

ALONE IN THE WOODS

BY REBECCA BEHRENS

DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK:

Jocelyn and Alex have always been best friends...until they aren't. Jocelyn's not sure what happened, but she hopes their annual joint-family vacation in the isolated Northwoods will be the perfect spot to rekindle their friendship.

But Alex still isn't herself when they get to the cabin, and Jocelyn reaches a breaking point during a rafting trip that goes horribly wrong. When the girls' inner tube tears, it leaves them stranded and alone on the banks of the Wolf River.

Before they know it, the two are hopelessly lost in a national forest.

Wearing swimsuits and water shoes and with only the contents of their wet bags, the girls face threats from biting blackflies to black bears, poison ivy to hypothermia. Both Jocelyn and Alex will have to use strengths they didn't know they had in their desperate trek home. But beyond battling the elements during the days and nights they spend lost in the wilderness, they'll have to overcome their fractured friendship—if they want to make it out of the woods alive.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

REBECCA BEHRENS is the author of the critically acclaimed middle-grade novels *When Audrey Met Alice*, *Summer of Lost and Found*, *The Last Grand Adventure*, and *The Disaster Days*. She grew up in Wisconsin, studied in Chicago, and now lives with her husband in New York City. You can visit her online and learn more about her books at rebeccabehrens.com.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At the beginning of the story, what is Jocelyn's friendship with Alex like? How does Jocelyn feel about their friendship?
2. What are your first impressions of the Northwoods? Would you want to travel or live there?
3. Why do you think the author chose to include flashback passages from Alex's point of view? What do they show you about the girls' friendship? Did those passages change your feelings about Alex?
4. How did technology impact the girls' friendship? How did it affect their experiences in the wilderness? How would you feel if you suddenly lost access to your phone for an extended period of time?
5. Jocelyn mentions her family's budget several times throughout the story. How does she feel about her family's financial situation? How does it affect her relationship with Alex?
6. How does the author use figurative language to help you understand the setting? How does the language help you understand the challenges the characters face from the river and the national forest?
7. What is the significance of the wolf sweatshirt to Jocelyn? What does it mean to Alex?
8. Change is a prominent theme throughout the book. By the end, Jocelyn states, "Things, and people, can change. Will change." How does Jocelyn feel about change at the end? Are her feelings different from the start of the story?
9. How would you characterize the relationship between Jocelyn and Alex at the end? How have Jocelyn's feelings about Alex, and about Laura, changed over the course of the story?
10. What details about wilderness survival and preparedness did you learn from this book? Are there any actions you plan to take after reading this book?

