

A guide to create the ultimate reading ritual experience for

# THE DREAMERS

SET ASIDE THE GLOW OF YOUR SCREENS  
for an evening of reading by yourself, or discussing the novel with your book club!



*"She knows that these boys refer to her as quiet girl, as in hey, quiet girl, it's ok to talk. She does not think of herself that way, as especially quiet, but there she was, as if under their sway: suddenly not talking."*

Candlelight creates a relaxing atmosphere. Try a lavender candle for calming "alone time" or a citrus scent to spark conversation in your book club. If you have something to say, let yourself be heard!



*"He packs a box for Henry. Books, mostly. That's what he's asked for so far. Books, and chocolate and tea."*

Keep your hands and body warm with a cup of tea, brewed in your favorite mug. If you're hosting a book club, set out a teapot for sharing!



*"The girls: they cry and cry, and they do not sleep. They sit around in their slippers and their sweats. . . . They hold hands. They drink tea."*

Tell your friends to come ready to chill, whether that means sweats, slippers, or comfy socks. If you're reading by yourself, change into your PJs, snuggle under a soft blanket, and start on Chapter 1.



*"Suddenly his face is close to hers. A sudden kiss. She does not even think of how they shouldn't be doing it. It's quick and fast. It's shy. And then he is saying something about the stars. . . . and how his dream is to just live in the woods somewhere and sleep under the stars."*

Create your own night sky and sleep under the stars like Mei and Matthew do in Chapter 31. Just hope that no emergency lights disrupt your view!



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR

# THE DREAMERS

- 1 A contagious disease, a quarantined town—the characters in *The Dreamers* are facing an extreme situation. Our culture is dominated by two opposing narratives about how people respond to disasters: Some believe they bring out the worst in people, others that they bring out the best. How do these possibilities play out in *The Dreamers*?
- 2 What do you think of Matthew's character? Are his actions heroic or heartless? Selfless or self-aggrandizing? Or some combination? Is it ethical to privilege the lives of one's loved ones over the lives of strangers?
- 3 How does *The Dreamers* differ from other books about disaster and dystopia? What does it have in common with those stories?
- 4 Some of the sick dream of extraordinarily vivid alternate lives. Consider Rebecca, who dreams of an entire lifetime, including a son. Do you think her dreamed-of life is somehow real? Or just a delusion? What about Nathaniel's extended dream of Henry?
- 5 Why do you think Karen Thompson Walker chose to feature a large cast of characters instead of focusing on just one person's experience? How did this choice affect your reading of the book? Did one character resonate with you more than the others?
- 6 One of the main characters is a college freshman named Mei. How would you describe her personality? How does she change over the course of the novel?
- 7 *The Dreamers* includes many parent/child relationships. What do you think of the book's portrayal of these bonds? How does the crisis affect these relationships?
- 8 *The Dreamers* involves a fictitious disease in a fictitious town, but what parallels do you see in today's real world? How do you think the government would respond to a situation like this if it happened today?
- 9 How do you feel about the ending of the book? How do you imagine the lives of the surviving characters will look five years into the future? How do you think their experiences during the outbreak will affect the rest of their lives?

