

DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE ONLY THING BIGGER THAN THE WORLD IS FEAR

Lucy's life by the pond has always been full. She has water and friends, laughter and the love of her adoptive mother, Lynn, who has made sure that Lucy's childhood was very different from her own. Yet it seems Lucy's future is settled already—a house, a man, children, and a water source—and anything beyond their life by the pond is beyond reach.

When disease burns through their community, the once life-saving water of the pond might be the source of what's killing them now. Rumors of desalinization plants in California have lingered in Lynn's mind, and the prospect of a “normal” life for Lucy sets the two of them on an epic journey west to face new dangers: hunger, mountains, deserts, betrayal, and the perils of a world so vast that Lucy fears she could be lost forever, only to disappear in a handful of dust.

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER QUIZ

CHAPTER ONE

- What did Maddy die of?
- Why do people come to see Vera? What does she have a reputation for?
- What does Lucy do that Lynn specifically tells her not to do (Lucy asks Stebbs to keep the secret that she did this)?
- What are people afraid is the source of the sickness?

CHAPTER TWO

- Lynn gives Lucy a lecture about not doing what?
- What body part seems to be affected by the people who don't die from polio?
- What is the danger in not having healthy adults?

CHAPTER THREE

- What happened to Adam's dad when he was taking him back to his house?

- Who do Carter and Lucy go to talk to?
- Why do they go to talk to this person?
- Where does this person live?
- Why does this person live here?
- What did Carter and Lucy do to this person to make him/her dislike them?
- What does Vera determine is causing the polio?

CHAPTER FOUR

- Carter isn't the only person who might be the carrier for polio. Who is the other person?
- Who are Stebbs, Lynn, Lucy, and Vera afraid might tell everyone that this person could also be the carrier?
- Who does Abigail think her husband Devon was with romantically?
- What decision does Lucy and Lynn make in order to protect everyone?
- What item does Lucy have that she will need to keep secret from other people?

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER QUIZ

CHAPTER FIVE

- What two people does Lucy spend a long time saying goodbye to?
- Who does Lucy say she'll name two babies after?
- Where are Lucy and Lynn going?
- How is the water supposed to be different in this place?

CHAPTER SIX

- What is wrong with Lucy?
- Why is Lynn worried about this?
- What does Lynn go to find to help this problem?
- What city are Lynn and Lucy near?
- Why is this city important?
- Why is Lynn wary of stopping here? What do they do to newcomers?

CHAPTER SEVEN

- Who wakes Lucy up when she's sleeping?
- What's happened to this person?
- What does this person decide to do as Lucy and Lynn travel west?
- How will Lucy help this person?
- Why is it important that this person goes to Entargo?
- What happens that Lynn is concerned that she didn't see coming?
- What does Lynn blame on critters?
- What really happened to the item that Lynn blames on critters?

CHAPTER EIGHT

- What do Lynn and Lucy find when they get to Entargo?
- What do Lynn and Lucy camp near?
- What do they see at night?
- What does Lucy do before Lynn can stop her to check to see if something they find is safe?
- What do Lucy and Lynn eat for dinner?

CHAPTER NINE

- Who comes to Lynn and Lucy's camp when they are sleeping?

- What has happened to this person prior to them coming to Lynn and Lucy camp?
- Where is this person originally from (where did he/she grow up)?
- What job did this person used to do?
- What do Lynn and Lucy do with this person?
- What two items does this person share with Lynn?

CHAPTER TEN

- Joss' comments give Lucy a new goal. What is this goal?
- Why does Lynn say Joss is walking so close to Lucy?
- What does Joss discover about Lucy?
- How does she discover this?
- What will happen if Lucy tells Lynn that Joss has discovered this?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

- Describe the three men that Lynn, Lucy, and Joss find.
- What does Joss say about these three men?
- What item do they find a field full of?
- What does Lucy pretend to have so she can talk to Lynn?
- What does Lynn reveal to Lucy about Joss?

