Frankie creates a fictitious e-mail account for Alpha, and begins ordering the Basset Hounds to pull different pranks.

The last prank -the theft and later return of a guppy statue- goes too far. Alpha is accused of the theft when Frankie's ex-boyfriend (Porter Welsch, also a Hound) turns him in, and Frankie confesses what she has done to Matthew. Matthew is enraged, breaks up with Frankie, and turns her in. Frankie is placed on academic probation, and becomes a legend in her own right. Trish defends Frankie loyally, and Matthew and his senior friends refuse to have anything to do with Frankie.

Matthew Livingston

Matthew Livingston is a senior at Alabaster Academy and the boyfriend of Frankie. He is the co-leader of the secret society, the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. Matthew is intelligent, arrogant, always has to be right, and takes Frankie for granted, often choosing to ditch her for the Hounds. He is from a very wealthy family, and has a home on Martha's Vineyard.

His loyalty to Frankie is weak. When he discovers that Frankie has been manipulating the Hounds, and has potentially gotten Alpha expelled from school, Matthew breaks up with her and betrays Frankie to Headmaster Richmond. He spends the rest of the book ignoring Frankie. When he does speak to her near the end, his disgust is clearly apparent.



Alessandro Alpha Tesorieri

Alessandro "Alpha" Tesorieri, an illegitimate child and a senior at Alabaster Academy. He is arrogant, unimpressed, a bit wild, and very elitist. He is jealous over Frankie's relationship with Matthew, and worries that Frankie will discover who the Basset Hounds are. He begins vying for Matthew's time. When Alpha goes home for a few days, Frankie creates a fake e-mail account in his name, and uses it to direct the activities of the Basset Hounds. Alpha takes credit for the pranks, which ultimately lands him in trouble with the Headmaster. Alpha is threatened with expulsion but is put on probation when Frankie confesses to the crime.

Trish

Trish is the simple, feminine, and pretty roommate of Frankie at Alabaster Academy. Trish doesn't care much for hanging out with the guys, but prefers domesticity instead. She is dating Artie, a member of the Audio Visual Technology Club, and Artie has keys to most of the buildings on campus. Trish agrees to sneak the keys to Frankie, and later stands up for her after she confesses to masterminding the Hounds. She turns out to be Frankie's only true friend.

Franklin Senior Banks

The father of Frankie and Zada Landau-Banks, Franklin was hoping that Frankie would be a boy, and when she wasn't, named her Frances. Frank is a former member of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, and is currently in the medical field. On a marijuana-induced evening, he penned a riddle to the location of the written history of the Order, and it was subsequently lost for thirty years until Frankie finds it.

Ruth Landau-Banks

Ruth is the conservative mother of Frankie and Zada, and an observant-Jew. She worries about Frankie's blossoming, and advises her to stay on the straight and narrow path.

Zada Landau-Banks

Zada is Frankie's older sister by three years, and has recently graduated from Alabaster Academy and begun attending college. When Frankie was a freshman, Zada took Frankie under her wing and watched out for her. Zada is Frankie's source of advice and familial support during the following year through telephone calls. Zada has a much closer relationship with Frankie than anyone else in their family.



Porter Welsch

Porter Welsch is a sophomore at Alabaster Academy, and the ex-boyfriend of Frankie. He is a member of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. Frankie broke up with Porter when he cheated on her. Porter warns Frankie about Matthew, but Frankie doesn't listen to him. Porter, hoping to get back at Alpha for breaking his sister's heart the year before, believes the e-mails he has received are actually from Alpha and not Frankie, and in so doing, turns her in.

Headmaster Richmond

Headmaster Richmond is a traditional man, who also tries to accommodate the wishes of the students. For example, he changes hosting Monday morning meetings with the student body from the chapel to the auditorium in the arts center. Yet when the guppy statue is stolen, Richmond has been pushed too far and seeks out the culprits.



Objects/Places

The Disreputable History of the Loyal Order of the Basset Ho

"The Disreputable History of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds" is a small, leatherbound book full of the history and misdeeds of the Order of the Basset Hounds. Entries range from the founding in 1951 to 1975, when the book was lost because the riddle to find it was so vague. The riddle slowly became the official oath of the Order, and the history book became a mythical object. Frankie discovers the history beneath the bronze campus map on the widow's walk of the Founder's House. It is accidentally left behind in the steam tunnels when Frankie rushes to get out.

Wool Coat

Frankie wears a black wool coat in order to follow Matthew around, and blend in more easily with her surroundings at night. She accidentally leaves it behind in the steam tunnels the night she rushes to get out.

Frankie's Laptop

Frankie uses her laptop to create a false e-mail account for Alpha. She then uses the laptop and the e-mail account to direct the missions of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds.

Keys

Keys factor into Frankie's plans significantly. Through Trish and her boyfriend Artie, Frankie obtains and makes copies of keys to most of the buildings on campus, and then leaves these for Basset Hound members to find and use when they play pranks.

