

# Discussion Questions

*"This Is How It Always Is"* by Laurie Frankel

- Who was your favorite character and why?
- How does Poppy's sense of self change throughout the book? What elicits these changes? Are the changes external or internal?
- How does the trip to Thailand influence the Walsh-Adams family? What does it teach them about acceptance, identity, and love?
- What external forces influence the members of the Walsh-Adams family to make the life altering decisions they do throughout the book? Which of these decisions are harmful? Which are beneficial? Do any of their choices toe this line? Why or why not?
- How does the novel challenge stereotypes and expectations of gender and sexuality? How does the book tackle and describe these stereotypes and expectations? Do you think Frankel does a good job in her portrayal of and rebellion against these ideas? Why or why not?
- Do you think there's a main character in the book? Why or why not? Which characteristics define a main character to you?
- Does this book challenge certain societal notions about parenting or a typical household dynamic? How so? Do you agree with the novel's depiction of a family dynamic?
- Carmelo tells Rosie that "parents choose one kid over another all the time" after Roo expresses distress and upset following the Walsh-Adams family's move. Do you agree? Do you think this is a moral way of parenting? Is it normal? Why or why not?
- All of the characters in the book grapple with celebration, acceptance, tolerance, and fear throughout Poppy's journey of self identity. What is the difference between all of these terms? How do they all influence the novel's characters? Is one more prominent in the book than the others? If so, how?