

HOW TO START YOUR OWN BOOK CLUB

Think it would be hard to start your own book club? Think again!
All you need is a little bit of organization and some
friends who are as excited about the books they read as you are.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

The best way to find people to be in your reading group is to ask your friends.

Think of all the people you know who like to read, and ask them to join. If you still don't feel like you have enough people, ask each of your friends to bring someone else. You can usually get a good discussion going with 6–8 people, but any number that is comfortable for you will work. If you're having trouble finding enough cool people to form your reading group, check with your school, local library, or bookstore to see if there's a group that you can join.

Figure out when and where you want to meet.

Some groups meet once a month, some meet every other month. You could get together at someone's house, in a park, on the beach, or in your school's library. If it sounds too official and overwhelming to decide all the "wheres" and "whens" right now, don't worry! It's YOUR group and so YOU get to make all the decisions. All you have to do is get together once, and you can work out the rest of the details later.

Decide how you will choose books, and how the discussions will be run.

This is another one that sounds a little scary but totally isn't. Maybe you have a favorite author that you and your friends would like to focus on. Or maybe you want to take turns picking your favorite book. Maybe one person likes to talk and would like to lead the discussion, or maybe you would rather just get together and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (try the publisher's website) or at your local library or bookstore.

The most important thing to remember is that there's no right or wrong way to have a reading group. Do what you're comfortable with and always have fun, and your group will be a success!

For more discussion guides to get your reading group going, visit
www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians



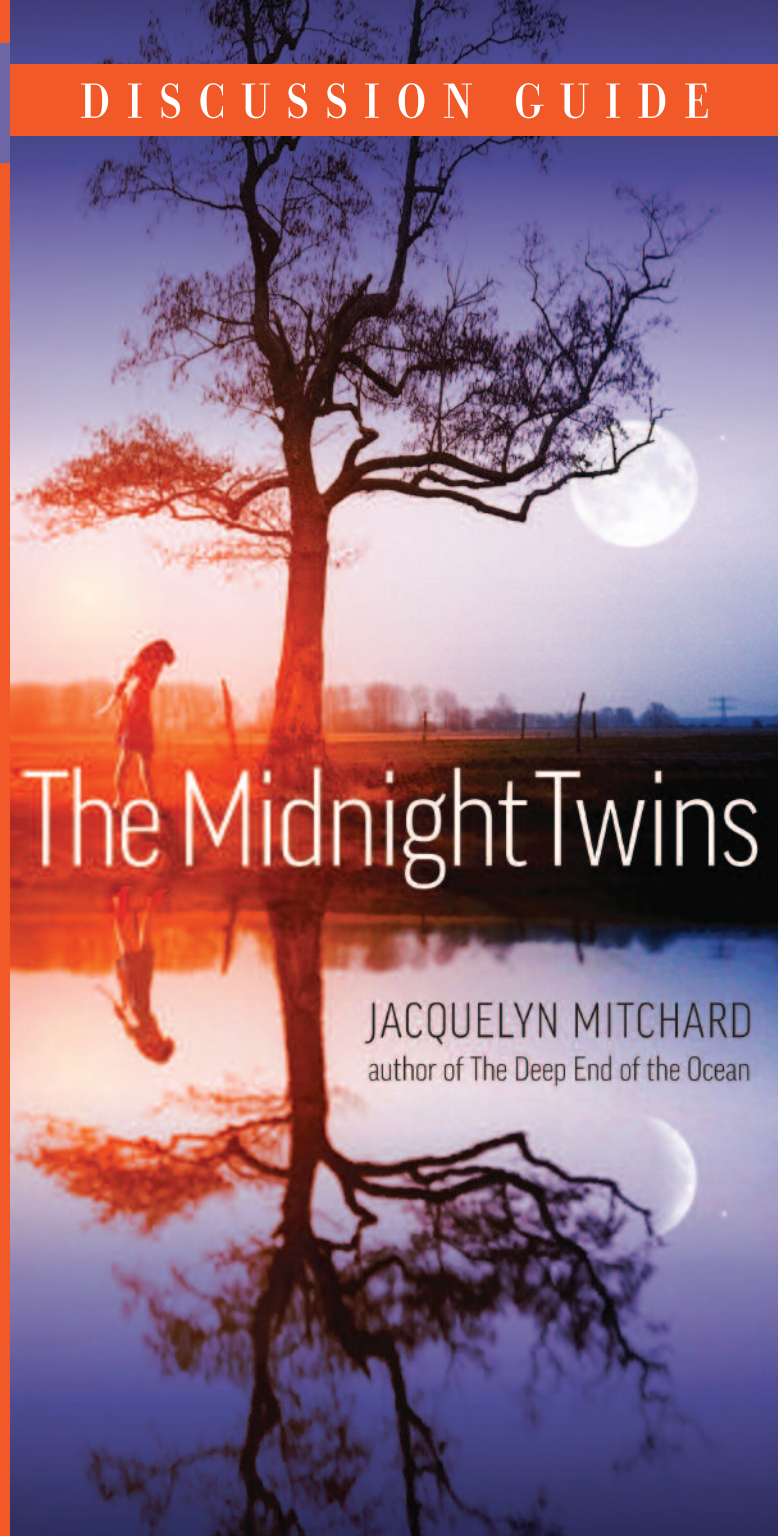
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DISCUSSION GUIDE