Alabaster Academy

Alabaster Academy is the prestigious, Massachusetts-based preparatory school where mostly rich families send their children to attend. It is steeped in patriarchal traditions, and is an unwitting host to the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. There are used and unused buildings on campus, all connected by underground steam tunnels. Alabaster Academy becomes the target of a series of Hound pranks, all orchestrated by Frankie.



The Steam Tunnels

When Alabaster Academy expands after construction, tunnels are used to connect all of the buildings, through which steam pipes are run to heat them. It is through these steam tunnels that Frankie finds her way around campus and has the members of the Basset Hounds carry out their pranks without being caught. The steam tunnels are also where Alpha is ultimately apprehended, and where Frankie severely burns her arm.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts is the state where Alabaster Preparatory Academy is located.

The Founders House

The Founder's House is one of the original two buildings on the Alabaster Preparatory Academy campus. It features a museum and a widow's walk where students and visitors can see the whole campus. On the widow's walk is a bronze map where the written history of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds was kept hidden.

The Jersey Shore

The Jersey Shore, the beaches of New Jersey, is where Frankie vacations before she begins her sophomore year. It is at the beach where her newly-developed body is first seen, and where Frankie first meets Alpha.

The Hospital Ward

The hospital ward is where Frankie ultimately must go in order to have her burn injury treated. It is also where she confesses to Matthew her involvement in orchestrating Basset Hound activities, and where Matthew informs her he is going to Headmaster Richmond.



Themes

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is at first an underlying theme of E. Lockhart's book "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks" and later becomes a prominent theme. This display of patriarchal behavior occurs in three ways.

The first is institutional. Alabaster Preparatory School hosts a number of buildings, and all of them feature paintings of noted headmasters, intellectuals, writers, scientists, and other eminent figures. All of them are men, even more modern individuals. This provides a surreptitious statement that greatness is only a male achievement, and that there is no female greatness that is recognized.

The second way patriarchal behavior occurs is through the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, a secret society that is composed totally of males. Very few females know about the Order, and even fewer have any knowledgeable contact with it. No females are allowed to join, making it a club exclusively catered towards males.

The third way in which patriarchal behavior occurs is along the lines of friendship. Although Matthew's friends (Alpha, Dean, and Callum) are members of the Loyal Order, they are also friends. Although Matthew enjoys hanging out with Frankie, when they are dating, he has no problems ditching her in order to hang out with Alpha and the other guys, even for non-Basset Hound situations. The effect is that Frankie feels lonely, and feels insecure because Matthew could just as easily break up with her at a second's notice.

Friendship

Friendship is a dominant theme throughout E. Lockhart's book "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks". It is exhibited between most of the characters and occurs in different ways.

Although the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds is a secret, fraternal organization that has to do with solidifying bonds between members, it also helps to enhance friendship between members outside of Order meetings. This can be seen in the way that Matthew, Dean, Callum, and Alpha, are totally at ease with one another and have no problem bantering back and forth. It is also apparent in the way that they do nearly everything together, from going to parties to eating meals with one another. It is a secure bond of friendship that Frankie envies.

There is also romantic friendship, or relationships, which appear to be the most temporary. Dean has no problem breaking up with Star out of nowhere, for example, even after they have been dating for a while without any problems. Matthew, upon



discovering Frankie's misdeeds, not only breaks up with her immediately, but turns her into the headmaster.

The final kind of friendship -without romance and without secret society bonds- occurs between Trish and Frankie, who are roommates. They bond together in their own way -from painting their nails to talking about their problems with one another to eating together. When Frankie burns her arm and gets into trouble, Trish remains loyal to her, going to get Frankie ice even though Frankie will not explain what is going on. After Frankie confesses to the pranks, and many kids on campus refuse to have anything to do with her, Trish sticks by and defends Frankie without hesitation, though Frankie believes that Trish may not do so if Trish was fully aware of what goes on in Frankie's mind.

Feminism

Feminism is the dominant and overarching theme consistent throughout E. Lockhart's "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks." Early on in the book, Frankie is a slightly geeky and unattractive girl whom her parents and family call "Bunny Rabbit". Yet through education and her own physical blossoming, she comes to understand that she has beliefs and ideas that are not consistent with her mother's conservative values or her roommate Trish's dainty feminine ideas about cooking and baking.

Alabaster Preparatory Academy is a bastion of patriarchy, from the all-male paintings of intellectuals, founders, and presidents, to the secret society known as the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. Frankie is not thrilled to see women excluded from the roster of paintings, and she is likewise not thrilled to be excluded from the Basset Hounds. Using her intelligence, she creates a phony e-mail account for Alpha, and begins to instruct the Basset Hounds as to what to do to score a blow for feminism.

Among Frankie's two most symbolic plans -though the symbolism is completely lost on those who observe the finished pranks- are to decorate the paintings of founders, as well as the campus, with bras; and to place the guppy statue -an honored campus symbol- in an old, dry pool in order to say that the ideas and values of yesteryear are dry and dead.

