



## **House Party**

Eric Walters

Reading level: 3.1

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AR Quiz # 118309

### **Book Summary**

When Casey's parents leave to go out of town on business, Casey and her new best friend, Jen, plan a party for a few friends on the "A" list, hoping to prompt a few return invitations to some of their cool parties. But Casey and Jen have no idea that their party invitation is being shared over the Internet, and hundreds of kids are planning on attending their party. While the party begins small with their invited friends, by midnight hundreds of party-goers arrive that Jen and Casey don't know, and Casey's house is being ransacked, and her parents' possessions are being stolen. Worse, when Casey's father's stereo is thrown through the front window and cars tear up the neighbors' lawns, the neighbors' call the police, who promptly arrive to break up the party. In the end, Jen's mother arrives to help the girls begin the massive cleanup before Casey's parents return the next day.

### **Prereading Idea**

Teenagers often struggle with their new-found independence and acceptable ways to demonstrate that independence to their parents. Hold a classroom discussion about the typical ways teenagers declare their independence, both appropriately and inappropriately. Make a list on the board as students make suggestions.

**Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas**

- Jen and Casey plan the party without any consideration for the liability their parents might face if anyone is hurt as a result of teenage alcohol consumption. Ask students to research the laws in their state dealing with parent accountability for underage drinking on their property. Have students utilize the information to prepare an informative brochure or a poster to display in the halls or distribute at school.
- Jen creates an irrefutable series of arguments to convince Casey to have the party, and then to invite more people than they had agreed on, and then to serve alcohol. For every objection Casey makes, Jen has a more convincing counter argument. In pairs, ask students to make a T-Chart of Casey's objections and Jen's rationalizations to see how Jen wins Casey over to her plan while making the plan appear to be Casey's idea. Have students work with a partner to bring both sides of the argument to life by writing and presenting one of the following: a point-counter-point dialogue, a poem for two voices, or a public service announcement against underage drinking.

**Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel*****Conclusion***

Since the author leaves the conclusion of *House Party* open-ended, the reader doesn't know Casey's parents' reaction when they are informed about the party and the destruction of their home. In small groups, ask students to brainstorm characteristics of Casey's parents: likes and dislikes, personality traits, career choices and their patterns of behavior. Then have students surmise what their reaction might be, based on what they have learned about them in the book. Have students write and share with the class ideas as a concluding scene for the book, including dialogue and stage directions.

***Irony***

Though Jen and Casey plan their party so that people at their school will invite them to the cool parties, what actually happens is that Jen and Casey don't even get to socialize with anyone from their school as they are forced to serve as maids and security for the hordes of people they don't even know. Discuss with students the irony of this situation. Ask students to find and to discuss additional examples of irony in the book. Have students select one ironic situation in the book and write and illustrate a cartoon to depict the irony.

**Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions**

1. Casey describes Jen as “a little plump,” and Casey is the “new” girl in town, having just moved from a place she has lived all her life. How do these facts play a role in their decision to plan a party?
2. When Casey’s mother tells her she has to go out of town, Casey is upset that she can not stay at home by herself. Would it be responsible to leave a fifteen-year-old girl home alone for the weekend? Why or why not?
3. What does Casey do to try to follow her mother’s advice to “be smart and be safe,” (ch. 3)?
4. Casey tries to find reasons not to have the party because she knows she shouldn’t do it, but she can’t refute Jen’s logic for having the party. Why doesn’t she just say “no”?
5. What is Casey risking by having a party at her house? What does it ultimately cost her? What does it cost Jen?
6. What could Jen’s and Casey’s mother have done to prevent the party from happening? Why didn’t they do anything?
7. As the party starts to spin out of control, Casey and Jen try to get the situation under control by eliciting help from a few friends. What should they have done?
8. How does the dedication, *To those kids who choose to party responsibly*, apply to this book?

**Writer’s Craft*****Simile***

The author uses similes to compare seemingly unlike things to help the reader “see” a visual image. For example, in chapter 11, Casey tries to explain about the party: “It was like a fire getting bigger and bigger.” Ask students to look through the description of the party and find a descriptive section where they can insert a simile or rewrite a sentence making it a simile. Have students use magazine pictures and text to create a simile collage of their new or rewritten text. Post collages in the room.

**Author Biography**

Since his first novel in 1993, **Eric Walters** has published numerous books, including *Grind*, *Juice*, *Overdrive* and *Stuffed* in the Orca Soundings series. When he is not writing, Eric is coaching his children’s soccer and basketball teams. In addition, he plays the saxophone and enjoys music. He enjoys presenting to children—blending drama, storytelling, audience participation and interaction. Eric strives to inspire his audience members, not only to respond to his books, but also to develop their own personal writing processes.