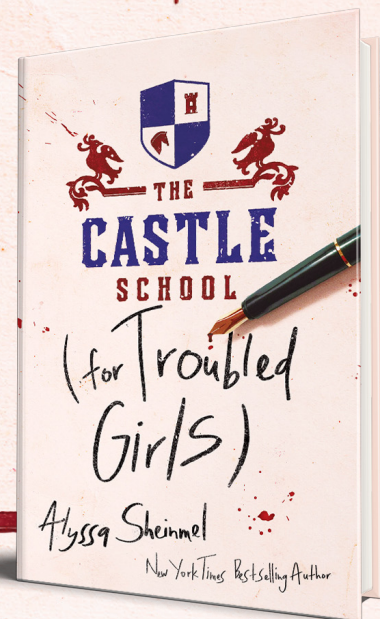


# THE CASTLE SCHOOL

(for Troubled Girls)

BY ALYSSA SHEINMEL

DISCUSSION GUIDE



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

## QUESTIONS ABOUT MOIRA

1. What was your first impression of Moira? Did you quickly sympathize with what she was going through and how she was behaving, or did you think her behavior toward her parents was somewhat bratty?
2. Why do you think Moira's parents chose to send her away? Do you think it was a good decision? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Moira spends so much time learning trivia? Do you think she uses it as something of a defense mechanism? For example, on her way to Maine, she focuses on learning facts about the state—is she really interested in Maine, or is she trying to distract herself from her feelings about being sent away? A little bit of both, perhaps?
4. When she first arrives at the Castle School, Moira believes she doesn't belong there; she thinks the other girls' problems are so much more serious than hers. Do you think she's right or wrong?
5. At first, Moira doesn't want to talk about Nathan; she can't even say his name out loud. But he's constantly in her thoughts; sometimes she can even hear his voice in her head. Moira insists that she's isn't in denial about Nathan's death—she knows he's gone—and yet, Dr. Prince says that denial isn't quite so straightforward. Do you think Moira is in some type of denial at the start of the novel? Do you think, by the end, she's closer to accepting Nathan's death, and the enormity of her loss?
6. For much of the book, Moira is convinced that the doctors who run the schools are experimenting on their patients. Why do you think Moira jumps to this conclusion so quickly? Why do you think she's finally able to let it go?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT MOIRA'S CLASSMATES AT THE CASTLE SCHOOL

7. The author includes chapters that give readers insight into each student's background. Did you like these interludes, or did it feel like they interrupted the story? What, if anything, do you think they added to the story?

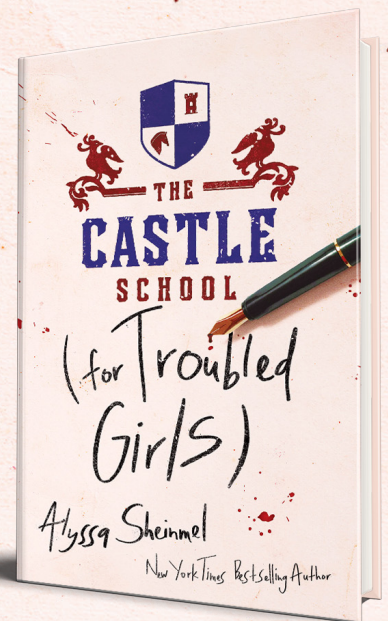


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8. Did you have a favorite character among the twelve girls at the Castle School? Who? Why?
9. Dr. Prince says that he believes something magical happens when his students forge friendships with each other. Do you think the relationships between the students at the Castle School are beneficial to them?
10. Do you think the other eleven girls at the Castle School benefitted from Dr. Prince's approach?
11. Do you think the twelve girls will keep in touch after the school year ends?

### QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CASTLE SCHOOL

12. Randy mentions that before his parents' divorce, the schools were run differently. What do you think life at the Castle Schools used to be like?
13. At the end of the novel, Eleanor's parents are suing the Castle School; do you think it's the right thing to do? After all, Eleanor's injuries were serious, and happened under Dr. Prince's care. Do you think the schools should remain open? If so, do you think they need to be run any differently? Do you think the schools' rules and restrictions need to be tighter—or perhaps, that the students would benefit from more interaction between the two schools?
14. Do you prefer one school over the other? Why?
15. Do you ultimately believe that the Castle Schools are safe, helpful places for the students who attend them?

