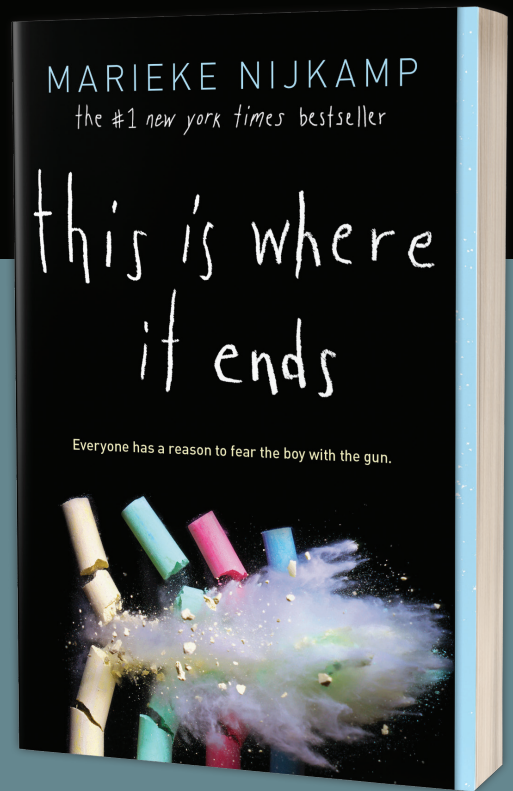


this is where it ends

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Questions about the book

1. There are many different kinds of relationships in this novel: family, friendship, romantic. How do these relationships inform what is at stake for each of the main characters?
2. Each character reacts differently to the shooting. Choose two characters and describe how they responded. Do you agree with the decisions they made? How might you have acted differently?
3. *This Is Where It Ends* is interspersed with texts, social media posts, and blog excerpts. How do you think technology has affected the way we experience and respond to tragedy?
4. If you could save one character in this novel, who would you save and why?

Questions about the characters

SYLV

5. Family is very important to Sylv, so much so that she's willing to give up her dream to take care of her mother. If you were in her shoes, would you do the same? Why or why not?
6. Sylv tries to save Steve and Asha because "we're all responsible for each other." What does Sylv mean by this? Do you agree?
7. Autumn and Sylv keep secrets from each other. Do you think this helps or hurts their relationship? Do you agree with their decisions or would you have encouraged them to speak up?

AUTUMN

8. Autumn doesn't feel as if she belongs in Opportunity. She tells Sylv, "If I stay here, I don't think I'll matter." What does she mean by this?
9. While speaking of Autumn's mother, Autumn's father says, "Dance took everything from her." Is that the case for Autumn too? What did dance give her?

TOMÁS

10. Early in the novel, Tomás has the opportunity to escape the school. Instead, he chooses to try to help his classmates. Discuss Tomás's decision. What would you have done?
11. When Fareed is on the phone with the police, Tomás comments that Fareed suppresses his accent so he won't be marked as a suspect. Do you think that was necessary? Do you think that is fair?

CLAIRE

12. There are moments in the novel when Claire says she hates herself for wanting to be happy. Why does she feel that way? If you were her friend, what would you tell her?
13. Claire and Chris feel helpless as they wait for news about what is happening inside the school. In your opinion, was it more difficult for the characters inside the auditorium or those waiting to hear about their loved ones? Why?

TYLER

14. Tyler told his father he wanted to go back to school to “set things right.” Discuss his motivations. How could he have gone about this differently?
15. Autumn and Tyler were both grieving their mother and dealing with family and school. How did they each cope with their troubles? Why do you think they both felt so alone?

Questions about death and grieving

16. In the epilogue, the survivors come together to remember those they lost by sending lanterns into the sky. Mei describes this as a way to “make sure the darkness is never absolute.” What does that mean to you?
17. How can you ensure the darkness is never absolute—for yourself or your peers or your family?
18. What do you think happens to the survivors after the book ends? What would come next for them? How do you think their experiences changed them?

Questions about school shootings

19. At the end of the book, someone asks, about the shooting: “How could it happen here? Why couldn’t we stop it?” How would you answer those questions?
20. In your opinion, what can be done to prevent school shootings?

