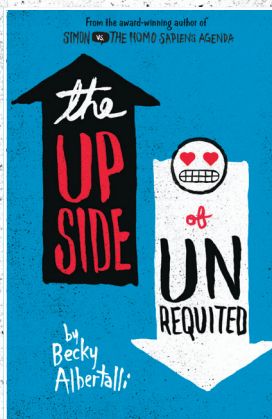
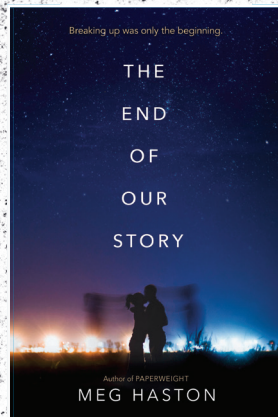
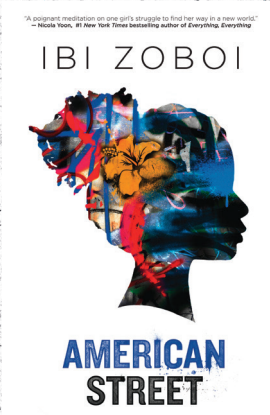
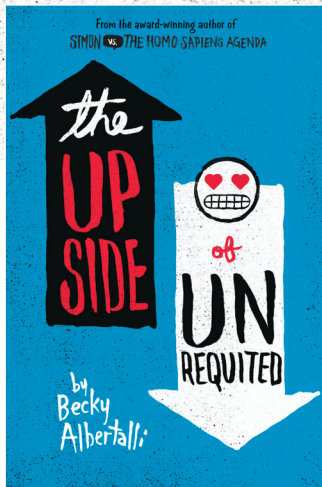


TEEN BOOK CLUB

Featuring
Conversation
Starters,
Discussion
Questions,
and Tips
on How to Run
a Successful
Teen Book Club





About the Book

Seventeen-year-old Molly Peskin-Suso knows all about unrequited love. She's lived through twenty-six crushes, always in secret. Because no matter how many times her twin sister, Cassie, tells her to woman up, Molly can't stomach the idea of rejection. Then Cassie falls in love, and for the first time ever, Molly's cynical twin is a lovesick mess. Luckily, Cassie's new girlfriend comes with a cute hipster-boy sidekick. Will is funny, flirtatious, and just might be perfect crush material. If Molly can win him over, she'll get her first kiss and she'll get her twin back. There's only one problem: Molly's coworker, Reid. He's a chubby Tolkien superfan with a season pass to the Ren Faire, and there's absolutely no way Molly could fall for him...right?

Becky Albertalli is the William C. Morris Award-winning author of *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*

Questions for Group Discussion

- What do we notice about Molly's crushes? What does this say about the type of boys she is attracted to? What does this tell us about her?
- Molly finds herself being pushed away more and more by her twin Cassie as she gets more involved with her girlfriend. How does this affect her relationship with her sister? Talk about the challenges of maintaining existing friendships while starting new ones.
- Cassie thinks that Will would be the perfect boy for Molly to date—he's cute and he's best friends with her girlfriend. Molly has a crush on him, but she is extremely reluctant to follow through because, "There's a reason I'm so careful. Boys like Will don't like girls like me. And if they find out we like them, they are always cruel. Always" (p.78). What does she mean by "girls like me"? Is Molly's tendency to crush on boys from afar more to do with how she sees herself or how others really are?
- How does Molly react to Reid when she first meets him? How is Reid different than the other boys Molly has crushed on? Compare the start of Molly and Reid's relationship to Cassie and Mina's. What are some of the challenges that each of these budding relationships face?
- Molly's moms' wedding planning means that she gets to hear more from both moms about their backstory. What does Molly learn about love and relationships from them?
- Talk about Molly's relationships with her moms, grandmother, and sister. How do her family members affect her issues with anxiety and low self-esteem?
- Molly's aunt Karen rejected Molly's mom, Nadine, and her decision to be involved with another woman, yet Karen quietly comes to see her sister get married. What does this show about her character?
- On the night of her moms' wedding, Molly reflects on the changing relationship between her and Cassie, "I think this is me letting go. Bit by bit. I think these are our tiny steps away from each other. Making not-quite-identical footprints in not-quite-opposite directions" (p.336). What does Molly mean by this? How have both Molly and her sister changed throughout the course of the story?

