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*The Line Tender* by Kate Allen

*The Science of Breakable Things* by Tae Keller

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*Those Kids from Fawn Creek* by Erin Entrada Kelly

*Sal & Gabi Break the Universe* by Carlos Alberto Hernandez

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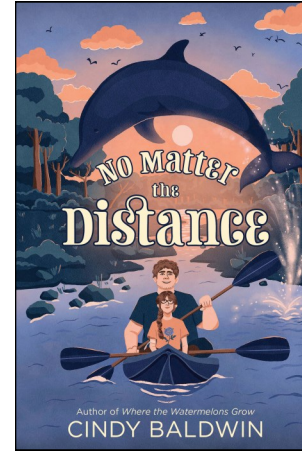
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# A Novel Idea Book Club Kit

*No Matter the Distance* by Cindy Baldwin



**From Library Journal**

Penny Rooney has cystic fibrosis, which means she has to do breathing treatments to help her lungs work. Some days, it seems like her CF is the only thing Penny knows about herself for sure. From her point of view, everyone around her can make sense of their place in the world. So why can't Penny even begin to write a poem about herself for school? Then during spring break Penny spots something impossible in the creek behind her house: a dolphin, far from its home.

But as Penny's CF worsens, she realizes that Rose needs to return to her pod to get better. Will Penny be able to help guide Rose back to the ocean, even if it means losing her friend?



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## Discussion Topics

- At the beginning of the book, Penny’s teacher assigns them to write a poem about “What I Know About Myself.” Penny feels like she knows others in her life, such as her family and friends, better than she knows herself. What do you feel you know about yourself? What do you think your family and friends would say about you?
- Penny’s feelings about having cystic fibrosis are complicated. Sometimes, it seems like no big deal, while other times, it’s really hard and she wishes she could be “normal.” How do you think Penny’s life might be different if she didn’t have CF? Are there any positive things that come into her life during the book as a result of CF?
- Cindy Baldwin, the author of *No Matter the Distance*, has cystic fibrosis. How do you think this affects the way she tells Penny’s story? Do you think it makes a difference when an author shares an identity with the characters they write? Do you think authors need firsthand experience to write stories, or not?
- Many of the poems in *No Matter the Distance* use different formatting styles, line lengths, and arrangement of lines on the page. Why do you think the author chose to change the styles and shapes of the poems throughout the book? What do you think having different styles of poetry throughout the story conveys about the story, or about Penny herself? What are some of your favorite poem layouts?
- Penny’s best friend, Cricket, has “known forever what she wants”—to work for NASA. Even the decor in their bedrooms shows their differences. Compare and contrast the characters of Penny and Cricket. How are they similar? How are they different? Do you think that they are good friends because of, or in spite of, their differences?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FROM AUTHOR’S WEBSITE

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## Author Biography



For as long as I can remember, I have wanted to tell stories—probably because my imagination was so vivid as a child that I was convinced that the Three Bears slept on the other side of my queen-sized bed and that a volcano was likely to rupture underneath my house at any moment. When I was eight, before computers were as common as they are now, I taught myself how to type so that I could get the stories in my head down faster than I could

with a pen and paper.

I have a genetic disease called cystic fibrosis, and my health challenges have always been both a big part of my life and a big influence on my writing. One of my first books was a melodrama about a princess locked in a tower that featured villains named most cleverly after two of my inhaled medications (Albuterol and Vanceril, in case you’re wondering).

As a preteen, I had books stashed all over my house in case I found myself nearby without reading material. For years, I kept a book in one bathroom cabinet in particular, just on the off-chance that I was brushing my teeth or visiting the toilet without another book at hand. As a grown-up, it’s my goal to write the kinds of books that kids will want to stash in bathroom cabinets.

Like many of my characters, I grew up in the South. I moved away after graduating high school and haven’t been back since, but my heart will always love the humidity, lightning bugs, and warm accents.

These days, my home is in Portland, Oregon, which is a different kind of magic—and while I’ll always miss the South, I’m growing to love the misty winters and the wild blackberries, too! I live in a cute little house called Maple Cottage with my husband and daughter, who looks like she just might turn out to be a storyteller, too.

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