What is even more important to Frankie is her ability to control the boys for once, even though she is pretending to be Alpha. She wields nearly unlimited power in the process, yet also paves the way for her own downfall by becoming far too heavily involved in things.



Style

Point of View

E. Lockhart tells her novel "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks" from the third-person and omniscient perspective with frequent space devoted to Frankie's thoughts shared in the first person. This is done in order to not bog the story down in Frankie's thought processes and it also allows E. Lockhart to use some very interesting ways of telling her story.

Among those is the use of Frankie's confessional letter, which begins the book and helps to conclude it after her downfall. This allows the reader, initially, a taste of everything that is going to happen, and makes the reader question how these things are going to happen. The other creative way E. Lockhart advances her story is to use e-mail conversations between Frankie and other students. Although this could be done in a story told from the first-person perspective, the flow works well here in third-person, because it provides the reader an objective place from which to see events unfold. Likewise, the transition between third-person narration and the reader's perusal of e-mails is effortless and occurs naturally.

Setting

The setting of E. Lockhart's "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks" occurs mainly in Massachusetts, specifically at the Alabaster Preparatory Academy. Frankie's ability to apply her feminist ideology to practical use makes Alabaster -a bastion of patriarchal control- the perfect setting.

In the book, Frankie takes on everything from symbols of male control -from putting bras on the paintings of male intellectuals, founders, and presidents, to hijacking a guppy fish and putting it in an old, dry pool to represent the dead values of yesteryear -to taking on the all-male secret society, the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds through infiltration. Alone, she masterminds a series of successful pranks, using the all-male Basset Hounds to make feminist statements for her against the school, all without any of the Basset Hounds realizing what she has done.

Language and Meaning

E. Lockhart tells her novel "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks" in soft language that is not poetic, yet appealing in its own right. The language is straightforward, sprinkled with words and ideas that are themselves not necessarily straightforward, such as Bentham's concept of the Panopticon and the idea of using people to make points against themselves without realizing it. This is done in order to keep the reader interested without bogging the reader down in unnecessary terminology or difficult ideas. Using this simple, straightforward language nevertheless allows

readers to understand difficult ideas or concepts, and allows Lockhart to make her points without deviating from the story itself.

Structure

E. Lockhart divides her book into chapters, with each chapter covering a specific incident or event. The chapters are not all chronological (Frankie's confession note appears in the first chapter, and toward the end of the book; other chapters are largely or wholly centered around past events), but they do follow an order which traces Frankie's rise and downfall.



Quotes

"To them, she was Bunny Rabbit. Innocent. In need of protection. Inconsequential" (A Chance Encounter That Would Prove Seminal, p. 13).

"These guys, they were so sure of their places in life -so deeply confident of their merit and their future -they didn't need any kind of front at all" (Alpha, p. 46).

"It's a systematic paranoia. Like, when you have that creepy sense that your dad knows you drank that beer, even though you drank it four days ago and there's no evidence whatsoever that he knows" (The Panopticon, p. 55).

"It was a secret society, but what precisely for was hard to tell" (The Invitations, p. 63).

"As the weeks passed, Frankie began to see that although Matthew welcomed people into his world with surprising warmth -it didn't occur to him to enter anyone else's" (A Triangle, p. 103).

"What annoyed her now was not that Matthew was right -but that he wouldn't just enjoy the made-up word" (The Neglected Positive, p. 114).

"When I act the way I acted, Matthew doesn't like me as much as he does when I fall off my bicycle" (A Broken Date, p. 175).

"She should have known this would happen. How had she not foreseen? Alpha was taking credit" (A Vamp, p. 248).

"The guppy represents the old-fashioned values of the school, and putting it in the dry pool is like saying those values are old and useless, the way the pool is" (The Fish Liberation Society, p. 291).

"Suddenly, Frankie's protective armor is gone and she is not angry at anyone about anything anymore. Looking at Matthew, she sees nothing but a beautiful boy who used to think she was adorable" (After the Fall, Spring, p. 340).



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the theme of feminism in E. Lockhart's "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks." Is Frankie a feminist? What makes her a feminist? How does she use these feminist ideas in order to make her points? Are her points made well, or are they misinterpreted? Why?

Why does Frankie infiltrate and use the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds to her own advantages? Was this a smart thing to have done? Was Frankie successful in her efforts, even though she was ultimately caught? Why or why not?

Discuss the theme of patriarchy in E. Lockhart's "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks". In what ways is patriarchy present at the campus? Do you think this is willingly done? Why or why not? Do you believe that even if the patriarchal control is deliberate at Alabaster, it matters? Why or why not?

Alpha's downfall has disastrous consequences for Frankie. What happens with Matthew when Frankie confesses to being the mastermind of the Basset Hound pranks? Is Matthew's reaction justified? Why does Matthew behave in this fashion, and why does Matthew side with Alpha over Frankie?

Discuss the theme of friendship in the novel "The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks." Classify each of the kinds of friendship you discover and discuss them. Which of those kinds of friendship are the strongest? Which are the weakest? Why? Provide evidence to support your claims.