"A poignant meditation on one girl's struggle to find her way in a new world."
—Nicola Yoon, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Everything, Everything*

IBI ZOBOI



AMERICAN
STREET

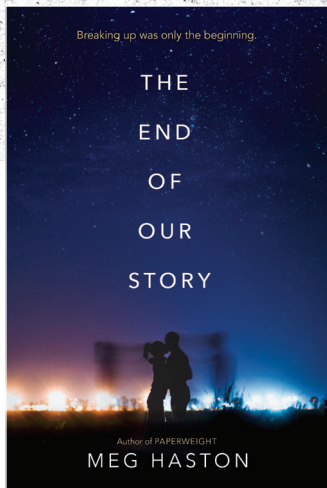
About the Book

On the corner of American Street and Joy Road, Fabiola Toussaint thought she would finally find *une belle vie*—the good life. But after leaving Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Fabiola's mother is detained by U.S. immigration, leaving Fabiola to navigate her loud, American cousins, the grittiness of Detroit's city streets, a new school, and a surprising romance, all on her own. Just as she finds her footing in this strange new world, a dangerous proposition presents itself that could help set her mother free. Trapped at the crossroads of an impossible choice, will she pay the price for the American dream?

Debut author Ibi Zoboi draws on her own experience as a young Haitian immigrant, infusing this lyrical exploration of America with magical realism and *Vodou* culture.

Questions for Group Discussion

- Fabiola's mother promised that life in America would be *une belle vie*—the good life. What are the components of this "good life" and how does it compare to Fabiola's life in Haiti? Talk about Fabiola's initial impressions of life in Detroit. Do they measure up to her expectations of *une belle vie*?
- The Toussaint family had to make many sacrifices to make it in America. Talk about the various sacrifices that Uncle Philip, Matant Jo, and Manman make. Is sacrifice a universal part of the immigrant experience?
- The history of the house on the corner of American Street and Joy Road is a dark one, but Fabiola's uncle didn't realize that when he bought the house, "He thought he was buying American Joy" (p.57). Discuss the symbolism of these intersections and how it relates to Fabiola's journey in America. Have you ever felt at a crossroads in your own life?
- Discuss Fabiola's faith and her reliance on the Haitian spirits (*Iwas*). How does her faith guide her as she transitions to life in America? Fabiola is the only one who seems to pay attention to Bad Leg. Who do you think he is? What role does he ultimately play in the story?
- Discuss the concept of Americanization. When Fabiola greets Matant Jo, Pri, Donna, and Chantal, she doesn't seem to find any semblance of Haitian culture. In what ways does Fabiola embrace American culture? In what ways does she resist it? In order to "make it" in America, do immigrants need to give up aspects of their cultural identity?
- Talk about Donna and Dray's relationship. Fabiola struggles to understand the nature of their relationship, as she witnesses constant emotional and physical abuse. How does Fabiola try to intervene? How can friends and family support a loved one in ending an abusive relationship?
- Detective Stevens seeks Fabiola out early after her arrival in Detroit to present her with an opportunity to release her mother from detainment, but Fabiola knows that opportunities such as this don't come without a cost. She has to choose to whom she'll be loyal—to her mother, to her aunt and cousins, or to Kasim. How does she decide whom to protect and how? What would you have done if you were in her shoes?



LEARN OUR STORY

About the Book

After a lifetime of friendship, Bridge and Wil finally fall in love their junior year—only to break up over a betrayal. The following year, Wil’s family suffers a violent loss, which brings Bridge and Wil back together in shared sorrow ... and a rekindled romance. As she navigates the stormy waters of her new relationship, Bridge struggles to reconcile the sweet boy she knew with the grieving, angry boy Wil has become. Even as she falls deeper in love with her old best friend, Bridge starts to suspect that he’s keeping something from her—something about the night his father died.

Meg Haston is a counselor at a women’s clinic and a private middle school in Florida and the author of *Paperweight*.