CHAPTER TWELVE

- What does Lucy find in the old shed behind the house that they are staying in that makes Lynn laugh?
- What happens to Lucy?
- What happens to Joss?
- What did Vera give Lynn for emergencies?
- What does Lynn do to Lucy that Lucy says makes even grown men cry in pain?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

- Who is with the men that Lucy and Lynn meet on the road?
- What mode of transportation are they using?
- What do these people want?
- What happens to these people?
- What do Lynn and Lucy take from these people?
- Who do they leave behind with a hurt leg?

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER QUIZ

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

- What is Lucy and Lynn's biggest enemy as they travel on horseback?
- What does Lucy name her horse?
- What color is Lynn's horse?
- What river do they have to cross?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

- What does Lucy find out Lynn has been doing with her food?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

- What will Lucy remember Nebraska being full of?
- What do Lynn and Lucy find that halts their traveling for a few days?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

- What two things does Lynn want Lucy to decide between?
- What choice does Lynn seem to want Lucy to make?
- What choice does Lucy make?
- When hiding out by the creek from the rain, what does Lynn and Lucy find?
- Where does this thing they found end up at the end of the chapter?
- What do Lucy and Lynn do at the very end of the chapter?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

- What happens to Brown Horse?
- What is the name of the man who finds Lucy and Lynn?
- What does he help with?
- What object does this man need to help with the above answer?
- Who is this man looking for?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

- What does Fletcher tell Lucy and Lynn about California?
- What is the name of the safe place that Fletcher tells Lynn and Lucy about?
- What physical obstacle is Lucy worried about?
- What does Fletcher ask Lynn and Lucy to allow?

- How do Lynn and Lucy respond?

CHAPTER TWENTY

- What does Fletcher name Brown Horse?
- Who finally falls asleep after a fire is made?
- How did Fletcher meet his wife?
- What is his wife's name?
- Who does Lucy tell Fletcher about?

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

- What obstacle does Lynn, Lucy, and Fletcher encounter on the mountain?
- How do they deal with it?
- What medical condition happens to Lynn when she's digging?
- What does Fletcher say is the cause of this?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

- Why does Fletcher tell Lucy that he wants her to remember how much Lynn is suffering and bleeding.
- What does Lynn worry about now with Fletcher?
- What was the weather like when they finally came out of the mountains?
- Who does Lucy tell Lynn she misses at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

- What does Lynn refuse to give up?
- What happens to Fletcher?
- What threat do Lynn and Lucy encounter while on the road?
- Where do they go to avoid this threat?
- What happens to Lucy in the canyons?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

- What item of clothing does Lucy lose when trying to fight for her life in the water?
- What does Lucy see in the water that makes her cry?
- What does Lucy find next to an electrical tower?
- Lucy sees a flash in the distance, what is making the flash?
- What secret does Lucy reveal?

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER QUIZ

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

- What do Lynn and Lucy have in their arms?
- Why is this item there?
- What city are Lynn and Lucy in?
- What does Nora call Lucy that makes her think of Vera?
- What item is Lynn missing that worries her?
- Who does Lynn say is in charge?
- Lucy asks to speak to someone important. What is the name of the person who comes to talk with her?
- What makes him unusual?
- What does she show him?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

- How old does Ben reveal that he is?
- What object can't they keep out of the town and it gets into everything?
- Ben reveals that his grandfather took and stored water from what two big bodies of water?
- Where does Ben's dad work?
- Describe Lander physically.
- What vegetable does Lander give to Lucy?
- What does Lucy give to Lynn?
- Why do they only live on the first two stories of the hotels?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

- Lucy doesn't like the taste of the water. What does Ben say makes it different?
- What item does Lynn want to talk to Lander about?
- What animal has infested the town?
- What are these animals prohibiting people from doing?
- How does everyone think Lynn can help with this problem?

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

- Why does Nora hate the mountain lions?
- What was Nora's daughter's job?
- Who did she do it with?

