



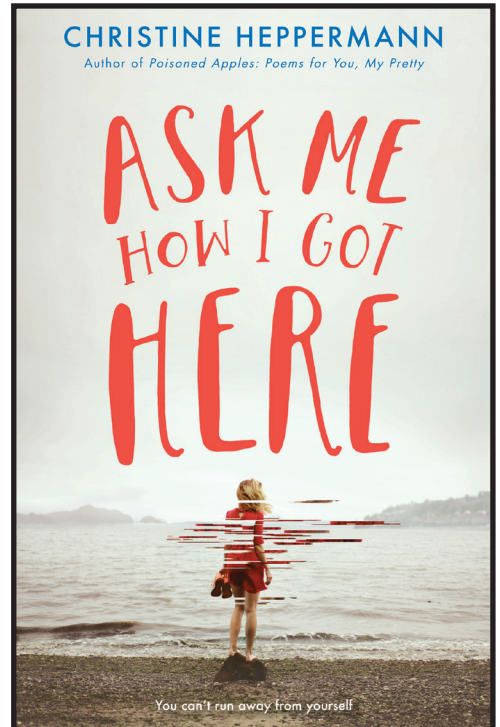
# ASK ME HOW I GOT HERE

CHRISTINE HEPPERMAN



## ABOUT THE BOOK

Addie has always known what she was running toward, whether in cross country, in her all-girls Catholic school, or in love. Until she and her boyfriend—her sensitive, good-guy boyfriend—are careless one night, and she gets pregnant. Addie makes the difficult choice to have an abortion. And after that—even though she knows it was the right decision for her—nothing is the same. She doesn't want anyone besides her parents and her boyfriend to know what happened; she doesn't want to run cross country anymore; she can't bring herself to be excited about anything. Until she reconnects with Juliana, a former teammate who's going through her own dark places. Christine Heppermann writes with an unflinching honesty and a deep sensitivity about the complexities of being a teenager, being a woman. Her free verse poems are moving, provocative, and often full of wry humor and a sharp wit.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Ask Me How I Got Here* is a novel in verse and tells a story through a series of poems. How does this literary style impact the story? Have you read other novels in verse?
2. The novel features a number of entries in Addie's handwriting. What makes these entries different from the other typed verses in the book?
3. Addie focuses on the Virgin Mary a great deal. Why is the image of the Virgin Mary and her experience so significant to Addie? What are some of the parallels and differences Addie draws between herself and the Virgin Mary?
4. Addie eventually tells her parents about her pregnancy, but hides that she quit the cross country team. Why do you think she hides this information from her parents, when they supported her abortion decision?
5. Describe Addie's relationship with Nick. How does it change over the course of the story?
6. Addie's poems range in length from a couple of lines to two pages. How did these differences in length affect how you read the book? How did these differences communicate Addie's feelings throughout the novel?
7. How does Addie's class project allow her to open up to a friend?
8. Addie's experience is contrasted in the novel with Allison's descriptions of Hope's Journey. What are some of the things women in Hope's Journey do? How do Allison's descriptions of the program make Addie feel?
9. What type of relationship does Addie have with her friend Claire? How does it change after Addie quits the cross country team?
10. Compare Addie's feelings toward running before her abortion and after it. Why do you think this change occurred?
11. Addie and Juliana start as friends and then become romantically involved. Why do you think they end up falling for each other? Was there any foreshadowing of the evolution of their relationship? How does Juliana's confession to Addie affect her?
12. *Ask Me How I Got Here* takes the reader through six months of Addie's life. Some months contain more poems than others. Why do you think the book is broken up by months? How does the pacing choice impact the story?