

# THE EXPERIMENT

## Book Club Discussion Guide

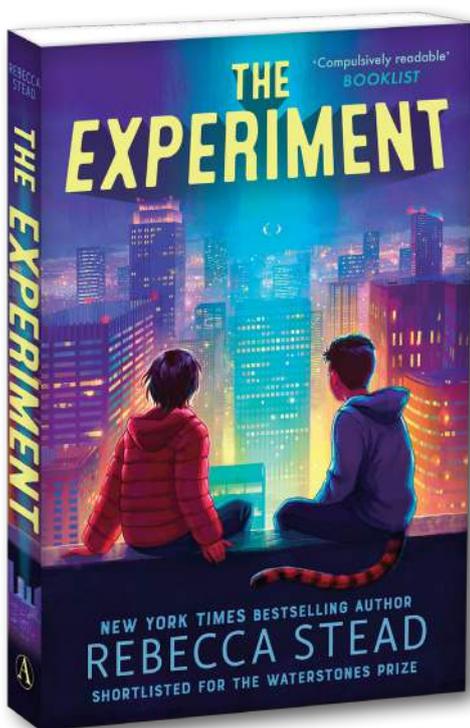
### ABOUT THE BOOK

**From the winner of the Newbery Medal and the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize comes a fast-paced coming-of-age novel - with aliens.**

Nathan never understood what was 'fun' about secrets, probably because he's always had to keep a very big one.

Although he appears to be a typical boy, Nathan learned at an early age that his family is from another planet. Now, their time on Earth may be coming to an end.

Nathan and some others are part of an experiment that suddenly seems to be going wrong. Some of them are disappearing without a word. After his family is called back to the mothership, Nathan begins to question everything he's been taught to believe about who he is and why he's on Earth.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rebecca Stead grew up in New York City where she lives today with her husband and two sons. Rebecca used to be a lawyer and wrote books for adults before turning to younger fiction. Her second book for children, *When You Reach Me*, won the Newbery Medal 2010, and her follow-up, *Liar and Spy*, was the winner of the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize. She now combines her writing with work as a literary agent.



# THE EXPERIMENT

## Book Club Discussion Guide

### Book Club Questions:

1. Why are Nathan's parents so strict? How does the author show that they are also kind?
2. Why does Nathan describe Victor's family as 'normal, messy, and perfect' (page 63)? How are Nathan's and Victor's families different?
3. Do you think it is hard for Nathan to live with this big secret? What do you think is the most difficult part of the rules of being a Kast?
4. What happened to Nathan in Florida that worried his parents? Why did they have to report it?
5. Nathan has grown up believing his family is part of an experiment. What does his mother hope will happen when they go to the Wagon for help? Why do you think Hester decides to send them back to New York?
6. Do you think it is difficult for Nathan to tell Victor about the tail growing on his back and his family's background? How does Victor react? How do you think you would react if you were Victor?
7. Why is Nathan's tail called Tuck? How does the tail grow and change? Why does it begin to look like Hobbes's tail? What does Nathan learn about Tuck the last time he goes to the Wagon?
8. Why do you think Nathan takes Victor with him when he returns to the Wagon? And then, why does he leave Victor at the mall?
9. Why is Nathan surprised by Hester at first, and what does he expect? What does he find out about her at the Wagon? Why does his mother defend her until he returns home with news?
10. Why does Izzy call Section Six a 'hole in a doughnut'? Why did she stop believing that the people in the experiment are aliens? How does she change Nathan's mind, and what do his parents say when he tells them about Izzy's theory?
11. When Nathan returns to the Wagon, his mum sees him go and doesn't stop him. Why?
12. How did Hester control Nathan's parents and the other families? What does Nathan learn about his parents' true identity?
13. Why are the video games in Nathan's mum's closet important? Describe the egg Nathan finds in a shoebox and its purpose. What role do Nathan's cat, Toto, and Izzy's cat, Mr Cute, play?
14. What does Hester mean when she says, 'I will never understand why they chose you' and 'You don't see because you don't know how to look' (page 211)?
15. In what ways does Nathan grow up and change through the book?
16. What was your favourite scene in the book and why?

