

The Summer Pact

by Emily Giffin



About the Book

In the wake of tragedy, a group of friends makes a pact that will cause them to reunite a decade later and embark upon a life-changing adventure together --- from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *MEANT TO BE*.

Four freshmen arrive at college from completely different worlds: Lainey, a California party girl with a flair for drama; Tyson, a brilliant scholar and an aspiring lawyer from Washington, D.C.; Summer, an ambitious, recruited athlete from the Midwest; and Hannah, a mild-mannered southerner who is content to quietly round out the circle of big personalities. Soon after arriving on campus, they strike up a conversation in their shared dorm, and the seeds of friendship are planted.

As their college years fly by, their bond intensifies and the four become inseparable. But as graduation nears, their lives are forever changed after a desperate act leads to tragic consequences. Stunned and heartbroken, they make a pact, promising to always be there for one another, no matter how separated they may become by circumstances or distance.

Ten years later, Hannah is anticipating what should be one of the happiest moments of her life when everything is suddenly turned upside down. Calling on her closest friends, it soon becomes clear that they are all facing their own crossroads. True to their promise, they agree to take a time out from lives headed in wrong directions and embark on a shared journey of self-discovery, forgiveness and acceptance.

In this tender portrayal of grief, love and hope, Emily Giffin asks: When things fall apart, who will be at our sides, helping us pick up the pieces?

Discussion Guide

1. What was your biggest takeaway from *THE SUMMER PACT*? You may wish to talk about the thematic significance --- literal and symbolic --- of the title, for starters.
2. Discuss the novel's structure and style. Did you enjoy the reading from each character's point of view? What other storytelling techniques, from foreshadowing to cliffhanger chapter endings, kept you turning the pages?
3. Explore the nature of friendship in *THE SUMMER PACT*. How do Lainey, Tyson and Hannah's relationships evolve before and after they lose their friend? And where do you imagine they're headed beyond the end of this book?
4. Discuss the ways in which Summer's friends experience grief --- individual and collective. How, if at all, could you identify with the events and emotions explored in this novel?
5. "You can't change the past," Tyson's mother tells him. "True," he says. "But I can learn from it." What did Tyson learn? Did *you* learn anything about yourself from his journey?
6. The novel opens with Hannah. Did you like her voice? How did her personality come to life on the page? Did you find her to be a relatable and trustworthy narrator? How?
7. What about Lainey? What made her unique or memorable? Moreover, could you imagine any of the main characters as friends of your own? Take a moment to think about your friendship circle(s) and if *THE SUMMER PACT* led you to consider your sense of belonging and/or loyalty --- and how.
8. We are taught, as young readers, that there is a moral to every story --- something that we are supposed to learn about the world and ourselves from having read it. Do you believe that a work of fiction can "speak" to our own humanity? And, if so, what do you think *THE SUMMER PACT* has to say?
9. If *THE SUMMER PACT* were made into a movie, who would you cast as each of the main characters?
10. If you had the chance to ask Emily Giffin one question about *THE SUMMER PACT* --- about the writing process, the characters or the plot --- what would it be?

Author Bio

Emily Giffin is the bestselling author of 12 novels: *SOMETHING BORROWED*, *SOMETHING BLUE*, *BABY PROOF*, *LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH*, *HEART OF THE MATTER*, *WHERE WE BELONG*, *THE ONE & ONLY*, *FIRST COMES LOVE*, *ALL WE EVER WANTED*, *THE LIES THAT BIND*, *MEANT TO BE* and *THE SUMMER PACT*. She lives in Atlanta with her husband and three children.

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