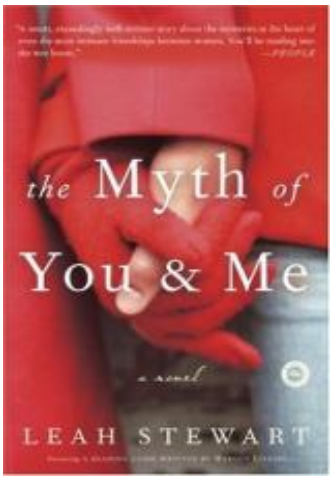
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The Myth of You & Me

by Leah Stewart



About the Book

When Cameron was fifteen, Sonia was her best friend---no one could come between them. Now Cameron is a twenty-nine-year-old research assistant with no meaningful ties to anyone except her aging boss, noted historian Oliver Doucet.

When an unexpected letter arrives from Sonia ten years after the incident that ended their friendship, Cameron doesn't reply, despite Oliver's urging. But then he passes away, and Cameron discovers that he has left her with one final task: to track down Sonia and hand-deliver a mysterious package to her. Now without a job, a home, and a purpose, Cameron decides to honor his request, setting off on the road to find this stranger who was once her inseparable other half.

The Myth of You and Me, the story of Cameron and Sonia's friendship---as intense as any love affair---and its dramatic demise, captures the universal sense of loss and nostalgia that often lingers after the end of an important relationship. Searingly honest, beautiful, and full of fragile urgency, **The Myth of You and Me** is a celebration and portrait of a friendship that will appeal to anyone who still feels the absence of that first true friend.

Discussion Guide

1. How would you describe the relationship between Oliver and Cameron? Is it purely a familial one, or are there romantic undertones? What creates such a tight bond between them?

2. What do you think made Sonia write to Cameron? Can you imagine writing such a letter? What does Sonia mean when she says, "Sometimes without you to confirm these memories I feel like I've invented them"?

3. Oliver believes that "all times exist simultaneously," a concept Cameron returns to several times over the course of the novel. What does Oliver mean by this? How is this notion at odds with Cameron's statement, on page 215, that "once you know the end of the story, every part of the story contains that end, and is only a way of reaching it"? Which of

these ideas strikes you as most true?

4. Why does Oliver force Cameron to seek out Sonia? What does he want for Cameron's life?

5. On page 51, Cameron says, "To belong nowhere is a blessing and a curse, like any kind of freedom." What do you make of this? How have her frequent moves shaped her? How have they affected her worldview? How might she be different if she'd lived her entire life in one place?

6. What connection does Cameron make between her personality and her height? How does she imagine her height causes others to see her?

7. What role does Sonia's dyscalculia play in her life? How has it affected her idea of her herself? Her approach to the world? Why do you think she chooses to let Cameron in on this secret, and what's the effect on Cameron when she tells her?

8. How are Cameron and Sonia shaped by their relationships with their parents?

9. Do you think that what Sonia did to end her friendship with Cameron is forgivable? Why or why not? Why do you think she did it? Why does Cameron find it so difficult to forgive? Is what Cameron did in response forgivable?

10. What draws Cameron to Will? Should Cameron be held responsible for her feelings for Will when he was Sonia's boyfriend, even though she didn't act on them? When she meets him again as an adult, why are her feelings so hard for her to express?

11. Sonia tells Cameron on page 205: "You're a dreamer who doesn't believe in the dream." What does she mean by this? How do you see this play out in Cameron's behavior?

12. Which of the two friends do you sympathize with more, Cameron or Sonia? At which points in the novel do you most sympathize with Sonia? With Cameron? At which points do you sympathize with them the least? Why?

13. In the prologue, Sonia tells Cameron that every decision we make affects the rest of our lives. Do you think this is true? What are the crucial decisions in Cameron's life? Sonia's? Oliver's? Why did they make them?

14. Why are friendships between teenage girls so intense? What brings Cameron and Sonia together? What does each bring to the friendship? What does each get out of it?

15. On page 114, Cameron says that these intense teenage friendships can't last. Is this true? Why or why not?

16. What kind of relationship do you imagine Sonia and Cameron having after the end of the novel? Have they begun a new phase of their friendship, or simply achieved closure?

Author Bio

Leah Stewart is the critically acclaimed author of THE NEW NEIGHBOR, THE HISTORY OF US, HUSBAND AND

WIFE, THE MYTH OF YOU AND ME and BODY OF A GIRL. She received her BA from Vanderbilt University, and her MFA from the University of Michigan. The recipient of a Sachs Fund prize and an NEA Literature Fellowship, she teaches in the creative writing program at the University of Cincinnati and lives in Cincinnati with her husband and two children.

Photo Credit: Jason Sheldon

Critical Praise

"In **The Myth of You and Me**, Leah Stewart captures, as few other writers do, the passions and pains and pleasures of friendship. . . . [A] beautifully written and suspenseful novel."

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