

## HOW TO START YOUR OWN BOOK CLUB

Think it would be hard to start your own book club? Think again!  
All you need are some friends who are as excited about  
the books they read as you are and a little bit of organization.

### HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

#### The best way to find people to be in your book club is to ask your friends.

Think of all the people you know who like to read, and ask them to join. If you still don't feel like you have enough people, ask each of your friends to bring someone else. You can usually get a good discussion going with 6 to 8 people, but any number that is comfortable for you will work. If you're having trouble finding enough cool people to form your club, check with your school, local library, or bookstore to see if there's a group that you can join.

#### Figure out when and where you want to meet.

Some groups meet once a month, some meet every other month. You could get together at someone's house, in a park, on the beach, or in your school's library. If it sounds too official and overwhelming to decide all the "wheres" and "whens" right now, don't worry! It's YOUR group so YOU get to make all the decisions. All you have to do is get together once, and you can work out the rest of the details later.

#### Decide how you will choose books, and how the discussions will be run.

Maybe you have a favorite author that you and your friends would like to focus on. Or maybe you want to take turns picking your favorite book. Maybe one person likes to talk and would like to lead the discussion, or maybe you would rather just get together and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (try the publisher's website) or at your local library or bookstore.

**The most important thing to remember is that there's no right or wrong way to have a book club. Do what you're comfortable with and always have fun, and your group will be a success!**

For more discussion guides to get your group going, visit  
[www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians](http://www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians)

## You've done the unthinkable. What happens . . . after?



### After

by Amy Efav

978-0-670-01183-4 (HC) • \$17.99 (\$22.50 CAN)

Ages 12 and up • Grades 7 and up

Who would leave her own baby in the trash to die? Certainly not someone like Devon—straight-A student, soccer player with Olympic dreams, more mature than her own mother. But desperation and panic drove her to do what most people can't even imagine. Now Devon's in a juvenile detention center, charged with attempted murder. Does she deserve that punishment? Your answer depends on whether you believe her story...

[www.after-book.com](http://www.after-book.com)



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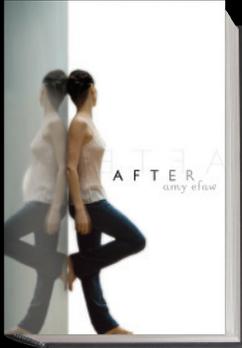
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## DISCUSSION GUIDE



## ABOUT THE BOOK



*An infant left in the trash to die . . .  
A teenage mother who never knew  
she was pregnant . . .*

Before that morning, the words most often used to describe straight-A student Devon Davenport were: responsible, hardworking, mature. But that all changes when the police find Devon home sick from school as they investigate the case of an abandoned baby. Soon the connection is made—Devon has just given birth; the baby in the trash is hers. After That Morning, there's only one way to describe Devon: attempted murderer.

And yet gifted author Amy Efav does the impossible—she turns Devon into a sympathetic character, a girl who was in such deep denial that she refused to believe she was pregnant. Through airtight writing and fast-paced, gripping storytelling, Ms. Efav takes the reader on Devon's unforgettable journey toward clarity, acceptance, and redemption.

[www.after-book.com](http://www.after-book.com)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



AMY EFAW is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, the mother of five children, and a self-described “soccer mom extraordinaire.” While researching *After*, she spent several hours each week observing juvenile offenders at Remann Hall Juvenile Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington, where the book is set. Her husband, who has been a prosecutor, a civil litigator, a defense attorney, and a military judge, provided expert legal advice.

A former Army officer and freelance journalist, Ms. Efav now lives in Denver, Colorado, with her husband, children, redbone coonhound, and Bengal cat. She has written one other novel for teens, and plans to write many more.

[www.amyefaw.com](http://www.amyefaw.com)

## Q & A WITH AMY EFAW

**Q: What inspired you to write this book?**

**A:** I first became interested in “Dumpster babies” while living in Philadelphia. One winter day, the big news story was about an off-duty police officer and his pit bull who stumbled across a trash bag that was left with some garbage cans at the curb. The dog just wouldn’t stop barking, so the officer tore open the bag and found a newborn baby inside, still alive. Then a couple of years later, when I was living in Washington State and pregnant with my fifth child, my Army prosecutor husband got his own “Dumpster baby” case to try. At that point, I knew that I *had* to write a novel involving the issue.

**Q: Is this story based on a real case? Is Devon a real person?**

**A:** *After* is not based on any one particular person or case. But after spending many hours researching the issue and reading hundreds of newspaper accounts, I found that most “Dumpster baby” stories shared some basic characteristics. Out of those characteristics, I was able to compile a profile of the type of teenage girl who might conceal her pregnancy and then throw her baby into the trash. That profiled character became the main character, Devon Sky Davenport.

**Q: In *After*, Devon does a horrible thing—why did you want to tell her side of the story?**

**A:** One afternoon many years ago while I was listening to public radio, Amy Goodman (a foreign news correspondent) said something that has stuck with me. She said, “Go to where the silence is and say something.” At that moment I felt as if I had received a sort of mission statement. As a writer, “going to where the silence is” means to me that I should try to write about the things that haven’t yet been explored.

**Q: What would you like readers to take away from *After*?**

**A:** I definitely would like to bring more awareness to the “Dumpster baby” phenomenon. But even more than that, I would like readers to realize how important it is to get involved in other people’s lives. Take a risk and reach out to others even if a mere gut feeling tells you that something is wrong. And don’t be afraid to ask for help if you need it. More often than not—whether you offered help or asked for it—you will be happy that you did.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- To you, is there a difference between Devon not knowing she was pregnant and Devon being in denial about her pregnancy? Why or why not? Are you sympathetic to Devon’s situation?
- Devon doesn’t want to give Dom a list of character witnesses because she doesn’t want her friends and teachers to find out about what she did. “But Devon,” Dom says, “everybody *already* knows.” If you had read about Devon’s story in the paper, what conclusions would you have drawn about her? Would they be different than what you think about Devon after reading her whole story in *After*?
- Devon’s mother was a teenage mother herself. How do you think this affects Devon’s motivations and decisions? Dom says to Devon, “I think everyone reacts against their parents in one way or another.” Do you think Devon would have reacted differently if she wasn’t afraid of becoming her mother? At what point in the story does Devon begin to view her mother in a different light?
- How are the adults in Devon’s life complicit in the situation? Should her mother or coach have noticed that she was pregnant and discussed it with her? Do you think they were negligent?
- Dom asks, “Did you, at any time, suspect that you were pregnant, Devon?” Do you believe that Devon was completely unaware of her pregnancy? Do you think this story might have ended differently if someone—Kait, Coach, Dr. Katial, Devon’s mother—had confronted her about it?
- Discuss Karma’s role in the story. How is she different from Devon? How are they alike?
- If Devon had been aware of the Safe Haven legislation, which gives pregnant women a way to anonymously abandon their babies without fear of prosecution, do you think she would have used it rather than leaving her baby in a trash can? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Devon chose the plea that she did? What do you think her future will look like after this decision?
- Teen pregnancy is a growing issue in America. Who do you think is responsible for educating teens about preventing unwanted pregnancy? Schools? Parents? Do you think that the current school curriculum for sex education is effective? Why or why not?
- What will you remember from reading this novel?