The Midnight Twins

JACQUELYN MITCHARD
author of *The Deep End of the Ocean*

ABOUT THE BOOK



ISBN: 978-1-59514-160-6 (HC)
Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up
\$16.99

Meredith and Mallory Brynn are mirror-image twins born on either side of midnight on one New Year's Eve. They have always been inseparable. But after they are nearly killed in a mysterious fire on their thirteen birthday, the bond that has always joined them unravels. They begin to experience visions and dreams that reveal the deep secrets kept by the people around them.

Meredith and Mallory realize they have each been given a gift: Meredith can see deep into the past, while Mallory can see the future. But when they discover that one boy is not what they imagined, their lives will be changed forever. If they can survive...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



JACQUELYN MITCHARD's first novel, *The Deep End of the Ocean*, was named one of the ten most influential books of the past 25 years by *USA Today*. A Chicago native, Jacquelyn now lives in south central Wisconsin with her husband, seven children, and pet dog. For more author information, visit www.jackiemitchard.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the significance of the twins' first names?
- On the first page, the author writes, "Meredith and Mallory were identical twins. But they were opposites." What are some of the ways in which they are opposites of one another?
- What is the significance of the twins being born on either side of midnight? Does it make sense that Merry is the older twin? Why is Merry the twin to see the past and Mally the twin to see the future?
- Merry and Mally have a secret language that only they understand. In what instances does this benefit them, and in what instances is it a problem that no one else can understand them? What sorts of ideas can they express with their secret language, and why would regular English be insufficient for expressing these ideas?
- What role does the twins' grandmother, Gwenny, play in their lives? How much do you think she actually understands about the twins' experiences? In what ways is she a valuable resource to the twins, and in what ways does she leave them to figure things out on their own?
- On page five, Gwenny tells Campbell, "Twins are different from other babies. And not just because there are two of them. They're joined. Not joined like kids who are born sharing a hip or a rib. Joined by spirit." Throughout the book, the twins undergo many changes and disagreements. Are they "joined by spirit" at all times, and, if so, how can you tell?
- Meredith and Mallory understand each other better than anyone else does. What are some of the things about them that their parents, friends, and neighbors do not understand? How does each of the other characters—Campbell, Drew, and Kim—feel about being left out of the twins' special bond?
- What purpose does Eden's character serve? Why does she take such an interest in Mally's situation?
- As a five-year-old, Merry gets lost in the woods. Eight years later, David Jellico chases her through those same woods. What are the parallels between those two dangerous situations? How do the twins' responses to danger change or remain the same over the years?
- Why do the twins decide not to tell anyone about David's true nature? Do you think this was a wise decision, or do you think David's family deserved to know what he was really like?
- Was David just pure evil, or did he have any redeeming characteristics? Did he deserve to die?
- Why do you think twins run only through the *women* in the Brynn's family?
- It matters not just what you see, but also how you interpret it. Think of a few instances where the twins have similar visions, but interpret these visions differently. What do their different interpretations of the same information signify about their personalities?
- Because Merry can see only the past and Mally can see only the future, they must work together to get a clear picture of the truth. How do they learn to do this, and what happens when they do not successfully combine their visions?
- Would you want to have visions like the twins'? If you could see into the future or into the past, which would you prefer, and why?