Questions for Group Discussion

- Bridge seems to be just as confused and angry by her behavior at the party that leads to her breakup with Wil as he is. Why do you think she went to the party without Wil? Why do you think she kissed Buck back?
 - Wil pushes Bridge away after she tries to apologize and explain that she still loves him after their breakup. We learn later that he wishes she hadn’t given up no matter how many times he told her to go away. Why does Wil push Bridge away when he really doesn’t want her to give up on him?
 - The narrative bounces back and forth between points of time and points of view. Why does the author present the story this way? Would the narrative be the same if it was only told through Bridge’s chronological perspective?
 - While Bridge doesn’t entirely understand why she ended up kissing Buck, she does recognize how she and Wil look at that and the world differently—“Since that night last year, there have been a million times I’ve wished that Wil wasn’t the type of person who lived his life by such absolutes. That he could understand a moment of weakness and forgive it. But he’s not. He doesn’t see the grays.” Her explanation is that she lives in the gray—does this seem to make sense or is she simply trying to justify her own behavior?
 - Wil explains many times over that he is worried that he has inherited his father’s behavior. Knowing what you know about Wil and his behavior, do you think he’s taken after his father the way he fears he has? Why or why not?
 - Why do you think Minna wrote the letters to her daughter and then never mailed them? Do you think that Bridge’s decision to mail them repaired Minna’s family or further tore it apart?
- “Haston pours authentic awareness and intensity into her characters, who fight to be together despite heartbreak, trauma, and the heavy realization that “life is never black-and-white . . . most of us have learned to tread in the gray.”**
—*Booklist*



About the Book

Gem has never known an adult that she can truly rely on: not her mother, whose issues make it hard for her to keep food on the table, and definitely not her father, whose intermittent presence is the only thing worse than his frequent absence. The one constant in her life has been her sister Dixie, even though they have recently been growing apart. When their dad returns home for the first time in years and tries to insert himself back into their lives, Gem finds herself with an unexpected opportunity: three days with Dixie on their own in Seattle. But this short trip soon becomes something more, as Gem discovers that to save herself, she may have to sever the one bond she's tried so hard to keep.

Sara Zarr is the author of six novels for teens, including *Story of a Girl*, a National Book Award finalist.

Questions for Group Discussion

- Gem cannot remember a time when she wasn't looking out for her younger sister, Dixie, but now that they are both in high school, Dixie hardly acknowledges Gem. Why? How does this affect their relationship?
 - Despite her estranged relationship with her parents, there are adults who pay attention to and want to help Gem, such as her guidance counselor Mr. Bergstrom, and the cafeteria worker Luca. Why is she resistant to accepting their help when she needs it?
 - No matter how much Gem says she doesn't need acceptance, she quickly makes a connection with Kip. Why do you think she is so willing to let her in and be friends with her?
 - In Gem's second writing assignment for her school counselor, she examines the history of relationships in her extended family. What conclusions do you think Gem draws from considering these relationships alongside those of her immediate family?
 - Gem's mother tells the girls that money doesn't fix everything when she throws out all of the food their father has bought them. Do you agree what she says? Do you agree with her actions? Why or why not?
 - Gem's battle between loyalty to her family and her desire to have a better life culminates in a decision to ask for help and leave home. What was the tipping point that led her to decide that this was the best choice she had—no matter what her sister decided to do?
- *"With a vivid, well-rounded cast of characters, including the adults, and a poignant portrayal of family dynamics, Zarr's frank, resonant story is both bittersweet and triumphant."
—Booklist (starred review)**

TIPS

for Organizing

A BOOK GROUP for TEENS

- The fastest way to advertise is through word of mouth. Social media accounts run by the grown-ups are only successful in starting a book group or promoting your event if you have teens sharing your posts. Recruit a few enthusiastic readers who are willing to get things started.
- Give them options and let them decide. Pull a list of potential books and share information about them with your readers.
- Come prepared with a few good questions, but let them drive the discussion. Let them start by introducing themselves and sharing their thoughts about the book to begin with. Let their conversation about the book start organically and use the questions if and when you need them.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It can be scary to speak up for the first time – especially if you're new to the group – so don't feel the need to fill the silence with chatter. The quiet gives them some time to think about how to answer a question you offered or to build up the courage to say something.
- Be ready with information about the next book title before they leave!

Discussion guide created by Cindy Minnich, a high school English teacher and certified school librarian in Pennsylvania.

