

**WE
ARE
ALL
MADE
OF
MOLECULES**

● A NOVEL BY SUSIN NIELSEN ●

DISCUSSION GUIDE



THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY

Stewart is **geeky, gifted** but **socially clueless**.
His mom has died and he misses her every day.

Ashley is **popular, cool** but her **grades stink**.
Her dad has come out and moved out –
but not far enough.

Their worlds are about to collide:
Stewart and his dad are moving in
with Ashley and her mom. Stewart is
89.9% happy about it even as he struggles
to fit in at his new school. But Ashley is 110%
horrified and can't get used to her
totally awkward home. And things are
about to become a whole lot more mixed up
when they attract the wrong kind
of attention . . .

ABOUT SUSIN NIELSEN

Susin Nielsen got her start feeding cast and crew on the popular television series, *Degrassi Junior High*. They hated her food, but they saw a spark in her writing. Nielsen went on to pen sixteen episodes of the hit TV show. Since then, Nielsen has written for many Canadian TV series.

Her young adult novels have received critical acclaim. She lives in Vancouver with her family and two extremely destructive cats.



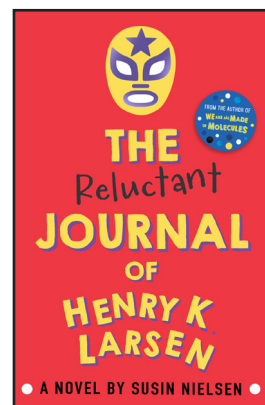
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- There are lots of examples of words that are used to label people in *We Are All Made of Molecules*. What effect do these words have on the characters? What do you think the author is saying about labels in this novel?
- Stewart has different ways of coping with his mother's death, particularly in how he remembers her. Do you think this helps him deal with his grief? What would you do differently if you were in his situation, if at all?
- The story is told from two different perspectives: Stewart's and Ashley's. What effect does this have on how you perceive the story has a whole? Why do you think the author chose to tell the story in this way?
- Think about Stewart's explanation about how we are all made of molecules and atoms from other things and so everything is interconnected. Ashley is initially repelled by this idea. What does this image mean to you?
- Ashley talks about the social ladder and how she has managed to climb it. What do you think of this view of her world? What effect has it had on her character?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *We Are All Made of Molecules* has a lot of sadness and difficulty, but it is often dealt with in a humorous way. Why do you think the author chose to do this?
- Throughout the book, many of the characters are victimised: Stewart is considered too nerdy and weird, Ashley's dad and his boyfriend Michael are attacked and shunned for being gay, and Ashley is pressured to have underage sex by her boyfriend. How do your sympathies develop throughout the book?
- Discuss the themes of acceptance and rejection in the book.
- Stewart uses graphs and charts to express his thoughts and feelings throughout. What do they add to the novel?
- How do you feel about the characters at the beginning and end of the book?

ALSO BY SUSIN NIELSEN:



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