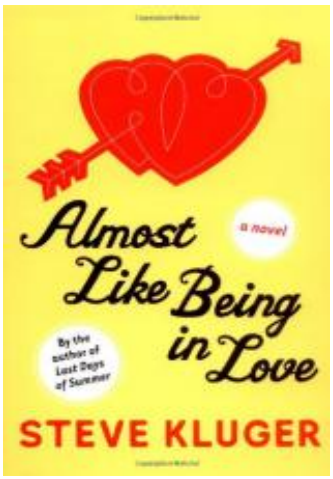
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Almost Like Being in Love: A Novel

by Steve Kluger



About the Book

A high school jock and nerd fall in love senior year, only to part after an amazing summer of discovery to attend their respective colleges. They keep in touch at first, but then slowly drift apart.

Flash forward twenty years.

Travis and Craig both have great lives, careers, and loves. But something is missing .... Travis is the first to figure it out. He's still in love with Craig, and come what may, he's going after the boy who captured his heart, even if it means forsaking his job, making a fool of himself, and entering the great unknown. Told in narrative, letters, checklists, and more, this is the must-read novel for anyone who's wondered what ever happened to that first great love.

Discussion Guide

1. Travis and Craig meet in 1978 and forge a friendship that becomes true love. Neither of them seem to experience much angst about being gay. Was this realistic for this time and place? Why or why not? Was it believable that Gordo was accepting of Travis's sexuality?

2. Travis had managed to make himself "invisible" to the rest of the school to avoid being bullied. When he becomes friends with Craig, he loses this defense. What other ways does Craig change Travis? How does Travis change Craig?

3. Craig suffers no repercussions from his classmates because of his relationship with Travis, even when Craig publicly rescues Travis from the school bully by pelting him with baseballs. How does this affect their relationship? How does Travis rescue Craig?

4. Discuss the ways in which Travis and Craig's magical summer mirrors the story of *Brigadoon*, where the characters

come to life one day every 100 years. Are there other parts of the story that remind you of Brigadoon? What about other musicals?

5. Could an obsessive neatnik like Travis actually live with a slob such as Gordo? Aside from comic relief, how does their relationship push the narrative forward? Can straight and gay men forge strong bonds, without sexual tension, as Gordo and Travis do?

6. After they part, Travis and Craig create their own extended families, which ultimately become intertwined. How would you define "family" as it means to the characters in this novel?

7. Is dating in real life as dismal as Travis's dating life post-Craig? Is a checklist such as Travis's useful for finding love? What would be on your checklist? To what lengths would you go for a chance at love?

8. During Travis's quest to find Craig, he nearly decides to stop several times. What keeps him pushing forward? Craig tried to find Travis one time after they parted. Does this mean Craig doesn't love Travis as much as Travis loves him? Why did Travis wait so long?

9. Describe how Gordo's relationship with his father changes. Does Craig's relationship with his mother change? How do you know? Compare Gordo's relationship with his father to Craig's relationship with his mother.

10. Eventually, all the characters find love in **Almost Like Being in Love**. Does the story end in the way you wanted? Why did the author choose this title?

Author Bio

Steve Kluger is a novelist and playwright who grew up during the Sixties with only two heroes: Tom Seaver and Ethel Merman. Few were able to grasp the concept. A veteran of *Casablanca* and a graduate of *The Graduate*, he has written extensively on subjects as far-ranging as World War II, rock 'n roll, and the *Titanic*, and as close to the heart as baseball and the Boston Red Sox (which frequently have nothing to do with one another). Since 1995, he has been a Jewish Big Brother to his all-time favorite 14-year-old, Avi. He lives in Santa Monica, California.

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