

A NIGHT TWICE AS LONG

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ABOUT THE BOOK

What do you call the difference between what you should feel and what you do feel? Life?

The blackout has been going on for three weeks. But Alex feels like she's been living in the dark for a year, ever since her brother, who has autism, was removed from the house, something Alex blames herself for. So when her best friend, Anthony, asks her to trek to another town to figure out the truth about the blackout, Alex says yes.

On a journey that ultimately takes all day and night, Alex's relationships with Anthony, her brother, and herself will transform in ways that change them all forever.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANDREW SIMONET is a choreographer and writer in Philadelphia. His first novel, *Wilderness*, published in 2018. He co-directed Headlong Dance Theater for twenty years and founded Artists U, an incubator for helping artists make sustainable lives. He lives in West Philadelphia with his wife, Elizabeth, and their two sons, Jesse Tiger and Nico Wolf.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Throughout the novel, Alex is living through a blackout. How would your life change if our world suddenly lost electricity? What would you miss the most, and how might your priorities shift?
2. In Chapter 1, the author uses the device of foreshadowing: "I'm gonna tell you right now: The lights do come back. Not today, but on day twenty-nine. Phew. Good to know. But on this day, day twenty-one, we don't know that." How would not knowing this information from the beginning have changed your experience of reading the book? Would you, have preferred not knowing?
3. While describing her room, Alex mentions her "reread stack": "...the books I can lose myself in that have no surprises. Surprises are mostly bad." What does this line tell us about her character? Do we see examples of surprises being bad later in the story?
4. Early on in the novel, Alex makes the decision to shave her head. Why do you think she chooses to do this?
5. In Chapter 2, Alex says this: "I don't want news. I don't want a Story. I step off the porch, smell the moist ground warming in the May sun. I want to stay wide open." What do you think she means by staying "wide open"?
6. Alex often thinks about the world in terms of stories: the rumors flying around about the cause of the blackout, the different versions of what people think happened to her family and Georgie, troubles with money, and so on. How does the story that Alex tells herself about her own life change over the course of the book?
7. In Chapter 3, Alex admits that "the worst thing about life without Georgie is how often I'd wished for it." Can you relate to this? Have you ever wished a family member, or even a friend, would go away?
8. Alex stops to talk to a nudist couple on her way to Bethany and back. What does she learn about herself and her relationship with her own body from these interactions?
9. In Chapter 10, Alex says: "The less we understand a human, the more words we throw." What do you think she means by this? Can you think of any examples from real life that support or refute this statement?
10. In the end, when the electrical grid finally comes back online, Alex feels both thrilled and a little disappointed to see everything going back to normal. How has the month of no power changed her world? Do you see any links between this story and the experience of people living through the COVID-19 pandemic?