The Playlist Diaries Book 1

Discussion Questions

1)    If you had to make a playlist for your high school years what songs would you include?

2)    The story opens with Red telling the reader that sometimes a decision can change your life. Looking back at the various crossroads in your own life, can you isolate certain decisions that ended up changing everything for you?

3)    Red often sees Will as a larger-than-life character who likes to add drama to the mundane parts of his life. Right before he reveals what happened in the state basketball championship, Red teases him saying: “Are you sure it’s that bad?”  to which he replies: “Maybe it’s not. Maybe I’m just being dramatic.”

Do you think Will was being too dramatic about what happened in the championship? Or did you understand why the event affected him the way it did?

4)    Stacie is acutely aware of the hypocrisy of gender roles in their high school, especially around dating and sex. The girls’ sex education lecture illustrated this disparity when they were encouraged to not be “old shoes” or else a man would never pick them. Do you feel these types of hypocritical gender roles have evolved since the 80s or are there still different expectations placed on girls and boys today?

**Bonus question**: Share what your own sex education lecture was like when you were in high school!

5)    Red tries to explain her compliance with Jimmy’s bullying as strictly self-preservation, rationalizing that she has no other choice but to go along with him because she has no power in the situation. Have you ever felt forced to go along with something you knew wasn’t right because of that same sense of powerlessness? Were you disappointed in Red for not standing up to Jimmy? Do you think there were any other avenues she could’ve taken, other than direct confrontation, that could’ve impacted his behavior?

6)    Will and Red’s relationship faced many hurdles. What qualities about the other kept drawing them together? What was Red getting from Will? What was Will getting from Red?

7)    Red has a lot of conflicting feelings about her mom’s relationship with Karen; privately loving the life she has with her family and yet publicly renouncing it to fit in with her peers. Are there any areas of your life where you censor or change yourself to better fit in with the group you’re with at the time? Do you consider this just a normal part of life, necessary for functioning in society? Or do you have any desire to change this tendency in yourself?

8)    What is your favorite Rolling Stones song from the book? Why?

Book Club Games & Party Ideas

* Have everyone wear their best 80s outfits, cheerleading or basketball uniforms
* Serve beer (Red’s favorite Miller Lite) and pizza. (Note: Pizza King was famous for its ground pepperoni. Throw some pepperoni slices in a food processor and try it on your next pizza… you’ll be amazed by the difference!)
* Games are mostly played for fun, but if you decide to keep score or have a game MVP you could give out throwback prizes like Lip Smackers, Trapper Keepers, striped knee socks, Jolly Ranchers, etc.

GAME IDEAS

**Travolta or TraNOlta:**

Each player has to say whether or not John Travolta was in the movie or TV show by responding True or False. If you want to keep score give each player an index card with True or False written on each side and have them hold up their answer on the count of three.

Grease (True) Fast Times At Ridgemont High (False)

Jerry McGuire (False) American Crime Story (True)

Carrie (True) Endless Love (False)

The Outsiders (False) Urban Cowboy (True)

National Treasure (False) Look Who’s Talking (True)

The Avengers (False) Pulp Fiction (True)

**What Line Comes Next? Lyrics Challenge:**

One person reads (or sings) the line of the famous 80s lyric and the group or individual has to fill in the lyrics that come next: (Tip: you can make it more challenging by giving less of the lyrics as clues)

Once upon a time I was falling in love, now I’m just falling apart…

**There’s nothing I can do, total eclipse of the heart.**

(“Total Eclipse of the Heart” Bonnie Tyler)

It’s gonna take a lot to drag me away from you,

There’s nothing that a hundred men or more could ever do…

**I bless the rains down in Africa.**

(“Africa” Toto)

Dig if you will the picture…

**Of you and I engaged in a kiss.**

(“When Doves Cry” Prince)

Too-ra-loo-rye-ay,

And we sing just like our fathers…

**Come on, Eileen**.

(“Come on Eileen” Dexys Midnight Runners)

Her hair reminds me of a warm safe place…

**Where as a child I’d hide.**

(“Sweet Child O’ Mine” Guns N Roses)

A singer in a smoky room…

**A smell of wine and cheap perfume**.

(“Don’t Stop Believin’” Journey)

I’m lying alone with my head on the phone…

**Thinking of you ‘till it hurts.**

(“I’m All Out Of Love” Air Supply)

Can’t you see me standing here I got my back against the record machine?

I ain’t the worst that you’ve seen, Ah, can’t you see what I meant?

**Ah, might as well JUMP!**

(“Jump” Van Halen)

Spread out the oil, the gasoline,

I walk smooth ride in a mean, mean machine…

**Start me up.**

(“Start Me Up” The Rolling Stones)

My blood runs cold  
My memory has just been sold…  
**My angel is the centerfold.**

(“Centerfold” J. Geils Band)

I made it through the wilderness  
Somehow I made it through…  
**Didn't know how lost I was  
Until I found you.**

(“Like A Virgin” Madonna)

Once I ran to you (I ran)  
Now I run from you…  
**This tainted love you've given  
I give you all a boy could give you**

(“Tainted Love” Soft Cell)

**Survey Says! Name the top 10 TV shows of the 80s**

(or 90s or 2000s)

Play in Family Feud style, dividing into 2 teams and giving each a chance to chime in with an answer, going back and forth until the groups reveal all the answers. (Choose the list you want to use based on the age group of your members.)

1981 1991 2001

Dallas 60 Minutes Friends

60 Minutes Rosanne CSI

The Jeffersons Murphy Brown ER

Three’s Company Cheers Everybody Loves

Raymond

Alice Home Improvement Law & Order

The Dukes of Hazzard Designing Women Survivor

Too Close For Comfort Full House MNF

ABC Monday Night Movie Murder, She Wrote The West Wing

MASH Major Dad Will & Grace

One Day At A Time Coach Leap of Faith

**Who Said It? Mick Jagger or John Lennon?**

Anything worth doing is worth overdoing. (Mick)

Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans. (John)

I've managed to avoid tattoos so far. (Mick)

As usual, there is a great woman behind every idiot. (John)

Part of me suspects that I'm a loser, and the other part of me thinks I'm God Almighty. (John)

My mother has always been unhappy with what I do. She would rather I do something nicer, like be a bricklayer. (Mick)

I haven't had the time to plan returning to the scene because I haven't left it. (Mick)

If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace. (John)

I got nasty habits; I take tea at three. (Mick)

Anything worth doing is worth overdoing. (Mick)

I get by with a little help from my friends. (John)

It's all right letting yourself go, as long as you can get yourself back. (Mick)

**Confession Time! Detention Edition**

Each person privately writes on a piece of paper the reason they got sent to detention in high school (or any time they got in trouble during their school years). Put the folded clues in a bowl, (there can be multiple answers per person if you want!) then read one aloud each round. Everyone then votes for who they think wrote it, either by just pointing at the person on the count of three, or else writing their answer on a piece of paper. Every right answer gets one point. If no one guesses the correct person, the person that wrote the clue gets a point.