Dear Reader:

When I began reading this manuscript about a group of half-siblings who are searching for their biological father, Donor 806, I was immediately interested. Though not a donor kid, I was an adoptee who searched for and found my birthmother as an adult. I understood the yearning of these characters to find that part of themselves and the emotional side of that journey, from the fantasy to the reality, and I hoped to bring some insight and authenticity to the work.

To a child, not knowing one or both biological parents can feel like a missing piece of identity, an important one, but there are also lots of very happy families who do not share the same DNA. First and foremost, the plot of 806 was one of a grand adventure, full of humor and escapades. I loved the lighter feeling of this book in dealing with such an emotional issue. My experience of life is that it is a crazy mix of joy and sorrow, loss and gain, hate and love, and laughter that occurs at the most inappropriate moment. In that way, this story seemed very real but also very fun to read.

I also learned a lesson: great manuscripts can come from the most unexpected people. Cynthia Weil is a legendary songwriter. She and her husband, Barry Mann, have written some of the bestselling songs of all time. Their lives are portrayed in the Broadway hit, "Beautiful," telling the intertwining stories of Cynthia and Barry with Carole King and Gerry Goffin. Her previous YA book was published to a long list of rave reviews. Clearly, talent for writing in one creative area can transfer to another. Cynthia has been an absolute delight to work with, and she is passionate about her characters and their story.

I hope you enjoy this adventure as much as I did.

Peggy Tierney
Publisher
Story Summary

WHO IS DONOR 806? HIS THREE KIDS ARE GOING TO FIND OUT.

Sibling 1 throws blenders and plays guitar. Sibling 2 is allergic to everything and is into magic. Sibling 3 is a varsity swimmer and has a group of female fans. Enough said. The only thing they have in common is their biological father, and the only thing they can agree on is that they all want to meet him.

With the help of a broken-down, “borrowed” Jeep, KT, Jesse, and Gabe make their way across the country evading police, trying their luck on the slots, and meeting a life-changing pig, all to track down Donor 806, their father. Any hope of success requires smarts, luck, and ingenuity. Good thing they have each other...even if they don’t see it that way.

Author Bio

Cynthia Weil is an internationally known lyricist with songs from “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling,” the most played song of the twentieth century, to the Oscar-nominated and double Grammy-winning “Somewhere Out There” from the animated film An American Tail. Her lyrics have been sung by the legendary voices of Barbra Streisand, Dolly Parton, and Kanye West. She has been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in addition to receiving multiple Grammy nominations and two Grammy awards. It is only fitting, then, that 806: A Novel has a teen songwriter as its main character. Cynthia’s previous teen fiction, I’m Glad I Did, was published in 2015 to critical acclaim.

Currently featured as a character in Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Cynthia resides in Los Angeles with her husband and songwriting partner, Barry Mann, and their dog, Callie. When not writing lyrics, you can find Cynthia fighting for animal rights, supporting young artists, or crafting her next book filled with music, dynamic relationships, and discovery. Learn more at 806novel.com.

“Hilarious road trip story.”
—Publishers Weekly

“Wonderful and relatable.”
—Foreword Magazine
Discussion Questions

Family
1. We see in Chapter 1 that KT has a hard time accepting her single mom’s string of boyfriends. What are some of the misconceptions surrounding single-parent families?
2. Do you know anyone who was adopted or conceived through artificial insemination? If so, have you talked about it with them? How do you think their childhood was the same/different than yours?
3. Jesse has two moms. Does this make him different from other kids who have a mother and father? Why or why not?
4. How do you think KT would define family?
5. In what ways is being an adopted child similar to being a donor child? How are they different?

Point of View
1. The entire story is narrated by KT in first person. How does this affect your perception of the story?
2. Do you think Kim made the right decision not to tell KT that she was born from a sperm donor?
3. Did KT, Jesse, and Gabe make the right decision to not tell their parents that they were leaving to find their biological father on their own?
4. Should Gabe have trusted Daisy? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever gone on a long road trip with family or friends? What did you do to pass the time? How did that experience help you relate to the story in 806: A Novel?
6. Magic tricks: nerdy or not nerdy?
7. Did you relate to one of the three main characters more than the others: KT, Jesse, or Gabe? Why?
8. After KT, Jesse, and Gabe meet Jimmy Savage and begin to spend time with him, why do you think Jimmy has trouble finding age-appropriate activities for them to do?
9. What would you do if you found out you were related to one of your classmates?
Discussion Questions continued

Identity

1. Songwriting and playing guitar helps KT calm down when she’s upset. What activities help you relax?

2. KT, Jesse, and Gabe each seek out their biological father for different reasons. What are those reasons, and which one resonates with you the most?

3. KT reacts very strongly when she uses Jesse’s shampoo and accidentally washes the dye out of her hair. Why do you think she cares so much about her hair color?

4. At one point, Jesse tells the other 806 siblings he doesn’t know who he is, what he wants to do, or even what he’s doing on this planet. Have you ever felt like that? Who did you discuss those feelings with? How did you move forward and get yourself motivated again?

5. Gabe spends most of the book searching for a sense of belonging. How and where does he find it?

6. How does Jesse’s personality change after he meets Willard Pinchekus? Have you experienced a moment in your life when your personal outlook similarly changed?

7. At the end of the book, KT tells Jesse and Gabe, “It wasn’t until we connected that I realized I’d been kind of lonely my whole life, and now I’m not.” (228) Has there been a point in your life where you felt the same way? What helped you overcome it?

Disappointment

1. When KT first learns that Jesse and Gabe are her donor siblings, she can’t believe that they are related. Do you think she overreacts when she thinks that they, “…had broken my heart just by being who they were” (37)?

2. During their search for Donor 806, are there points when KT, Jesse, and Gabe lose hope that they’ll find their biological dad? How do they overcome these obstacles?

3. Have you had someone really like you romantically (as KT does with Dylan), but you didn’t have the same feelings for them? How did you deal with it? Did you talk about it with your other friends? What happened with that relationship?

4. The donor siblings run out of gas during their trip…have you ever had that happen, and how did you solve the problem or get where you were going?