



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The following discussion questions can serve as a springboard to discuss teen pregnancy, its potential complications, and what family means to individual readers.

## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

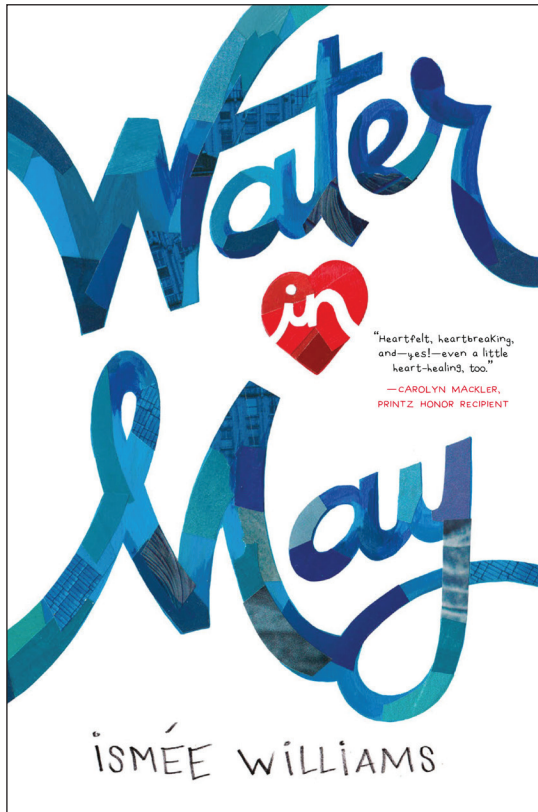
- What was your initial reaction to *Water In May*? Did it draw you in immediately or did it take time to get into?
- What feelings did *Water In May* trigger?
- Was there anything that surprised you about the story? Something you didn't see coming?
- If Mari had chosen not to go through with the pregnancy, how might the story have been different?
- If Mari had chosen not to visit her Papi in jail, how might the story have been different?
- How did you feel about the ending? Did you want it to be different?
- Were there particular passages or quotes from *Water In May* that stuck with you? What did you like about them?
- Did Mari do anything that made you feel uncomfortable? Something that you know you could never do? Did Mari do anything that you wish you had the guts to do? What choice would you make if you were in Mari's position?
- How credible/believable was Mari as a narrator? Did you feel you got the full truth of what really happened?
- Was the Mari you met in the first scene on the phone with the receptionist the same Mari who was sitting next to Angelo and Abuela at the end of the book?

## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Would you be friends with Mari? Are her actions justified? Why do you think she acts the way she does? If you had to describe Mari using four adjectives, what would they be?
- Why did Abuela throw Mari out? Do you think her actions were justified?
- Among Mari's friends Yaz, Teri, and Heavenly, who is your favorite and why? Which friend sacrificed the most for Mari?
- Which characters did you sympathize with or feel sorry for the most?
- Who do you think is the hero of the story?
- If you could hear *Water in May* from another character's point of view, whom would you choose?
- If *Water in May* were made into a movie, who would you want to see cast as the characters?
- What did you think of the setting, Washington Heights? Would the story have been different if set in another city or place? If set in another time?
- What did you think of the way the story was told? (Dominican slang throughout the book, Mari's point of view, etc.)
- If you got the chance to ask Ismée Williams one question, what would it be?
- What do you think the author's goal was in writing this book? What ideas or themes struck you as important? What did you take away from reading *Water in May*? Do you feel or think of things differently after having read it?

# WATER IN MAY

Ismée Williams



ISBN: 978-1-4197-2539-5

Ages 13 & up

## PRAISE

★ *“Fierce and tender—and absolutely worth reading.”*  
—Kirkus

*“The emotional core here is credible as well as dramatic.”*

—The Bulletin of the Center  
for Children’s Books

*“Realistic and compelling, heartfelt and heartbreaking all at the same time.”*  
—VOYA

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Fifteen-year-old Mari Pujols believes that the baby she’s carrying will finally mean she’ll have a family member who will love her deeply and won’t ever leave her—not like her mama, who took off when she was eight; or her papi, who’s in jail; or her abuela, who wants as little to do with her as possible. But when doctors discover a potentially fatal heart defect in the fetus, Mari faces choices she never could have imagined. Surrounded by her loyal girl crew, her off-and-on boyfriend, and a dedicated doctor, Mari navigates a decision that could emotionally cripple the bravest of women. It doesn’t take long to discover that both Mari and this sick baby have the strength to heal an entire family.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Ismée Williams** is a former pediatric cardiologist at Columbia University Medical Center in New York City. As the daughter of a Cuban immigrant, partially raised by her *abuelos*, her background helped her understand the many Maris she met along the way. *Water in May* is her first novel.

Visit Ismée online at [www.ismeewilliams.com](http://www.ismeewilliams.com).