

Book Club Guide



Letter from the Author



Hello, reader friends,

I'm excited and honored to have you consider *What Happens Next* for your book club. This novel is a marriage of women's fiction and mystery. The topics should lead to meaningful discussion that I hope is laced with plenty of laughter and reminiscing.

What Happens Next follows Faith Byrne as she looks to uncover the truth surrounding the disappearance of her childhood friend. We also peer into the life of a Dora, as she faces the decades old loss of her daughter and the current separation from her remaining family.

But what happened before? Through the eyes of Heather, we travel back in time to the summer of 1987. Here we see three kids, in their last years of childhood, as they navigate their expanding world, all with the understanding that Heather will be gone by the end of September.

Book clubs are a passion for me. I'd love the opportunity to visit with your group. To make this virtual connection, go to the "resources" section on the [Open Book website](#). Here, you'll select "Request Author Teleconference."





I'll be doing quite a bit of traveling this coming year. If I'm close to your area, it would be amazing to meet you all in person. Feel free to contact me for possible times or even just to ask questions or request special book club swag.

Resources for some added bookish fun are included in this newsletter, and I'd be so delighted to see pictures of your group. Please tag me!
Facebook: @ChristinaSuzannNelson IG: @ChristinaSuzann

Many blessings,

Christina

Christina



Christina Suzann Nelson
in 1987



1980's Book Club

Looking for a totally radical way to kick off 2023 with your book club? Grab your power suits, scrunchies, legwarmers, dresses with padded shoulders, or acid washed jeans! Read *What Happens Next* and host an 80's-themed book club meeting—it will be all the rage. Consider serving some of these dishes and treats that were popular in the 80's:

80's Foods

- Sawmill Gravy (Christina's family recipe is included below!)
- Potato Skins
- Ramen Salad
- Nachos
- Swedish Meatballs
- Peanut Butter Kiss Cookies
- Sloppy Joes
- Taco Dip
- Jell-O Salad



80's Candies

- Bottle Caps
- Pop Rocks
- Pez
- Skor
- Nerds

Recipe

This was a common meal for my family in 1987. I'm not sure if my stepmother made it up, or if it was a passed down recipe, but we loved it. My parents served this over rice. It may not be overly healthy, but it's a great comfort food.

-Christina Suzann Nelson

Ingredients

1 lb. hamburger

¼ cup flour

2 cups milk

Salt and pepper

Sawmill Gravy

Directions

Cook hamburger until browned.

Add enough flour to soak up the fat, then slowly mix in milk until you have a nice gravy.

Salt and pepper to taste.

Serve over biscuits or prepared rice.





Discussion Questions

1. Where were you in 1987? Or where were your parents? Did Heather's scenes bring back any memories?
2. Have you ever had a loss you felt you needed permission to grieve? What did that look like for you?
3. Not all grief comes at the physical loss of a loved one. Faith had to grieve the loss of her marriage. What other losses require a time of mourning in our lives?



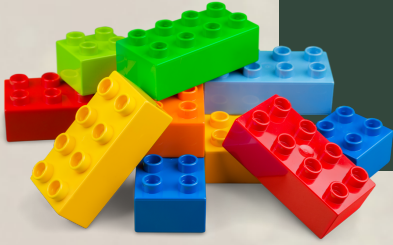


4. Did you find yourself connecting more with one character's experiences or personality over the others? Who and why?

5. Did you have a least favorite character in the novel? Did your feelings toward any of the characters change as the story progressed?

6. Fiction allows us to walk in another person's shoes for a moment in time. How did you grow from reading Dora, Faith, and Heather's stories?





Can You Name these Toys from the 80's?

Take a trip back in time with your book club! See how many 80's toy favorites you can name by using the clues to unscramble the letters (spaces and punctuation marks not included).

1. This animatronic singing teddy bear was the best-selling toy in both 1985 and 1986.

TDYNERUIXPD

2. These multi-colored plush animals each have unique pictures on their stomachs that represent their personalities. The concept was originally designed in 1981 to be used on greeting cards.

REBESRCAA

3. This handheld computer from Texas Instruments would ask you to spell a word and then would let you know if you got it right or wrong.

ELEKSLAPSP

4. Which outdoor toy was essentially a big plastic tarp you ran water over?

SPILINDESL

5. Drawing on toys is usually a big no-no, but this stuffed animal came with a marker and was perfect for budding artists.

DBELEARODO



6. Which large robot toys could turn into vehicles?

MERSFORATRSN

7. These interlocking wooden toys could be stacked in different ways to create buildings—like cabins.

GSCOLNLLINO

8. This spud came with accessories like ears, eyes, hats, and shoes.

MRAODHTEAPOT

9. Which tattooed horse figurines created a stir in the '80s?

LNYLITYTEPOM

10. This handheld device was a portable slide projector with cartridges. It kept many kids entertained on road trips.

VIFIERWND

11. The television ads for this light up box encouraged kids to "Turn on the magic of colored light..."

RITETELIB

12. These dolls were known for coming with their own birth certificates.

ATCHBBEPKICADSAG



Answers to Can You Name These Toys from the 80's? Quiz

1. Teddy Ruxpin
2. Care Bears
3. Speak&Spell
4. Slip 'N Slide
5. Doodle Bear
6. Transformers
7. Lincoln Logs
8. Mr. Potato Head
9. My Little Pony
10. View Finder
11. Lite Brite
12. Cabbage Patch Kids



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