



how to love

BY *Katie Cotugno*

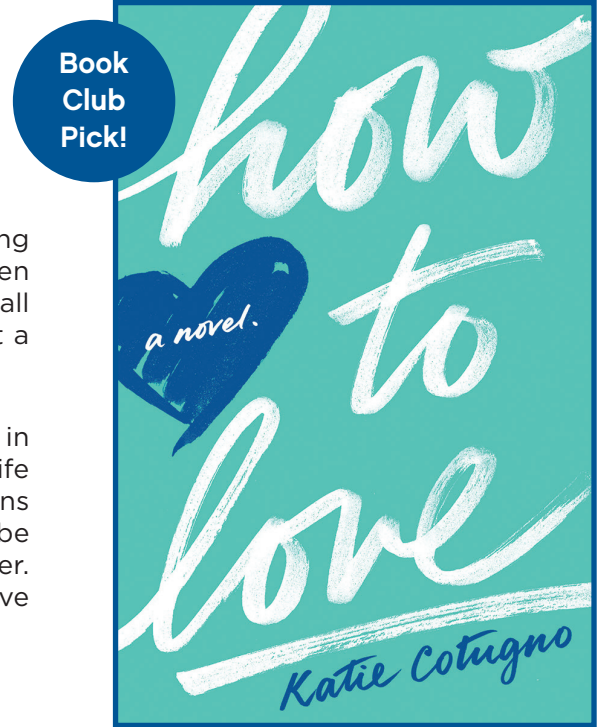
ABOUT THE BOOK

BEFORE: Reena Montero has loved Sawyer LeGrande for as long as she can remember. But he's never noticed that Reena even exists . . . until one day, impossibly, he does. Reena and Sawyer fall in messy, complicated love. But then Sawyer disappears without a word, leaving a devastated—and pregnant—Reena behind.

AFTER: Almost three years have passed, and there's a new love in Reena's life: her daughter, Hannah. Reena's gotten used to life without Sawyer, but just as suddenly as he disappeared, he turns up again. Reena wants nothing to do with him, though she'd be lying if she said his being back wasn't stirring something in her. After everything that's happened, can Reena really let herself love Sawyer LeGrande again?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do the opening lines of the book foreshadow about the relationship between Reena and Sawyer?
2. How does Allie's revelation to Reena on page 41 alter their friendship forever?
3. What does Reena mean when she says, "The answer, I always thought, was to get out of town" (page 49)? Why is her desire to get away ironic?
4. Why is it so hard for Reena to stay angry at Sawyer despite everything he's done?
5. Do you think Reena and Allie would have resolved their friendship if given the chance?
6. Why is the timing of Allie's death significant? How is it a turning point in Reena and Sawyer's relationship?
7. Do you think Reena is truly happy in her relationship with Aaron? Would these feelings be the same or different if Sawyer never returned?
8. How is Soledad a good maternal role model for Reena? Why is having a strong family backbone to rely on important for a teen parent?
9. How have Reena and Sawyer grown, both separately and together, in the time they have been apart?
10. Do you think Reena's choices regarding Hannah would be any different if Sawyer wasn't the baby's father?
11. What do you learn about Reena's character when she breaks up with Aaron (page 206)? Why is it the right thing for her to do?
12. What is the significance of the pomegranates in the story?
13. Why is Reena's family hesitant about her involvement with Sawyer, both in the beginning and later? What would you do in Reena's position?
14. What does Reena mean when she states, "I did love him, is the awfulness of it" (page 308)?
15. Why does Reena feel guilty about her dad's heart attack? How is she finally able to let go of this guilt?
16. How is travel a metaphor in Reena's life? What do you think happens after the novel ends?
17. Imagine the story from Sawyer's perspective. Why do you think he leaves town—and Reena—instead of facing his problems? Would their relationship have worked out the same way if he stayed?



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