

book club questions

MY FRIENDS

How did My Friends compare to other Backman books you've read, if any?

Why do you think the cover focuses on the three boys?

Why was this book set at Easter?

Share how you see "the painting" in your mind's eye.

Class presents as a theme early on in My Friends. What do you think Backman was trying to say about class and art?

Discuss art as a coping mechanism for the characters.

Art is described as "what we leave of ourselves in other people." How do you describe art?

It was said that, "The artist's bookcases were full of poets, like the bookcases of anyone trying to find out how everyone else copes." What books have helped you cope?

What did "the artist" see in Louisa?

Discuss this quote: "He feels like telling her that the artist didn't give her the painting because it was his inheritance, he gave it to her because he realized that she was the inheritance. Art is what we leave of ourselves in other people."

What role does grief play in shaping the story?

Backman said, "If you only get a few summer days like that you're truly lucky, if you only find one friend like that you're insanely fortunate." Share a lucky summer day and/or friendship you've experienced.

Discuss water as a symbol.

Why isn't the artist's name revealed until later in My Friends?

Discuss the role of friendship for the characters.

Most of the characters had traumatic childhoods. Why did Backman make this choice?

Share whether you agree with this quote: "Loneliness was better than disappointment."

Compare and contrast the found families vs. the biological families of the characters.

What is the difference between loving someone and believing in them?

Share whether you agree with this quote: "The most dangerous place on earth is inside us."

Backman often weaves humor into his very deep and complex plots. Did anything make you laugh in My Friends?

Did you like the slow-burning way in which the story was told?

Did you like the narrative style of past and present timelines?

"The knife" is hinted at throughout My Friends. Did its role play out the way you expected?

Share your thoughts on each of the characters' "endings."