

Polarity in Motion
A Young Adult Novel by Brenda Vicars
Discussion Questions

1. First consider/discuss the title. Why would a girl be named *Polarity*? What is the significance (literal or figurative) of *Motion*?
2. When does Polarity first realize there is something special about Ethan?
3. What does the aquarium with its invisible wall symbolize to Polarity?
4. Barriers can be visible or invisible, and many are denied. Are there barriers between Ethan and Polarity even though they care deeply for each other? If you care about someone of a different race, can you still be influenced by racism?
5. People like Polarity's mother are complex. In the story, what are her mother's strengths and weaknesses? What do you think of her question at the end of the family therapy session? ("Doctor, is mankind a borderline collective?")
6. Polarity and her mother have an emotional fight scene that is defused when Polarity says, "My name is Polarity." In what ways is their argument normal? In what ways is it excessive/extreme?
7. How does Polarity's father deal with her mother?
8. Tilly had the truth all along, but no one recognized it. Are there other truths in the novel that were there all along but are unrecognized?
9. Why didn't Polarity immediately realize when and where the nude picture was taken?
10. Why wouldn't the authorities believe her when she said she was innocent? And why did the authorities suspect her parents might be involved in child pornography?
11. Do you think the actions Polarity and her parents took to investigate the case were appropriate or necessary? To get better results, should they have worked more closely with the system or less closely?
12. What do you think happened to Zada? Why did Polarity's mother insist adding the quotation below to the Internet posting?

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), nearly 800,000 children under the age of 18 are reported missing each year in the United States. Of that number, 33 percent are African-American.

With the rare exception, the unprecedented number of African-American girls who disappear from their classrooms, communities, and churches...end up exploited uncounted.

Invisible.

Forgotten.

13. In the end, why does Polarity say that she is glad the nude picture was published?
14. What do you think of how each principal handled Polarity's case? Was there more they should have done? If so, what?
15. Do you think school environments like Beauty are useful or necessary? What are some of their benefits and flaws?
16. Why was Polarity jealous of Shanique? Were her reasons reasonable?
17. Discuss the grandmother's role. Does she support Polarity, and does she enable Polarity's mother to engage in borderline behaviors?
18. How do you think Polarity changed over the course of the story? Do you consider these changes positive or negative?
19. Do you feel sorry for Tracey, or does she make you angry?
20. Polarity sums up her experience in a poem. What do curtains and veils symbolize to her? Where did she get the idea for her phrase "still failed to see the way I see"? Do you agree with the last two lines of the poem?

I tore the curtain down and roared, "I see inequity."
 But countless veils, shifting and sheer, deftly blinded me.
 So I, pumped with pride, still failed to see the way I see.
**Veils, unseen and unnamed,
 Will unremoved remain.**

21. What do you predict is next for Ethan and Polarity?