

# READER'S GUIDE

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*No One Else* (Fantagraphics)



Readers will find a lot to relate to and discuss in this story of a divorced mom and her family, including themes of grief and the expectations of modern life.

**CREATOR:** R. Kikuo Johnson

**ABOUT:** A 2023 Whiting Award Winner in Fiction; 2022 LA Times Book Prize WINNER, Graphic Novel/Comics; and 2022 Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize Honor Book. In this graphic novel, Charlene is a divorced mom, has a young son named Brandon, and works full-time as a nurse while also caring for her infirm father. Gorgeously drawn and set in the author's hometown on the Hawaiian island of Maui, it is the long-awaited follow up to Johnson's acclaimed debut graphic novel, *Night Fisher*, and a mature work of literary fiction that is certain to be one of the most talked-about books of the year.

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*“Set in Maui, where burning sugar cane fields choke Brandon’s dreams, the graphic novella’s splintered world is populated with striking, evolving images that symbolize the characters’ changing emotional landscape: their dad’s old fishing boat, big-jawed agricultural equipment, the urn containing his ashes... Johnson’s careful style conveys big emotions and family dynamics in concise scenes. It’s a beautiful example of a short comic containing multitudes.” —Publishers Weekly, 2021*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *No One Else* is about how people process loss differently. How do you think the characters coped with their grief? Which character did you relate to most in that regard?
2. Charlene is often shown as overwhelmed and stressed as a mother and student. How do you think she prioritized and handled her responsibilities in those roles?
3. Robbie appears to be the opposite of his sister, living a more carefree lifestyle. How did his dynamic with Charlene shape the story?
4. Johnson uses a limited and simple color palette. How do you think the art style enhances or changes the way the story is told?
5. The conclusion leaves the story a bit open-ended. What do you think happens to the characters after the last page?

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