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

- What are Ben and Lucy doing in this chapter?
- Why is Ben carrying flags?

- Ben asks Lucy if she will go with Lynn if she decides she wants to leave. How does Lucy respond?
- Who is Ben's mom?
- Who did Nora have her daughter with?
- What does Lucy realize there aren't many of in the town?
- What does Lucy learn Lander wants to do to Lynn?
- What does Ben give to Lucy for her and her mom?
- Why does he give this to them?
- What disease swept through the town?
- Why does Ben say they would have saved Lucy and Lynn no matter what?

CHAPTER THIRTY

- What happened to the guns in the city?
- What does Nora think Lucy would be good at (career-wise)?
- What does Nora reveal about a person who is a carrier for polio?

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

- What does Lucy see in the distance when she is witching for water?
- What does Ben make her promise to tell him if it happens?
- Why does Lucy say she wants to leave?
- What does Lynn reveal she did to Lucy?
- Who essentially takes over Lynn's role of being a mother to Lucy?

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

- Who is Lucy sleeping with now?
- Who comes to talk to Lucy in the middle of the night?
- Who/what is brought back when the car goes into the dessert that seems unusual?
- Ben reveals to Lucy why he believes he's so smart. What invention does he show to her?
- What does Lucy do to Nora?

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

- What is going on outside that helps Lucy find out what room Lynn is in?
- What does Lucy do to the guard?

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER QUIZ

- Why does Lynn refuse to run away with Lucy? What does she want first?
- What does Lynn do to Lucy when she refuses to wait for Lynn to do this thing?
- What two things does Lynn ask Lander for?
- What does she say she'll do if she doesn't get them?
- What does Lucy do to Lander?
- What does Ben say he thinks Lander did to him?
- Why does no one bother Lynn and Lucy as they try to leave?
- What does Lynn reveal to Lucy about killing Carter?

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

- What creates electricity in California?
- Where does Lynn and Lucy meet Dan (the first man they encounter in California)?
- What do they tell that man, so he knows they are friendly?
- What is Lynn and Lucy's house that they claimed near?
- What does Lynn not like?
- Where does Lucy start working when they get settled?
- What does Lynn reveal to Lucy that she needs to do?

This guide aligns with Common Core Standards ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10 10



MINDY MCGINNIS

Mindy McGinnis is an assistant YA librarian who lives in Ohio. She graduated from Otterbein University with a BA in English Literature and Religion. Mindy grew up in the woods, and had a deep desire to see if she could survive out there on her own if the situation ever presented itself. That never happened, and the introduction of the internet has quelled that urge. She loves being a writer, because it's the only occupation where you can legitimately stare into space and claim to be working.

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER QUIZ ANSWER KEY

CHAPTER ONE

- Polio
- Healer
- Washed up in the stream
- The pond

CHAPTER TWO

- Kissing
- Legs
- They won't be able to protect themselves (or the water)

CHAPTER THREE

- He became infected with polio and couldn't move
- Devon's wife (or Adam's Mom or Abigail)
- To tell her what's happened to her son and husband.
- At the top of the hill (away from everyone)
- She doesn't trust anyone (this provides a lookout)
- Played a joke where they swapped her real cow with a stuffed animal cow
- Carter

CHAPTER FOUR

- Lucy
- Monica
- Lynn
- To leave the pond
- Her witching stick

CHAPTER FIVE

- Vera and Carter
- Carter
- California
- They are able to take ocean water and clean it (desalinization)

CHAPTER SIX

- She has a blister
- It could get infected
- A new pair of shoes for Lucy
- Entargo
- It is where Lucy was born
- They check the blood of people who enter and shoot you if you're not healthy (Lynn is nervous because Lucy could still be the carrier for polio)

CHAPTER SEVEN

- Carter
- He got attacked (someone beat him up and robbed him)
- Follow behind them
- She'll leave bits of her food for him
- They'll test his blood to see if he's the carrier
- Rain (a storm)
- Drinking one of the rain filled containers of water
- Cater drank it

