



The Birdy Cleary Book Club Packet

Dear Readers,

I love the way books make us feel seen and help us see others more fully. The more we read, the more tools we have to understand new people and situations, and the stronger our empathy grows.

I also love the discussions books can spark. Whether you loved *Birdy* *Cleary* or hated it, I hope you will use it as an opportunity to connect with real people in your life. I created this book club packet because I would never have gotten here without my friends and family, and I want to help more people access that type of joy.

In a world of virtual demands and constant uncertainty, it is vital to connect with real people in all their complexity, to love and be loved through life's highs and lows, and to snort-laugh as often as possible.

So call a few friends, or summon a crowd. Pick a menu from the following pages, or use one as inspiration for your own. Turn on some music, break out the discussion questions, and let the good times roll.

Please don't interrupt the fun on my behalf, but if you find yourself sharing pictures after the event, feel free to tag me on Instagram (@catherine.busch.author)-and tell me about it! I hope it's just one of many gatherings you enjoy with your friends.

Thank you for reading and supporting my work. It means the world to me.

Catherine

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Playlist

The Spotify playlist is available on my website, but if you're not a Spotify user, you can use this list to create your own list. It's a mixture of fun and emo, just like Birdy. Some songs are mentioned in the book, some I envisioned for certain scenes, and some just fit the general mood. Enjoy!

- Welcome to the Black Parade by My Chemical Romance
Time of Your Life (Good Riddance) by Green Day
Low by Flo Rida
Honky Tonk Badonkadonk by Trace Adkins
You and Me by Lifehouse
Mr. Brightside by The Killers
No Hands by Waka Flocka Flame
The Great Divide by Noah Kahan
Paper Planes by M.I.A.
When You Were Young by The Killers
Bring Me To Life by Evanescence
I Hate Everything About You by Three Days Grace
Highway to Hell by AC/DC
Supermassive Black Hole by Muse
Viva la Vida by Coldplay
How to Save a Life by The Fray
Holiday by Green Day
Seven Nation Army by The White Stripes
In The End Linkin Park
Creep by Radiohead
Island in the Sun by Weezer
Yeah! by USHER
All My Favorite Songs by Weezer ft. AJR
Ready to Run by The Chicks
That Don't Impress Me Much by Shania Twain
DONTTRUSTME by 3OH!3
Gives You Hell by All-American Rejects
Thx fr the Mmrs by Fall Out BoY
Tik Tok by Ke\$ha
Crank That (Soulja Boy) by Soulja Boy
Wake Me Up When September Ends by Green Day
Fidelity by Regina Spektor
The Call by Regina Spektor
Bye Bye Bye by *NSYNC
Gold Digger by Kanye West ft. Jamie Foxx
Somebody Told Me by The Killers
All the Small Things by Blink-182
Umbrella by Rihanna and Jay-Z
Young Forever by Jay-Z and Mr. Hudson
All the Above by Maino and T-Pain
All I Do Is Win by DJ Khaled
Poker Face by Lady Gaga
Just Dance by Lady Gaga
Club Can't Handle Me by Flo Rida
American Idiot by Green Day
Before He Cheats by Carrie Underwoods
It's A Great Day to Be Alive Travis Tritt
Friends in Low Places Garth Brooks
Love The Way You Lie by Eminem ft. Rihanna
Numb by Linkin Park
Bleed It out by Linkin Park
Feel Good Inc. by Gorillaz
All Star by Smashmouth
I Miss You by Blink-182
Losing My Religion by R.E.M.
You're Gonna Go Far, Kid by The Offspring
Kryptonite by 3 Doors Down
I Write Sins Not Tragedies by Panic! At the Disco
I'm Just a Kid by Simple Plan
Kids by MGMT
Time to Pretend by MGMT
Temperature by Sean Paul
Airplanes by B.O.B. ft. Hayley Williams
Nothin' on You by B.o.B. ft. Bruno Mars
Hot n' Cold by Katy Perry
Starlight by Muse
Live Your Life by T.I. ft. Rihanna
Run This Town by Jay-Z ft. Rihanna
Dirty Little Secret by All American Rejects
Time After Time Cyndi Lauper

Menu 1: Cheap and Grungy

This menu fits Birdy and her friends early in the book, as they blunder around with little agency and minimal resources. Perfect for a night when you want to hang out, but are broke and tired.

