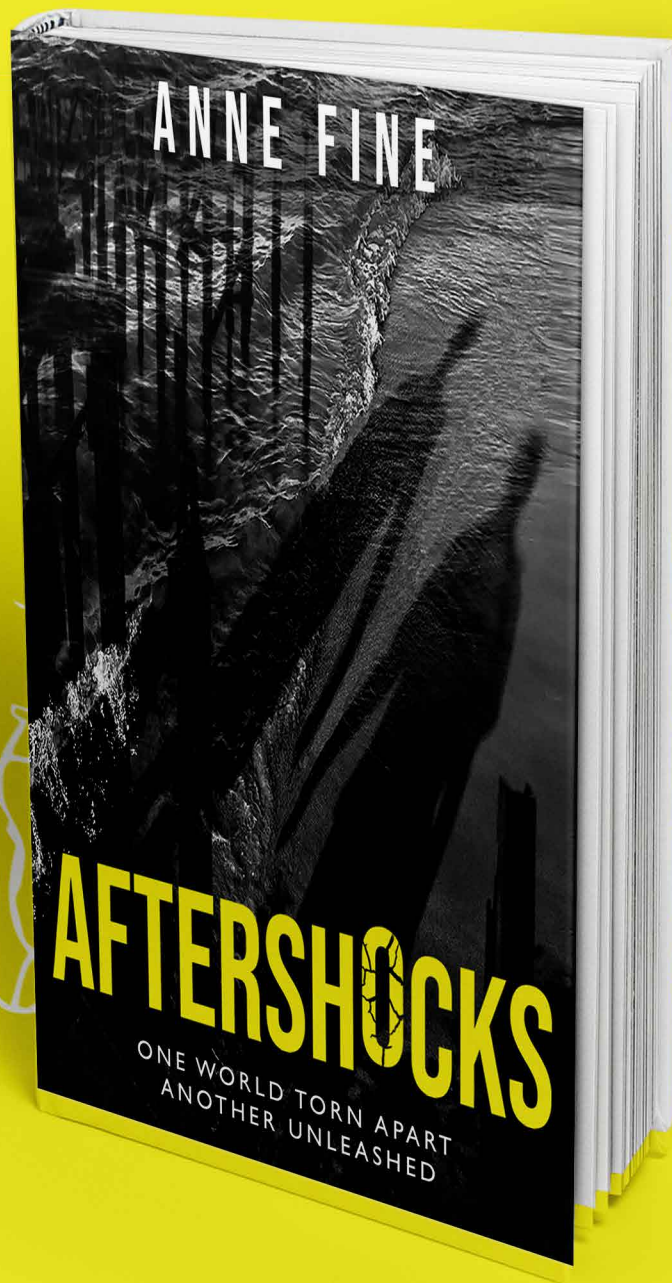


AFTERSHOCKS



DISCUSSION GUIDE



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When Louie's mum says she is going walking with her friends, his dad must take him on a work trip with him. If you were going to the Endlands, what would you take with you? Imagine you can take ten items, what would you choose and why? You might like to pick some useful items and some which are fun and will help to stop you from getting bored.

'Everyone knew that the Endlands were horribly isolated, out there on the very furthest edge of the country. And dull. One rubbish road to get there. Not much when you arrived you arrived. No pizza places or cinemas.' (p1)

Can you put together the different information we find out about the Endlands and the Endlanders in the book?

Draw your own map of the area. You might like to include:

- The road that leads there
- The Causeway Bay
- The forest
- The Pumping station
- Topane

How do you think it would feel to live in a place so isolated? What would be different to your own life and what might you miss and why?

Swati warns Louie and the others that the Endlanders are 'a bit weird'. What makes them strange? Do you think they are always treated fairly in the book? You might find it useful to read some of what Ms Nyland describes about their history on page 16 and the comments Valentina makes about the Endlanders on page 17.

‘People in the Endlands are always staring. They almost seem to make a point of acting as if strangers are something quite out of the ordinary.’ (p10)

Have you ever been stared at? When did this happen and how did it make you feel?

With your friends or family, hold your own Endlanders staring contest. Work in pairs and see who can stare the other person out by going the longest without blinking or looking away. You could have different rounds to find out who is the star starrer!

The team travelling to the pumping station come across a huge face on the rock. Miles asks whether it is ‘some sort of warning, like those huge statues that stare out from Easter Island?’ Can you find examples of any other early or primitive art? Using the description on page twelve, create your own rock carving out of modelling clay or papier-mâché, or you might choose to draw this.

Dad asks Louie ‘Since when did you become such a persistent dispenser of earthquake safety tips?’ (p33)

Can you research some top tips for what to do in an Earthquake? Do you think you would be able to remember safety advice in an emergency?

There is a strange sort of relief in getting out of danger. It makes you more light-hearted than before.’ (p51).

Discuss with friends, family or classmates a time when you got out of danger or a difficulty. What happened? How did you feel during the difficulty and afterwards?

After Toby’s accident, Ms Dale asks Louie whether his parents have arranged for him to have help and to talk to someone. How useful do you think it is to talk to someone else about your problems and your worries? Do you have somebody you choose to speak to about the things that make you uncertain? Who is that and what makes them a good person to tell?



Hugo describes to Louie that ‘Traditionally, the way to soothe an angry spirit is for the loved ones who are left to tell the story over and over.’ (p183)

This is called Malouy in the book. Why do you think this might be helpful to people? Have you ever told a story about something difficult that has happened to you? Why did you decide to tell the story, who did you choose to tell it to and how did you feel afterwards?

‘Beliefs and practices like this don’t spring out of nothing and nowhere. They’re born of the experiences of generations and embody basic instincts. They stem from shared feelings, and the customs around them arise so the community can pass on lessons learned over the centuries.’ (p184-5)

Can you think of examples of stories which have been passed on over centuries to help pass on lessons and feelings? What beliefs do your friends and family have and how do these help each of you? If you are interested in finding out more about how stories can help pass on feelings and experiences, you might like to try to find out about Carl Jung and particularly about his ideas around what he called the collective consciousness.

Broderick Henderson finds it hard to believe in the ghosts, or spirits that are in and around the bay because their presence lacks logic. Do you believe in ghosts or spirits? If you don’t, can you think of any possible explanations for the spirits seen around the bay?

‘New school years mean fresh chances. Resolutions. New ways to think about things. New ways to be.’ (p241)

Do you think Louie’s life is likely to be different in the new school year? Can you think of things which might have changed for him at school and at home and why that is?

Stories can often change the way we think about things too. Has reading Aftershocks made you think about anything in a different way?

Why not create three resolutions of your own after reading Aftershocks? What will you aim to do differently and why?



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If you've enjoyed reading *Aftershocks* you might like to make a resolution to try some of these other books.

Anne Fine: *The Road of Bones*

Anne Fine: *Up on Cloud Nine*

Christopher Edge: *The Many Worlds of Albie Bright*

Zana Fraillon and Bren MacDibble: *The Raven's Song*

Kenneth Oppel: *Ghostlight*

Jewell Parker Rhodes: *Ghost Boys*

These discussion notes were devised and written by Jake Hope, reading and literacy consultant and author, past chair of the Youth Libraries Group and current chair of the Working Party for the Yoto Carnegies at CILIP.

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