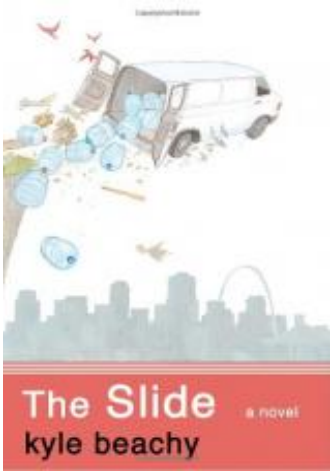
The Slide

by Kyle Beachy



About the Book

Potter Mays retreats immediately after college graduation to the safety of his childhood home. Each morning, his mother makes him eggs, lovingly fried into hollowed-out pieces of toast. His father promises to ?poke around? for gainful employment for his son. Potter?s best friend, Stuart?an ?Independent Thought Contractor? working out of his parents? lavish pool house?is willing to serve as a kind of life coach, provided, of course, that Potter pays for his services all summer.

Elsewhere, Potter?s (former? future?) girlfriend, Audrey, is backpacking around Europe with her beautiful bisexual traveling companion, Carmel. Potter was not invited, and getting a good night?s sleep has recently become an issue.

As enigmatic packages arrive from Audrey, the refuge of life at home soon proves illusory. Potter?s parents are oddly never in the same room together, the underage neighbor girl is looking quite adult, and Stuart?s much-needed counseling service is subcontracted to a third-party denizen of the pool house with an agenda all his own. And just what are those noises coming from the attic?

At once an offbeat love story, a moving portrait of a family in crisis, and a darkly funny American comedy, Kyle Beachy?s **The Slide** heralds the arrival of a remarkable new voice in fiction.

Discussion Guide

1. What does it mean to Potter Mays to be ?the son that didn?t drown?? How does the death of his brother affect the way Potter sees himself? How does it impact the way his parents relate to him (and each other)? Do you think he is aware of the feelings he carries?

2. When the tree falls on Stuart?s new apartment, it doesn?t seem to faze him in the slightest. What does this say about

Stuart? Do you think Potter would have reacted (or not reacted) the same way? Throughout the novel, what are some examples of situations in which you felt like the actions of the characters were unexpected or unusual given the circumstances? Why do you think the author made these choices?

3. What is your opinion of Stuart? Is he a savant or a self-important blowhard? What did you think of his advice for Potter? What do you see as the basis of their friendship? What holds them together despite the betrayals?

4. Discuss the title of this book. What does **The Slide** refer to?

5. What do you think is the message behind each of Audrey?s gifts to Potter? What do they tell us about her?

6. In describing the trajectory of his relationship with Audrey, Potter describes the shift they underwent over the years from love to resentment. In their case, it seems to be a fine line. Do you see this playing out elsewhere in other relationships in the book?

7. Consider Potter?s encounters with his brother Freddy?s ghost. Do you think Potter comes to terms with anything through these conversations? Does he gain any wisdom or perspective?

8. Where do you see all of these characters in five years? Potter, Audrey, Stuart, Marianne, and Edsel: where do you think they will be, and what do you think they will be doing in the foreseeable future? What relationships will they maintain with each other and what ties will be severed?

9. Discuss Potter?s relationship with Ian. What does each gain from their friendship? What do they have in common? What possesses Potter to befriend him in the first place? Did this development take you by surprise at all? Why or why not?

10. Potter and Audrey are each unfaithful to each other, but in completely different ways. What was the motivation for each of them, and whose offense would you personally find harder to forgive? Did one cross a line that the other did not?

11. Consider the role of baseball in **The Slide**. To whom is baseball important, and why? What do you think this adds to the narrative? What is the author trying to show through these recurring references?

12. On page 151, Potter?s father shares the advice his own father shared with him: ?Always make sure you love her more than she loves you, and she will love you even more.? Do you think this is sound advice in the world of this novel? Why or why not? Is it sound advice in your experience?

13. At what point does Potter begin to realize how he really feels about the people around him? Is there a moment at which the switch is flipped, or is it a gradual awakening? Did you find any of his revelations to be particularly satisfying or surprising?

14. Discuss Potter?s relationship with Zoe. What do they see in each other? Did you find his attachment to her to be predatory?

15. One of the prominent themes in **The Slide** is love?and whether it can be maintained in the long term. Who is most

successful in creating a sustainable love, and whose relationship is doomed to failure? What aspects of failed love do you see, and where are the glimmers of hope? Is the outlook generally optimistic?

16. When confronted, why does Potter confess to Mr. Worpley?

17. When Potter recounts the events of his summer to Audrey, she asks him for the moral, saying there has to be one, ?otherwise, what?s the point?? (p. 279). Do you think Potter is correct about the moral to his story? Why or why not?

Author Bio

Critical Praise

"Kyle Beachy has a knack for fantastic little nuggets of observation?Like his protagonist, the first-time author is brimming with potential."

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