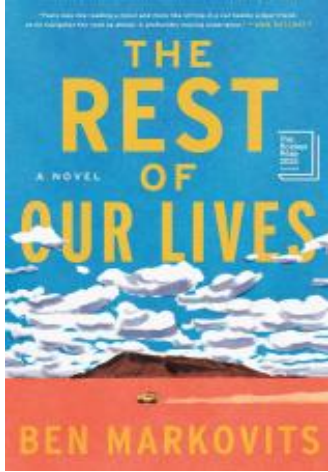


The Rest of Our Lives

by Ben Markovits



About the Book

A triumphantly life-affirming road trip novel about marriage, middle age, and a man at a crossroads in his life.

When Tom Layward's wife had an affair 12 years ago, he resolved to leave her as soon as his youngest child left the nest. Now, while driving his college-bound daughter to Pittsburgh, he remembers his promise to himself. He is also on the run from his own health issues and a forced leave from work.

So, rather than returning to his wife in Westchester, Tom keeps driving west, with the vague plan of visiting people from his past --- an old college friend, his ex-girlfriend, his brother, his son --- en route, maybe, to California. He's moving towards a future he hasn't even envisioned yet while he considers his past and the choices he's made that have brought him to this particular present.

Pitch-perfect, tender and keenly observed, *THE REST OF OUR LIVES* is a story about what to do when the rest of your life is only just the beginning of your story.

Discussion Guide

1. What role does the road trip structure play in the novel? Do you see the road trip as escape or confrontation?
2. How did you think Tom as a narrator framed our reading experience. Did you find him a likable character? A reliable storyteller? Why, or why not?
3. Which character did you feel more empathy towards in the unraveling of Tom and Amy's family, if anyone?
4. What does Tom's journey reveal about his past, relationships and mental state? How do his encounters shape your

understanding of Tom's character?

5. What does the turmoil in Tom's work life reveal to the reader? Did you interpret this as mere background, or is it integral to Tom's inner life?

6. Basketball recurs throughout the novel. What significance does this motif hold at this point in Tom's life?

7. What role does masculinity play in the novel? Did you think of Tom as a stereotypically masculine character?

8. What does Tom's attitude towards his own health problems reveal about him?

9. How do you think this novel comments on the concept of 'midlife'? Do you think Tom is experiencing a 'classic' midlife crisis?

10. How did you interpret Tom's final line to Amy? What do you think the author intended for us to take away from this?

Author Bio

Ben Markovits was born in Texas and grew up there and in London and Berlin. He studied at Yale University and the University of Oxford. After graduating, he became a professional basketball player in Landshut, Germany (where he played against a young Dirk Nowitzki). His 11 previous novels include *FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS*, *YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE LIKE THIS* and *THE SIDEKICK*. He has published essays, stories, poetry and reviews in *The Guardian*, *Granta*, *The Paris Review* and *The New York Times*, among others. In 2013, *Granta* selected him as one of their Best of Young British Novelists, and in 2015, he won the Eccles British Library Writer in Residence Award and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. He lives in London and teaches creative writing at Royal Holloway, University of London.

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