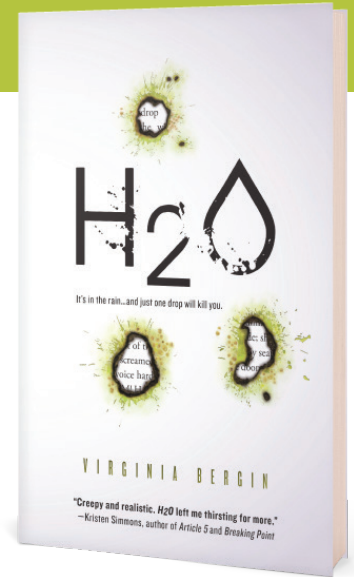


H2O DISCUSSION GUIDE



A NOTE FROM VIRGINIA BERGIN

I chose the subject of water because it is essential to life . . . and yet waterborne diseases kill about 1.8 million people every year, and 783 million people do not have access to clean water. So for a lot of people, the situation described in *H2O* already exists.

According to the last set of UNICEF figures, 18% of the world's population is aged 10–19, so, by my calculations, that means there are at least 140,940,000 Rubys and Dariuses and Princesses trying to survive . . . right now.

1. What would *you* do if deadly rain fell?
 - a. Is there a character in the story whose actions you identify with?
2. Would you be concerned about animals? What about your own pets?
3. As a character, Ruby has a lot to say for herself, but what do you think about the way she behaves?
4. *H2O* is told from Ruby's perspective. As a reader, how did you feel about this?
 - a. What are the positives and negatives of reading a story written in first-person point of view?
 - b. Did you trust what Ruby has to say, or did you sometimes doubt her?
 - c. Were there things in the story you felt you might have understood better than Ruby did herself?
5. Why do you think Ruby is writing this story?
6. What do you think the army and the government would do if a situation like this really happened?
 - a. Is that different to what you think they *should* do?
 - b. What would *you* do if you were in a position of power?
7. Overall, how do you feel about the way different individuals and different groups of people behave toward each other in *H2O*?
 - a. Are there any encounters you particularly liked/disliked—if so, why?
8. *H2O* is science fiction, but do you think there is an environmental message in the story? Does it reflect any current environmental issues we face?
9. Has *H2O* changed the way you feel about water in any way?
10. Why do you think this book is called *H2O*? (And not *Water*, for example.)
11. What do you think will happen next?
12. Ruby made me put this in: When should you give up hope?