



TWO BEST FRIENDS. ONE NIGHT.
A CURSE THAT WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING.

THE REVELRY

KATHERINE WEBBER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

“Dark, dreamy and
deliciously atmospheric.”

Catherine Doyle

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WALKER
BOOKS

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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR WALKER BOOKS

ABOUT THE BOOK

In Webber's hugely evocative third YA novel, *The Revelry*, the reader is thrown into the wonderfully atmospheric world of Ember Grove – a rural woodland town in America whose residents have long accepted the unexplained and mysterious. But when Bitsy and her best friend Amy break the unwritten rules and sneak into the woods to find the Revelry – a secret bacchanalian rite of passage for graduating classes – something fundamental changes. As the world Bitsy knows fractures, the friendship she shares with Amy seems to take on a sinister give-and-take, even as they seem inextricably linked. As Bitsy tries to understand what has happened, she must explore the realities of a society full of superstition, folklore and secrets, and confront her own sense of self in a small town, in this exuberant slice of magical Americana.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katherine Webber is originally from California but currently lives in London. She loves an adventure, whether in a book or in real life. She co-writes younger series *Sam Wu* (Egmont) and *Dragon Realm* (Simon and Schuster) with her husband as Katie and Kevin Tsang. Find her on Twitter at @kwebberwrites.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Revelry is a novel loaded with intrigue and mystery, balanced against the acute observations of adolescence and teenage life. As such, there is much to discuss and myriad topics that can be explored in reading groups, from the magical and mythical through to the realities of lived experience and contrasting circumstances. As a novel that touches on significant themes that may reflect the experiences of group members – friendship, romance, bullying, poverty, family make-up, missing persons, the occult, etc. – it is imperative that members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, and that adequate support is made available to anyone who might require it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Getting started:

What did the group think of *The Revelry*? What did anybody like about it? What atmosphere did the novel create? Was anyone reminded of other stories, books, films, etc., that they've enjoyed?

1. Ember Grove

That isn't how things work in Ember Grove and you know it. – p.160

What did members think of Ember Grove as a setting? What does the name evoke? Discuss how the town operates within the novel – why does Webber set the novel here? What does it facilitate or allow in terms of plot?

2. Bitsy

I am a girl from Ember Grove, and these are my woods. – p.9

What did readers think of the character of Bitsy? Why does Webber choose to narrate the story from her perspective? Discuss how Bitsy's understanding of herself develops across *The Revelry*; is she the same character by the end? How important is it that she is "from Ember Grove"? Does everyone feel this way?

3. Amy

Amy holds her hand up and I go quiet, like she has some power over me. I guess she does, in a way. — p.182

Compare Bitsy to Amy – why is the novel not seen from Amy’s perspective? How would it differ if it were? Does Amy go through the same journey as Bitsy? How are Amy’s life circumstances presented? Do we see Amy through a lens?

4. Revelry

The Revelry is more than a party: the Revelry can change your entire future. — p.9

What does the idea of the Revelry suggest? What does “Decadent Dionysian Bacchanalia” evoke? Does it represent anything beyond itself? Discuss what power the Revelry holds over the town. How does it relate to other “coming of age” concepts? What about the “secrecy” of more everyday teenage parties? Would members want to go to a Revelry? Why?

5. Skyler

“Whatever gave you the impression I’m a normal person?” — p.163

What does Skyler represent in the novel? What does she want? How does the reader grow to understand this, and who, or what, she is? Discuss her final transformation – was it a release? A punishment? Just? An escape?

6. Chanterelle’s

But this is woodland forest by way of Disney gone dark. — p.96

Discuss the role of Chanterelle’s in the novel. What is its purpose? Is it significant that it seems to sit on the boundary between the town and the woods? If so, why? Why do strange things happen here in particular? What is the role of Chanterelle herself?

7. Friendship

That’s how it has been for the past few years. Me and Amy as a package deal, and then Cecily and the girls. — p.82

Friendship plays a significant part in the novel. How does Webber balance the minutiae of teenage friendship groups, insecurities, squabbling, etc., with the timeless, far-reaching, almost mythical invocation of “binding” oneself to another in friendship?

8. Agency

“I cursed myself, and I am the only one who can break the curse.” — p.259

Where does the agency lie within the novel? Who or what drives the action? Discuss how Webber blurs the boundaries between fantasy and reality, and the implications this has on where responsibility lies – is Bitsy solely responsible for her actions? Are there outside agencies affecting her? What part does belief play in what happens? Can the novel be seen as allegorical?

9. Mystery

“What happened?” I demand. I don’t remember anything. As this realization sinks in, a cold spreads through me and I begin to shiver. “Ames?” — p.38

How does the style in which Webber writes reflect the feel of the novel? Why, when it is called *The Revelry*, is the Revelry itself never fully revealed, and shrouded in mystery throughout the novel? Why do Amy and Bitsy forget what happened?

10. Mythologizing

Local myths and half-forgotten fables – and the Revelry is the most important of them all. — p.9

Or maybe maybe maybe. / Maybe it is more than that. — p.144

Discuss the idea that Bitsy and Amy create a mythology around their own actions and decisions. What impact do their actions have on their own perspectives? What does it mean for Bitsy to take responsibility for the “curse” she and Amy brought on themselves?