CHAPTER EIGHT

- Everyone is dead
- A big lake
- Fires (other people have made fires around the lake)
- Drinks the water
- Fish

CHAPTER NINE

- Joss
- The group she was traveling from left her when other people ran them out of their camping spot
- Florida
- Yoga instructor
- They allow her to travel with them
- Soup and wine

CHAPTER TEN

- Find Carter again
- She's using her for cover
- She's a dowser
- She was going through her bag (said she was getting out her water bottles to fill)
- Lynn will kill Joss

CHAPTER ELEVEN

- They are dead (hanged)
- She was traveling with them
- Corn
- Blister
- That Joss wasn't traveling with those men (she made it up)

CHAPTER TWELVE

- Five gallon buckets
- She gets shot in the shoulder

- She leaves them
- Honey
- Stitches up her shoulder

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

- Joss
- Horses
- Lucy (because of her dousing ability)
- Lynn shoots most of them
- Their horses (three of them)
- Joss

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

- The heat/sun
- Spatter
- Black
- Mississippi

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

- Not eating it

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

- Graveyards
- A house (by a creek)

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

- Whether to stay and live at this house or to continue to California
- Stay and live at the house
- Continue to California
- A woman, man, and two children
- In their house
- They leave

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

- He hurts his leg (becomes lame)
- Fletcher
- Brown Horse
- Apple Cider Vinegar
- His wife

CHAPTER NINETEEN

- That there is nothing normal about California (it's been hit by the same shortage as everyone else has)
- Sand City
- The mountains
- To let him travel with them
- They allow him to come along

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER QUIZ ANSWER KEY

CHAPTER TWENTY

- Terra Cotta
- Lynn
- On the road/traveling
- Rose
- Carter

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

- Rockslide blocking their path
- They are digging through it with their hands
- She gets a bloody nose
- From the high altitude

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

- So she doesn't turn around and take Lynn back through the mountains to find Carter
- That he will leave her and Lynn
- Heavy rain
- Vera (her grandma)

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

- Spatter
- He leaves and goes off on his own
- A person is following them
- The canyons (or follows the creek into the canyons)
- She gets swept away in the water during a rainstorm

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

- Boots
- Spatter
- Lynn
- A car
- She can witch water

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

- An IV
- To give them water/liquid
- Las Vegas
- Little One
- Her gun
- Lucy
- Ben

- He's a young boy
- How she can witch water

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

- Eighteen
- Sand
- Lakes and pools
- The gardens
- Massive man, biggest Lucy has ever seen
- Tomato
- Tomato
- The heat is too hot when they get any higher

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

- Chlorine
- Her gun
- Mountain Lions
- Getting water
- She can shoot them

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

- Her daughter was killed by one
- Scavenging houses for supplies
- Ben

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

- Witching water
- To mark where Lucy finds water
- She would go with Lynn (they stay together)
- Bailey
- Lander
- Women
- Get her pregnant
- A taser
- In case any of the guys try to rape them
- Cholera
- They need women

CHAPTER THIRTY

- The people who weren't originally from Las Vegas that were driven out took them

- A caregiver/healer
- It would leave their body after a few weeks

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

- A car
- If Lynn gets pregnant
- For Carter
- Killed Carter
- Nora

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

- Nora
- Lynn
- Three men
- Glass that collects the water that evaporates from dead bodies
- Tasers her

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

- Raining/storming
- Tasers him
- Her gun
- Tasers her
- Her gun and keys to the car
- She'll kill Lucy
- Kills him (Tasers him to death)
- Paralyzed him/broke his back
- Lynn has the gun
- She said he asked her to do it/he couldn't stand the guilt of all those who died because of him

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

- Windmills/Wind Turbines
- On the beach
- That Fletcher sent them
- The ocean
- The ocean
- The purification plant
- Go back to Ohio