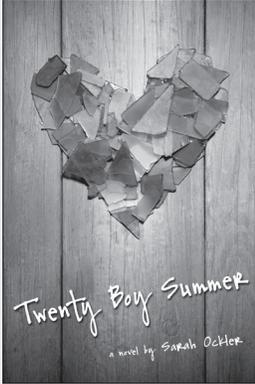


ReadingGroupGuide

Twenty Boy Summer by Sarah Ockler

ABOUT THE BOOK



According to her best friend Frankie, 20 days in Zanzibar Bay is the perfect opportunity to have a summer fling, and if they meet one boy ever day, there's a pretty good chance Anna will find her first summer romance. Anna lightheartedly agrees to the game, but there's something she hasn't told Frankie—she's already had that kind of romance, and it was with Frankie's older brother, Matt, just before his tragic death one year ago.

Beautifully written and emotionally honest, this is a debut novel that explores what it truly means to love someone and what it means to grieve, and ultimately, how to make the most of every single moment this world has to offer.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Did Anna and Frankie have the summer vacation they had imagined? Why or why not? Were you surprised by anything in the story?
2. What does this novel say about the meaning of “lucky?” Do you think Anna and Frankie were lucky the day of the car accident?
3. The poet Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote, “Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.” Do you agree with this thought? How do you think Anna feels about this idea? Why?
4. Anna compares her current life to a previous time when her life was “perfect.” Is anyone’s life ever perfect?
5. Are secrets always harmful?
6. What do you think about Anna and Matt’s decision to wait to tell Frankie about their relationship? Do you agree with Anna’s choice to keep the secret after Matt’s death? Why or why not? Do you think Anna had to protect Frankie, as Matt and Anna thought?
7. What does this story say about appearance and intelligence?
8. As Anna and Frankie prepare for their California trip, Anna mourns the change in their friendship and thinks that they probably wouldn’t be friends if they met now. Have you ever experienced such a big change in a friendship? What happened? Was there ever a reunion? Why does Anna stay friends with Frankie?
9. What do you think about Frankie’s attitude about Anna’s virginity and A.A.? Why do you think Frankie is focused on this? Why is Anna embarrassed about being a virgin? What do you think about Anna’s loss of her virginity? Was it special for her? Did it need to be? Why did Frankie lie to Anna about her own loss of virginity?
10. Anna worried that kissing someone else would erase her memories of Matt. Do you understand her worries? Does Anna deserve to grieve Matt’s death? Why or why not?
11. What does the video camera do for Frankie?
12. Describe Frankie’s relationship with her parents. How are Frankie, Jayne, and Red dealing with Matt’s death? Do they help each other? If you could say one thing to Jayne and Red, what would it be?
13. Frankie and Anna both think about being normal, having a normal family, doing normal things. What is normal? Is there such a thing as a normal family?
14. Who is more to blame for their fight near the end of the novel—Frankie or Anna? Explain. Do you imagine that either Frankie or Anna have regrets about the summer? Why or why not?
15. What is your opinion of Sam and Jake?
16. Why do you think the ocean has such a prominent role in this story? What does the ocean mean in the book?
17. What do you think happens to Anna and Frankie after the summer? Who are they and what are they doing in 10 years?
18. Could you be friends with Anna and Frankie? Explain.
19. What will you remember from reading *Twenty Boy Summer*? What meaning do you take away from this novel?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Ockler wrote and illustrated her first book at age six—an adaptation of Steven Spielberg’s *E.T.* Still recovering from her own adolescence, Sarah now writes for young adults. While nomadic at heart, she currently lives in upstate New York with her husband Alex and an ever-expanding collection of sea glass. Visit her online at www.SarahOckler.com



Photo: Rachel Cynn Miller