



Genre: Women's Fiction

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Discussion Questions

1. What is lost for the characters in this novel?
2. In what ways does the author show Sam's mental illness? Julia's?
3. Sam's situation seems different from Julia's in that his bipolar disorder seems to be a life-long illness, while hers could be situational. Discuss.
4. Do the mothers and fathers in this novel help or hinder their children? Or both? How far would you go to protect or save your children?
5. Choice and self-determination are important in this novel. Early on in the novel, we are told Paul Reeves wanted to exercise more choice about his own life. Sam chooses to live as he is; Julia chooses to enter Brookfield and is willing to try anything that might help her navigate grief and loss. What other choices define them and shape the novel?
6. At Sam and Julia's ages, parents have no access to details about their children's mental health care unless the children allow it. How do you feel about that?
7. Secrets play a pivotal role in this novel. What are the secrets? Could one or two secrets being spoken out loud have changed the entire novel?
8. How does art play a role in this novel? Literature?
9. What happened at the end?
10. How is this novel timely?

Praise for *The Other Side of Nothing*

"The author . . . beautifully depicts the unfolding and emotionally charged love story between two young people invested in philosophy, literature, and art, and she captures the heartbreak spiral that can happen when things go awr . . . **A stunning story of mental illness and its challenges.**"

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

"**Moving, insightful, and deeply compassionate, *The Other Side of Nothing* is a remarkable and important read.**"

—J. J. ELLIOTT, author of *There Are No Rules for This*

"**...exquisitely written** narrative with the powerful voice of experience. **Heart-wrenching, riveting, and hopeful**, this is a no-holds-barred glimpse into the agony of emerging through a mental health crisis, told from the inside out and from the outside in. **An important read.**"

—EMMA GREY, author of *The Last Love Note*

About the Author

Anastasia Zadeik is a writer, editor, and storyteller. She serves as Director of Communications for the San Diego Writers Festival and as a mentor for the literary nonprofit So Say We All. Her debut novel, *Blurred Fates*, won the 2023 Sarton Award and the 2023 National Indie Excellence Award for Contemporary Fiction. *The Other Side of Nothing* is her second novel. She lives in San Diego with her husband and their rescue dog, Charlie.

