

## I Know How This Ends

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In 2020, as the first babies born after September 11th, 2001 graduate from high school, a special program brings together a generation of young adults with adults who watched the towers fall. *I Know How This Ends* is a time-bending novel concerned with the profound regret and surprising joy initiated by a national tragedy.

Operation Steel Survivors is made up of children born to women who were pregnant and in or near the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11th. Hope, her class's valedictorian, and Rory, a journalist, overlap at a graduation ceremony, setting into motion a series of coincidences that collapse time.

The novel is embroidered with characters and delicate symbols that repeat the theme of synchronicity, as with a postage-stamp-sized painting that reveals surprising intricacies and the declaration that "men and women connected—hard to tell where one ended and another began." The intimate details of characters' lives are opened through a series of "what ifs" that drive the story's final, dramatic choices. Real life details are lush and tangible, and time bends softly; scenes bleed together as though in a dream.

Leaning on emotional storytelling and high-octane characters and situations, the text includes orphans, people struggling with mental illness, and widows. Its density evokes Dickens, and moments within it verge on melodrama. The actual terrorist attack reverberates throughout, but it is not often at the forefront; instead, its effects are present in scenes set in 2001, 2011, and 2020, though more focus is given to a romance developing in Botswana. September 11th itself comes to function like a fantasy, an "inciting event," but not a point of focus.

*I Know How This Ends* is a love story for survivors that acknowledges the profound, inescapable impact of the September 11th attacks on the generations who witnessed it or inherited its trauma.

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