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# Miss Me When I'm Gone

by Emily Arsenault




## About the Book

?A very clever wordsmith.?
?*New York Times Book Review*

?Ms. Arsenault?reveals strange truths beneath everyday surfaces.?
?*Wall Street Journal*

Emily Arsenault?s first two novels, BROKEN TEAGLASS (?a beautifully written, engaging mystery? ?Dorothy Allison) and IN SEARCH OF THE ROSE NOTES, received resounding critical acclaim. With her third, MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE, he firmly re-establishes her standing among Laura Lippman, Tana French, Jennifer McMahon, Megan Abbot, and the other major players in the literary mystery game. Arsenault enthralls with this story of what ensues in the shocking aftermath of the sudden, violent death of the successful author of a ?honky-tonk EAT, PRAY, LOVE,? when an old college friend of the murdered woman comes across an unpublished manuscript?one which could possibly lead to the writer?s killer. A former lexicographer, English teacher, children?s librarian, and Peace Corps volunteer, Emily Arsenault has found her true calling as an author of twisting, intelligent, emotional, and exceptionally compelling mystery fiction.

## Discussion Guide

1. Music plays a major role in MISS ME WHEN I?M GONE. What is Cyrus?s relationship with music and how does it affect his opinion of popular music? How do the rest of the Harper clan (Ruth, Saro, and Ott) relate to music and how does it inform Cyrus?s experience?

2. Both Margaret and Cyrus lost someone close to them. How do these characters handle loss and how does this loss drive their actions?

3. When Loman catches wind of Cyrus and Saro?s opry ?rube? routine, he puts an end to it, saying ?don?t make a fool of music because music can make a fool of you.? What stereotypes in old-time music is Loman addressing here? What preconceptions did you have about the genre and how has this book affected those preconceptions?

4. What is the relationship between religion and music in this story? What happens to Ott and Ruth that shifts their attitudes toward each and what impact did this have on Cyrus?

5. In talking about the Homecoming parade, the druggist tells Margaret, ?Once you?re gone, it?s best to stay that way.? What?s your opinion of this statement? How would Cyrus feel about this sentiment? What does ?home? mean to Cyrus and Margaret?

6. After Margaret kills the football players, it is later revealed she attempted to kill her boyfriend as well. What is your opinion of Margaret?s reaction to the murder she committed? What does it say about her character and how does it relate to the loss of her son?

7. Through his conversations with Cate, we learn that Cyrus?s memory of Saro isn?t always accurate. How does the image of Saro in Cyrus?s mind differ from what others say about her? What role does memory play in the story of Cyrus and Margaret?

8. When Cate plays one of Cyrus?s songs to him, he says, ?That song?s not me. The singer?s not the song.? What?s your opinion of this thought? Does Cyrus believe this sentiment at the story?s end?

9. Margaret?s final letter to her daughter suggests she found her but didn?t actually approach her. Will or can Margaret ever have a relationship with her daughter and what do you think will become of both of them?

10.With hog-eyed men lurking in the shadows, Cyrus?s story ends with him atop the bed of a pickup waiting to join a song with his fiddle. What do you see in Cyrus?s future? Will he answer the call for another album? Will he remain in Apogee?

11.What role does Randy play in this story? What was your opinion of his relationship with Margaret and his inner monologues interspersed throughout the novel?

12.Who is the hog-eyed man? What does he represent to Ruth? To Cyrus? What must one do in order to stop seeing them?

## Author Bio

Emily Arsenault is the author of THE LAST THING I TOLD YOU, THE BROKEN TEAGLASS, IN SEARCH OF THE ROSE NOTES, MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE and WHAT STRANGE CREATURES. She lives in Shelburne

Falls, Massachusetts, with her husband and daughter.

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