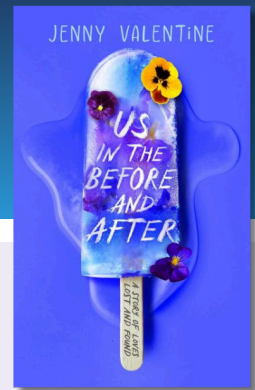




BOOK TALK CARDS



THEMES:

Friendships • Death
Grief • Ghosts

Us in the Before and After

by Jenny Valentine

At the start of a long, hot summer, best friends Elk and Mab face the fallout of a sudden death, and the lifelong consequences of a single tragic act.



OUR THOUGHTS

“Beautifully written and utterly devastating study of friendship and grief. Sure to stay with readers for a long time and a fantastic comeback for this author.”

TIME TO TALK

- 1 Have you ever had a best friend? What is/was so special about them? Why or why not?
- 2 The girls first meet when Mab leads Elk out of a maze she is lost in. Why do you think their friendship starts in this way?
- 3 Why do you think Elk's mum describes Mab as 'free range' (p.40)? How are the two girls different from each other?
- 4 Mab and Elk's friendship is threatened by Elk beginning a relationship with France. Do you think she should have got together with him? Why or why not?
- 5 Why do you think the author sets the book during a heatwave? Do you think a setting of colder weather would be as effective?
- 6 Ghosts feature heavily in the novel. Do you believe in ghosts?
- 7 Elk speaks to a grief councillor about the death of her gran. How do other characters deal (or not) with their grief? Which approaches do you think are useful?
- 8 Mab frequently suggests she would have done things differently or 'lived more' if she had the time again. What, if anything, would you do differently if you had to live your life over again?
- 9 Do you think the book would work as well if the two main characters were boys? Why or why not?
- 10 Why do you think the author created the character of Knox, a little boy? What role does he play in helping the protagonists accept the events of the 'after'?

TAKE THE TEXT FURTHER WITH OUR TOP 5 TITLES TO CONTINUE THE THEME:

