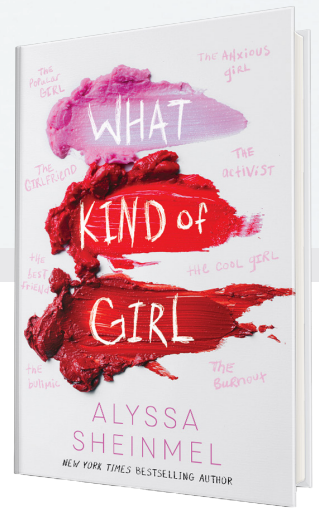


# WHAT KIND OF GIRL

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



**\*\*WARNING-SPOILERS AHEAD!\*\***

### MAYA'S PERSPECTIVES

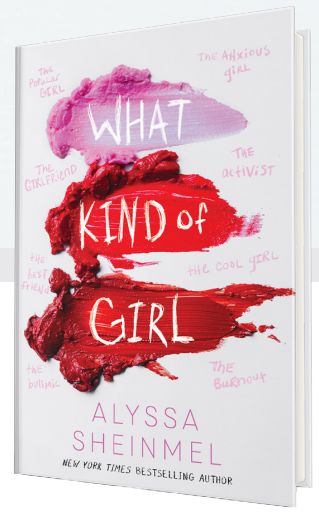
1. Why do you think the author chose to use four different perspectives—the Girlfriend, the Popular Girl, the Burn-Out, and the Bulimic—to portray a single character?
2. Was there one or another of the perspectives that you found yourself liking best, or relating to more closely than the others? Which one? Why?
3. At some point, did you begin to suspect that each of the four narrators was the same girl? When? Why?
4. Why do you think Maya chose to come forward about Mike's abuse when she did, and not sooner?
5. Why do you think she chose to go to the school principal rather than to her parents or to Mike's parents?
6. Do you think Mike should be expelled for what happened between him and Maya? Why or why not, and if not—what do you think the consequences of his actions should be?
7. Do you think Maya will decide to move to New York to live with her father? Do you think she should?
8. Maya began visiting Hiram's car as an escape—but over time, she and Hiram seemed to care for one another deeply. Do you think Maya and Hiram will end up together?

### JUNIE'S PERSPECTIVES

1. Why do you think the author chose to use four different perspectives—the Anxious Girl, the Activist, the Best Friend, and the Cool Girl—to portray Junie's character in Part Two, after it had already been revealed that the four narrators in Part One represented one girl?
2. Did you think this was a good choice even when it was clear that each narrator was a different facet of the same girl's personality? Did you think it was more or less effective than it had been in Part One?
3. Was there one or another of the perspectives that you found yourself liking best, or relating to more closely than the others? Which one? Why?
4. Junie seems to be aware of the fact that she is hiding different parts of herself from the different people in her life, trying to play the part of "The Cool Girl" or "The Activist" for her classmates and her parents. Do you think Maya is also aware of the different sides of herself, the way she switches from friendly popular girl to loving girlfriend, depending on whom she's with?
5. Why do you think Junie's father has trouble understanding her struggles? How do you think their relationship will change going forward?
6. Do you think Junie and Tess should get back together at the end of the book? Why or why not?

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### TOUGH TOPICS

*What Kind of Girls* deals with very serious topics, including teen dating violence, self-harm, and eating disorders. Here are some facts and discussion questions about those topics:

#### TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

- One in ten high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.
- One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.
- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence—almost triple the national average.

#### SELF HARM

- Approximately two million cases of self-harm are reported annually in the US.
- Each year, one in five females and one in seven engage in self-injury.
- 90 percent of people who engage in self-harm begin during their teen or preteen years.
- Females comprise 60 percent of those who engage in self-harm behavior.

#### EATING DISORDERS

- Approximately seven million girls and women suffer from an eating disorder.
- At least 19 percent of college-aged women are bulimic.
- Eating disorders are the third most common chronic illness among females.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are these numbers higher or lower than what you expected?
2. Seeing the numbers around teen dating violence, self-harm, and eating disorders—do you think we should be talking more about these topics? What do you think we can do to make it easier for people struggling with these issues to come forward? Do you think books like *What Kind of Girl* help make these topics easier to discuss?
3. Is there anything you think Maya's and Junie's friends and families could have done differently so that either of them might have shared what they were going through sooner?
4. Do you think it would help if we changed the ways we talk about these topics? If so, how?
5. *What Kind of Girl* includes a content warning with regard to the serious topics in the story. Do you think books should have content warnings? Why or why not?