

Further Reading

Girl in Snow
Danya Kukafka (2017)
KUKAFKA 08/17

When fifteen-year-old Lucinda Hayes is found dead in her sleepy Colorado suburb, the secret lives of three people connected to her are revealed: the social outcast who loved her from afar, the jaded girl who despised her, and the policeman investigating her death.

Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, and a Dream
H.G. Bissinger
SPORTS FOOTBALL BIS

Chronicles a football season in Odessa, Texas, a depressed All-American town that lives and dies with the fortunes of its high school football team.

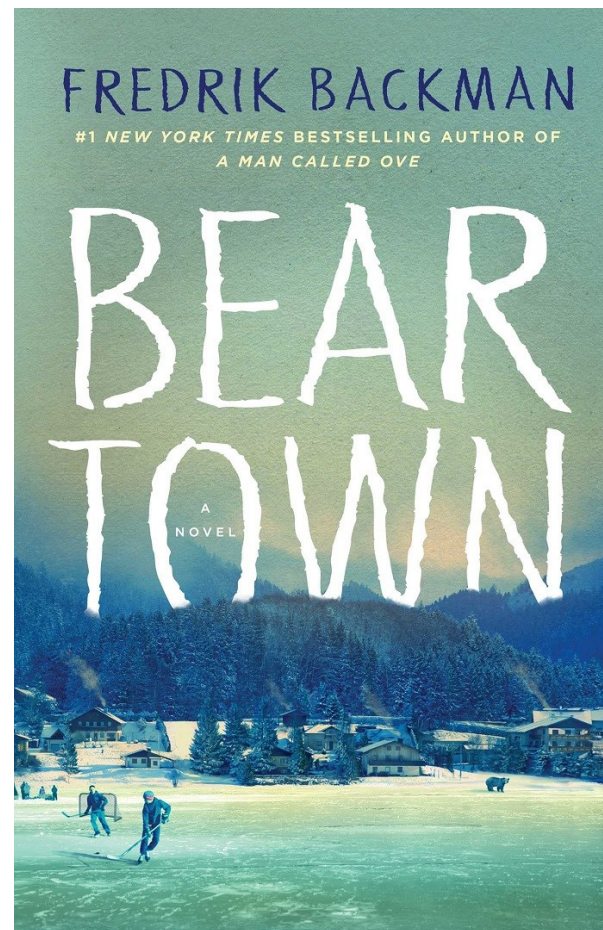
Faith
Jennifer Haigh (2011)
HAIGH

When her older brother, Art, a Catholic priest and the popular pastor of a large suburban parish, finds himself at the center of a scandal, Sheila McGann, estranged from her family for years, returns to Boston, ready to fight for him and his reputation.

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Book Discussion



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About the Book

Winning a junior ice hockey championship might not mean a lot to the average person, but it means everything to the residents of Beartown, a community slowly being eaten alive by unemployment and the surrounding wilderness. A victory like this would draw national attention to the ailing town: it could attract government funding and an influx of talented athletes who would choose Beartown over the big nearby cities. At first, it seems like the team might have a shot at fulfilling the dreams of their entire town., but one night something happens between a team member and the general manager's daughter--and the next day everything seems to have changed.

Discussion Questions

1. What does hockey mean to the people of Beartown? What does winning the semifinal mean for the town's future?
2. The town and the parents of the Beartown junior hockey team place great expectations on the shoulders of 17 year old boys. How does this pressure affect the boys? Have the club's leaders (David, Sune, Peter,) prepared the boys to deal with this pressure? Have the boys' parents?
3. How do issues related to social class affect the people of Beartown and the hockey club? Do those who live in the Hollow have a different world view from those who live in the Heights? Does hockey cut through class distinctions or reinforce them?
4. What does Kira's role as a working mother, and her job as a lawyer, mean to her? How does her job affect the way others treat her?
5. There are many different styles of parenting portrayed in the book. Which parents do you think are the most successful at preparing their children for the real world? Why? Which are the worst?
6. Discuss the difference between male and female roles in the small village of Beartown. What is expected of the girls and women vs. the boys and men? Which characters break these expectations, and what are the consequences of doing so?
7. In the course of the novel, we see that playing on a sports team teaches young people values like loyalty, responsibility, and commitment. But we also see instances of exclusion, aggression, and entitlement. Are there certain behaviors that are rewarded in a sports competition but considered inappropriate in daily life? Give examples. Which characters in the book have difficulty navigating this?
8. How does Maya's final act shape her future? How does it shape Kevin's? Do you think a form of justice is achieved? Why or why not?
9. At the end of the novel, do you think the tradition of the Beartown Hockey Club continues? Has its fundamental character changed? How do you think it will change going forward?
9. Consider this sentiment echoed throughout the book: "What is a community? It is the sum total of our choices," (p. 312). By this definition, how do the townspeople of Beartown ultimately measure up? What kind of community have they built?