Discussion Questions

ULTRA
By David Carroll

1) Why do you think the author chose to tell the story through a TV interview format? What are the pros and cons of telling Quinn’s story in this way?

2) Many stories involve a hero who embarks on a long journey or “quest.” Does Quinn’s story remind you of any other books or movies?

3) Quinn is portrayed as a superhero, because of his oversized heart and his body’s inability to produce much lactic acid. Why do you think the author included these details?

4) What’s the difference between team sports and solo sports? Why do you think Quinn was attracted to a solo sport like running?

5) Why do you think the author named Quinn’s best friend “Kneecap”?

6) Can you imagine doing any physical activity for 24 hours straight? If so, what activity would you choose? How might it make you a better person?
7) Quinn experiences several hallucinations during the race. At times, his hallucinations seem completely real. Why do you think the author described Quinn’s hallucinations in such a realistic way?

8) *Ultra* is a work of fiction. But can you think of any *real-life superheroes* like Quinn — young people who have accomplished extraordinary physical feats? What do you think motivated them?

9) Why do you think the author chose to make Quinn's father a veteran of the war in Afghanistan?

10) Do you think Quinn realizes that he's running the race because of his father?

11) Do you think Quinn's mother knows? What does she say or do that gives it away?

12) What else, aside from grief, could motivate someone to take on a huge challenge like a 100-mile race?