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## Family Reading Guide for "All the Noise at Once"

*Conversation starters for parents and teens*

### Getting Started

#### What This Book Is About

"All the Noise at Once" follows Aiden, a young man with Autism who fights for a spot on his school's football team—only to watch everything unravel when rising tension leads to a confrontation, police involvement, and his star-quarterback brother Brandon being wrongly arrested and charged with assaulting an officer after being racially profiled. As Brandon's future hangs in the balance and their bond frays under the pressure, Aiden is determined to find the truth. This powerful, timely novel sits at the intersection of disability, racial justice, and brotherhood.

#### Key Themes Your Teen Will Encounter:

- **Autism and neurodiversity:** Aiden's experience is rendered from the inside—his sensory world, his processing, his particular way of noticing what others miss—without reducing him to his diagnosis
- **Racial profiling and wrongful arrest:** Brandon's arrest is the central injustice of the story, handled with honesty and without easy resolution
- **Brotherhood and loyalty:** The strain the arrest places on Aiden and Brandon's bond is one of the book's most emotionally complex threads
- **Systemic injustice:** The story doesn't isolate Brandon's arrest as a single bad event but places it within patterns that are recognizable and real
- **Determination and truth-seeking:** Aiden's investigation is an act of love and justice—and a test of whether one person can make a difference when institutions fail
- **Identity under pressure:** Aiden must navigate who he is—autistic, a brother, an athlete, an investigator—in circumstances that demand all of those identities at once

**Note for Parents:** This book addresses Autism, racial profiling, and wrongful arrest with care and honesty. It will likely generate strong emotional responses and may surface personal experiences your teen has had with discrimination, policing, or feeling misunderstood. Approach these conversations with openness. There are no easy answers here—and the book doesn't pretend there are. That honesty is part of its value.

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### Discussion Questions

#### About Aiden and Brandon

- How does Aiden experience the world differently from his teammates—and how does that become both a challenge and an asset?
- What does Aiden's desire to play football tell us about who he is and what he wants?
- How does Brandon's arrest change the dynamic between the brothers?
- What does Aiden risk by deciding to investigate? What drives him to do it anyway?

#### About Race, Systems, and Justice

- What is racial profiling, and how does it operate in this story?
- Why does being "wrongly charged" not automatically mean being quickly believed or released?
- What does the story suggest about the gap between what the law is supposed to do and what it sometimes does?



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- Who, in this story, has the power to change things—and who doesn't?

### **Conversation Starters**

- What does it feel like to know something is true but struggle to make others believe you?
- Have you ever had to fight for something that should have been straightforward?
- What do you think Brandon would say to Aiden at the end of the story?
- If you were Aiden, what would be the hardest part of this situation—and why?

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### **Discussion Activities**

#### **Exploring Neurodiversity**

- Research sensory processing differences and how they affect everyday experiences
- Discuss: "What accommodations exist in your school or workplace for people with Autism? Are they sufficient?"
- Ask: "What does Aiden notice because of how his brain works that others might miss? How does that serve the story?"
- Explore: What does it mean to describe Autism as a different way of experiencing the world rather than a deficit?

#### **Engaging With Racial Justice**

- Look up examples of racial profiling cases and how they have been documented and addressed
- Discuss: "What would change if people believed Brandon automatically rather than requiring Aiden to prove the truth?"
- Talk about what it means to trust systems—police, courts, schools—and when that trust has been broken
- Ask: "What does the book suggest about who bears the burden of proof in situations like Brandon's?"

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### **Conversation Tips for Parents**

#### **Talking About Race and Policing With Your Teen**

- Lead with listening—ask what your teen already knows, believes, and has experienced
- Avoid defensive responses if the conversation touches on uncomfortable systemic realities
- Share your own experiences or family history with institutions—honestly
- Acknowledge complexity: it is possible to value public safety and also believe in accountability and reform simultaneously

#### **Supporting Teens With Neurodivergent Experiences**

- If your teen has Autism or ADHD, this book offers rare representation from the inside—let them lead the conversation about what resonates
- Discuss: "Are there environments where you feel more like Aiden at tryouts? What makes them hard?"
- Explore what advocacy looks like for neurodivergent students in your teen's school context

#### **Building Civic Awareness**

- Research your local jurisdiction's policies on racial profiling, police accountability, and civilian oversight
- Discuss: "What can an individual actually do when they believe an injustice has occurred?"



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- Talk about the difference between cynicism and critical awareness—both are responses to injustice, but they lead different places
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## Questions by Reading Level

### Accessible Entry Points (for any reader)

- What causes Aiden's sensory meltdown at tryouts, and how does it affect his football hopes?
- How does Brandon end up getting arrested?
- What does Aiden decide to do once he realizes the charges against Brandon are wrong?
- What does the story suggest about what it takes to get the truth heard?

### Deeper Analytical Questions

- How does Davis use Aiden's neurodivergent perspective to advance both the emotional and investigative threads of the story?
  - What does the novel suggest about the relationship between individual action and systemic injustice—can Aiden's investigation actually fix anything?
  - How does the story complicate the idea of "innocent until proven guilty"?
  - What does brotherhood mean in this story—and how does the novel test it?
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## Activity Ideas

### Writing and Advocacy Projects

- Write a first-person account of a scene in the novel from Brandon's perspective—what is he experiencing?
- Research a real wrongful arrest case and write a summary connecting it to themes in the novel
- Draft a letter from Aiden to the school administration about what happened—what does he want them to understand?
- Write an analytical essay: "How does Davis use Aiden's Autism as both a narrative challenge and a narrative tool?"

### Research and Civic Engagement

- Research the Innocence Project and cases of wrongful conviction in the United States
  - Look into disability rights organizations and what they advocate for in school and community settings
  - Explore the history of racial profiling legislation—what laws exist, and how effective are they?
  - Research what it means to be a "person of interest" vs. being formally charged—what rights apply?
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"All the Noise at Once" is a book that asks its readers to hold multiple truths simultaneously: that Aiden is extraordinary and also ordinary; that the system failed Brandon and also that individuals within it made choices; that love between brothers can be strained nearly to breaking and still hold. Davis has written a novel that is honest about the weight of what it depicts and generous about the human beings carrying it. Use this book to talk about what justice actually looks like—not as an abstraction, but as something that requires specific people to fight for it, one case at a time.