Extension Activities

- **I. Essential Objects.** Identify objects that represent important events from your life, like the lost items Madison finds in *The Everafter*. Create a collage depicting your objects and include captions that describe the events that the objects represent, as well as their significance to your life. Share your collage with the other members of your reading group.
- **2. The Real Deal.** With your reading group, discuss Sandra's choice to write honestly about a painful life experience for her college application essay. Then follow the essay instructions from the novel and write your own equally honest essay—an essay that offers the real deal on who you are and what you believe.
- 3. Quantum Mechanics and the Meaning of Life. Research quantum mechanics theories, particularly aspects that relate to particle-wave duality. Also investigate the Many Worlds theory. How do these theories relate to *The Everafter*? Create a multimedia presentation about the findings of your research to share with your reading group. Use your presentation to launch a discussion about your opinions and those of your group members.
- **4. By the Numbers.** Select a significant memory from each of these ages in your life: 3, 11, 13, and your current age. Then write a narrative essay in which you describe why these memories are important to you. How has your perspective on each incident that you have chosen changed over time? Do you think you would have selected different memories at a different point in your life? Explain.
- **5. The Color of Emotion.** On page 214, Madison says that Tammy's emotions appear as colors that brighten and darken. Taking inspiration from this imagery, craft depictions of emotions using varying colors or abstract forms. For example, what color, shape, texture, or pattern would you use to describe happiness? Or anger? Or jealousy? Or surprise? Write a short companion poem for each of your visual representations.

Praise for The Everafter

"In *The Everafter*, Maddy relives moments from her life which broke her heart, made her laugh uncontrollably, and forced her to grow. Amy Huntley's book will do the same for you."

-Jay Asher, author of Thirteen Reasons Why

"A mystery about life's greatest mysteries, a love story that transcends death, a ghost story with real substance, and an altogether fascinating novel about the redemptive possibilities in lost things."

-Gabrielle Zevin, author of Elsewhere



About the Author

Amy Huntley, a high school English teacher for eighteen years, makes her debut as a novelist with *The Everafter*. Amy confesses to using her career as a teacher as an excuse to read more than one hundred books each year. After all, part of her job is to put the right book in the right student's hands! Amy Huntley lives in Michigan. Please visit her online at www.amyhuntley.com.

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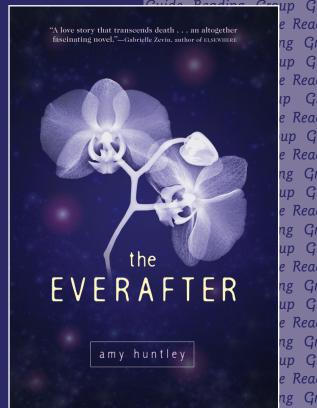
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Questions and activities prepared by Laura Williams McCaffrey, a library consultant and children's book author, East Montpelier, Vermont. Reading Group Guide

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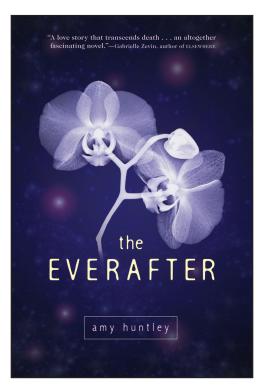
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About the Book

"I'm dead. Not my-parents-told-me-to-be-home-by-twelve-and-it's-two-o'clock-now dead. Just dead. Literally." So begins Madison's story of existence in a dark, lonely place she calls Is. She doesn't have a body and doesn't remember how she died. Before her in the darkness hang glowing items she lost while alive. The items offer her chances to return to her life and discover fresh truths about it. They also offer clues about her perplexing death. As Madison examines both her life and her death, she starts to realize what might be beyond Is—and how she might travel further into eternity's vast mysteries.

Discussion Questions

- I. On reading the title of this novel, *The Everafter*, what did you expect the story would be about? How did your thoughts on what the title means change as you read?
- 2. What are the novel's primary themes? How does the story's unique structure support those themes?
- 3. In which genre would you characterize *The Everafter*? Is it mystery, fantasy, realistic fiction, or something else? Explain.
- 4. What are the several states of existence that Madison experiences while dead? What scientific, religious, and philosophical terms might you use to name these states of existence?
- 5. Madison discovers a great deal about herself because of things she has lost. In what ways do people learn as much about themselves through what they lose as through what they gain?
- 6. Why does Madison at times choose to change her life and at times choose not to? If you were her, would you make the same choices that she does? Why or why not? If you had the opportunity to change events in your life, which ones would you change and why?
- 7. On page 124, Madison says of death: "No one wants to believe life really does end this way . . . interrupted, unresolved, and unfinished." By the end of the novel, does Madison's life still seem "interrupted, unresolved, and unfinished"? Why or why not?
- 8. Why do Gabe and Sandra keep secrets from Madison about their parents? How might keeping such secrets help people cope with difficult situations, and how might doing so hinder them?

- 9. Reread the scientific theories presented on pages 106 and 107. How do these theories relate to Madison's situation in Is? How do they relate to the novel's themes?
- 10. What are Madison's perspectives on God and religion? How have they changed since she died, and how have they stayed the same? Do you agree with her thoughts about God and religion? Why or why not?
- 11. What do you think Madison's mother means when she says, "Without pain, you wouldn't understand happiness. And without happiness, you wouldn't feel the pain" (page 158)? Using examples from your own life, explain why you agree or disagree with this sentiment
- 12. At which points in the novel does Madison make flawed or inaccurate assumptions about situations? What do you think causes her to make these incorrect assumptions? When you've made similar mistakes, what caused you to do so? What have you learned from your mistakes? What does Madison learn from hers?
- 13. What do you think Madison means when she says of the power of words: "They have some kind of miraculous ability to make me who I am" (page 170). Do words have the same "miraculous ability" for you? Does something else in your life help define who you are?
- 14. After reading Sandra's college application essay, what discoveries do you think she ultimately makes about life, death, friendship, and poetry? How does Madison help her make these discoveries? Who in your life has most significantly changed your understanding of the world? How did he or she do so, and what has been the result?

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