

BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

THE COMPLETE PACKAGE
FOR READERS AND LEADERS

DISCUSSES ANNE MICHAELS' NOVEL

FUGITIVE PIECES

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BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

Bookclub-in-a-Box presents the discussion companion for Anne Michaels' novel Fugitive Pieces

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Quotations used in this guide have been taken from the text of the paperback edition of **Fugitive Pieces**. All information taken from other sources is acknowledged.

This discussion companion for **Fugitive Pieces** has been prepared and written by Marilyn Herbert, originator of Bookclub-in-a-Box. Marilyn Herbert, B.Ed., is a teacher, librarian, speaker and writer. Bookclub-in-a-Box is a unique guide to current fiction and classic literature intended for book club discussions, educational study seminars, and personal pleasure. For more information about the Bookclub-in-a-Box team, visit our website.

Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion companion for Fugitive Pieces

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CONTACT INFORMATION: SEE BACK COVER.

BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Anne Michaels' Fugitive Pieces

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BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Readers and Leaders Guide

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is clearly and effectively organized to give you information and ideas for a lively discussion, as well as to present the major highlights of the novel. The format, with a Table of Contents, allows you to pick and choose the specific points you wish to talk about. It does not have to be used in any prescribed order. In fact, it is meant to support, not determine, your discussion.

You Choose What to Use.

You may find that some information is repeated in more than one section and may be cross-referenced so as to provide insight on the same idea from different angles.

The guide is formatted to give you extra space to make your own notes.

How to Begin

Relax and look forward to enjoying your bookclub.

With Bookclub-in-a-Box as your behind the scenes support, there is little for you to do in the way of preparation.

Some readers like to review the guide after reading the novel; some before. Either way, the guide is all you will need as a companion for your discussion. You may find that the guide's interpretation, information, and background have sparked other ideas not included.

Having read the novel and armed with Bookclub-in-a-Box, you will be well prepared to lead or guide or listen to the discussion at hand.

Lastly, if you need some more 'hands-on' support, feel free to contact us. (See Contact Information)

What to Look For

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is divided into easy-to-use sections, which include points on characters, themes, writing style and structure, literary or historical background, author information, and other pertinent features unique to the novel being discussed. These may vary slightly from guide to guide.

INTERPRETATION OF EACH NOVEL REFLECTS THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX TEAM.

Do We Need to Agree?

THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS NO.

If we have sparked a discussion or a debate on certain points, then we are happy. We invite you to share your group's alternative findings and experiences with us. You can respond on-line at our website or contact us through our Contact Information. We would love to hear from you.

Discussion Starters

There are as many ways to begin a bookclub discussion as there are members in your group. If you are an experienced group, you will already have your favorite ways to begin. If you are a newly formed group or a group looking for new ideas, here are some suggestions.

Ask for people's impressions of the novel. (This will give you some idea about which parts of the unit to focus on.)

- Identify a favorite or major character.
- Identify a favorite or major idea.
- Begin with a powerful or pertinent quote. (not necessarily from the novel)
- Discuss the historical information of the novel. (not applicable to all novels)
- If this author is familiar to the group, discuss the range of his/her work and where this novel stands in that range.
- Use the discussion topics and questions in the Bookclub-in-a-Box guide.

If you have further suggestions for discussion starters, be sure to share them with us and we will share them with others.

Above All, Enjoy Yourself

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Keys to the Novel

Author Information

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Fugitive Pieces is made up of two seemingly unconnected stories, which Anne Michaels uses to explore the chance and circumstance of life measured against the power of love.

The first story belongs to Jakob Beer and his rescuer, Athos Roussos. Athos, a Greek geologist, is digging up the ruins of Biskupin, an ancient settlement located in central Poland. This fortified settlement was built to protect its people against foreign tribes. (see *Biskupin*, p.57) It is from the underwater ruins of this buried village that Jakob Beer, a seven-year old fugitive of war, suddenly appears. Athos scoops up the mud-covered Jakob, hides him beneath his coat and spirits him out of Poland to Greece. They hide in Athos's family home for the duration of the war and then leave the past behind to start again in Toronto, Canada. They come to Toronto because Athos has been hired to teach in the newly formed geography department at the University of Toronto.

notes

The second story intersects the first only by a filament of chance. It is at a faculty gathering that Ben, a young writer and professor, and his wife, Naomi, meet Jakob and his wife, Michaela. Like many chance encounters, this one sparks an instantaneous emotional connection between Naomi and Jakob. It takes the emotionally compressed Ben a very long time to understand the significance of this association to his personal life. These two men are souls who are both lost and found through love. Each has two loves, two life stories, two emerging souls, and two new chances.

Through Jakob and Ben, Michaels illustrates how we are shaped and impacted by the links and influences of historical events. She shows how history, both global and personal, is a “gradual instant” that seems suddenly thrust upon us, but in reality is one whose path we can trace to our beginnings. This Holocaust story emphasizes faith and love as redeeming forces for the damaged soul. This is what freshens Michaels’ perspective on the Holocaust and why she believes that the Holocaust is not an “old” story, but one that is renewed with each telling.

Keys To the Novel *time and history, humanity, memory*

- Anne Michaels investigates the concepts of time, history, and humanity within the framework of memory. Memory and history form an inseparable bond, because they share the same time and space. To prove that “*every moment is two moments*” (p.140, p.161), Michaels uses parallels and counterparts for her characters, their stories, and their emotions.

Time and History

- She presents time and history as vertical formations, not linear or chronological ones, by taking the reader backward from Jakob’s elder years to Ben’s young ones. (see *Time*, p.45) We watch both Ben and Jakob as they grow forward into their final loves. The story does not begin with Ben, because first we must see, through Jakob,



**Thanks for previewing this
Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion guide.**

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print or PDF format, just visit:**

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