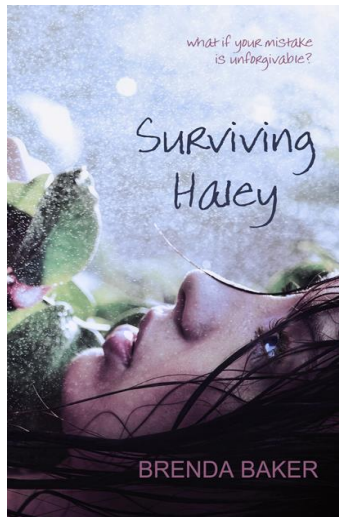


Discussion Questions



SURVIVING HALEY

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About the Book

Lauren Werthman struggles with guilt and depression. Even moving to another state and into a new home doesn't help her overcome the life-altering aftermath of losing her sister.

Memories of the tragic accident reverberate through her life as her family tries to cope, but Lauren's life spirals out of control. Her mother criticizes her choices every day, her father continues to work later and later, and people at her new school seem to know the family secret.

Lauren binge-eats, has nightmares, and doubts the existence of a God Who didn't intervene to prevent the senseless tragedy.

As Lauren's family and friends work through the pain and guilt, will they find that even though the void will always remain, the power of forgiveness brings peace and hope and a bright future, or will Lauren forever be lost to the pain and guilt?

TITLE: Surviving Haley
Discussion:

Question 1: Do you think Lauren was responsible for Haley's death?

Answer 1: Maybe, but the only way the drowning could have been prevented was if Lauren had watched her every minute.

Question 2: Were you surprised to hear how Jonah's dad ended up in a wheelchair? Give your reasons.

Answer 2: Yes, because Jonah seemed to have his life together. We didn't know that he had a past he wasn't very proud of until he told Lauren his secret.

Question 3: Why was Candra (Miss Gladen) able to help Lauren when none of the other therapists were able to do so?

Answer 3: Candra became Lauren's friend first, and Lauren learned to trust her. She didn't push Lauren to deal with Haley's death until Lauren was ready.

Question 4: Which do you think is more dangerous, binge eating or binge eating and purging?

Answer 4: Both have serious psychological and physical health risks, including stress, depression, suicidal thoughts, obesity, blood pressure abnormalities, diabetes, heart disease and even death. Bulimia--the binge/purge behavior--might be more dangerous, because the ill effects can happen faster.

Question 5: How did Jonah help Lauren come to believe there is a God?

Answer 5: He prayed and kept reassuring her that God loved her no matter what she'd done. When he shared the story of his dad's accident, Lauren saw he was flawed just like her, and yet he was able to go on with his life because of his dependence on God. She knew then that she needed God too.

Question 6: What is the definition of addiction? Lauren's mom became addicted to alcohol. Can you become addicted to food?

Answer 6: Addiction is a strong and harmful need to have something or do something. Food can become an addiction if you binge eat. It's harmful because it can lead to obesity which causes a host of serious health issues.

Question 7: After Haley died, how did Dad's method of coping differ from Lauren's and her mom's?

Answer 7: Lauren's dad believed if they moved away from where the accident happened and just carried on with their lives then they'd all be okay. He thought the passage of time and a new start would heal their loss, but he found out his strategy didn't work for Lauren or her mother.

Question 8: Why was Eli bullied? By the end of the story, when he had Jonah, Kavya and Lauren as friends, do you think the bullying lessened or even disappeared?

Answer 8: Eli's stuttering, his worn clothing, and his homely physical appearance made him different from the other kids--a prime reason someone is bullied. Yes, when he had some friends, it probably became harder to bully him because he wasn't alone. At this point, the others would most likely target an easier victim.

Question 9: What makes girls like Tiffany popular? Is "pretty" a requirement for being a popular girl?

Answer 9 Girls who are popular usually have high self-esteem, dress well, are good at something, and they can be either very kind or very mean. They aren't necessarily pretty, but care about their appearance. They act confident, and they are natural leaders that other kids listen to and respect.

Question 10: Why do you think Tiffany disliked Lauren from the first day on?

Answer 10: Lauren reminded Tiffany of who she used to be--an overweight, unattractive girl, someone who didn't fit the image of "popular." We often dislike things about others that we dislike about ourselves. And for Tiffany, bullying was a sport. She did it to Eli, and she thought it would be easy to pick on Lauren as well.