Snack: Microwave popcorn

Dessert: Oreos

Beverage: Hot chocolate, rum and Coke, or any low-effort cocktail

Menu 2: Cozy Night In

As Birdy and her friends get older, their cooking skills improve, their creativity increases, and their bond deepens. This menu is good for a cozy night when you are still tired, but are willing to exert slightly more effort in your preparations.

Entree: Boxed macaroni and cheese, chicken nuggets

Dessert: Chocolate chip cookies

Beverage: Seltzer water, hard seltzer, or wine

Menu 3: Growing Up

Eventually, Birdy and her friends learn to cook and take more control of their circumstances. (Sometimes.) You won't find a single margarita in the novel, but international law dictates that when you consume chips, salsa, and guac, you must keep a margarita close at hand. And unlike Birdy and the gang, we're no lawbreakers.

Entree: Tortilla chips, pico de gallo, and guacamole. Eat your weight in these, or expand to a full taco bar if you wish.

Dessert: Milkshakes or brownies

Beverage: Canned mocktails, margaritas, or craft beers, if you're into that.

M.A.S.H. For Adults

Fun fact: M.A.S.H. accurately predicted my future husband. As such, I am an advocate for keeping this game in circulation. This version is designed to capture your daydreams, so you mostly can't go wrong, unless you end up living in a shack. But at least that wouldn't require much upkeep!

Print a page for everyone in your book club. If you've never played before, here's how it works:

1. M.A.S.H. stands for the four possibilities for your living quarters: Mansion, Apartment, Shack, and House.
2. Find a pen and fill in your choices for each category. Don't hold back. We're daydreaming here.
3. Have your friend draw dashes until you say to stop.
4. Using the number of dashes they drew as a guide, your friend should go through the board, crossing out answers. So if they drew five dashes, they cross out every fifth answer until only one answer remains per category.
5. What remains is your daydream life. Enjoy!

M.A.S.H.

Annual Vacation

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Luxury Service

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Travel Companion

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Luxury Home Update

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Transportation

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Profitable Side Hustle

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Discussion Questions

Now let's get the conversation going.

For optimal results, print these questions, cut along the dotted lines, put them in a bowl, and take turns picking and answering them.

Choose the question style that fits the mood, or use all three.

First Page: Icebreaker Questions

Next Page: Literary Nerd Questions

Final Page: Real Talk Questions

Who was your favorite character?

What was your favorite scene?

Who was your least favorite character?

What was your least favorite scene?

Which of the featured schools sounded the worst
and best to you?

Most of the characters struggle with their work situations. What
was your first job? What was your worst job?

What do you think happens to Dominic when he grows up?
What do you think happens to Jude?

Birdy never picks a college major. What do you think she
ends up doing with her life?

Friendship is a major theme in the book. How would you compare the friendships between the girls, the moms, and the dads? What do you think influences how these different friend groups treat each other?

Birdy and Dominic have a volatile relationship. How does the power shift between them throughout the book?

Family relationships are another major theme in the story. What does Birdy learn about her family throughout it? How does her relationship with her brothers compare to the relationship between the Doppelski brothers?

While most of the story is told from Birdy's perspective, sometimes other characters take the reins. Which of the other point-of-view characters did you find the most compelling?

Just as in real life, many of the characters in this book are not quite what they seem. Whose journey surprised you the most?

Birdy by Cleary is divided into seasons across four years. How did this structure influence your experience of the story?

Early in the book, Birdy says she can only live her life by what her parents want. How does this belief change over time?

How does the 2000s setting of the novel influence the characters' beliefs, actions, and experiences?

Birdy learns a lot about who to trust and why. What helps you decide if you trust someone or not?

Everyone at this book club is suddenly at a high school dance together. What's everyone wearing, and what songs are you dancing to?

Can you remember a time when someone stood up for you or when you stood up for someone else?

Share a beauty or grooming tip you did not learn until way too late in life.

Of all the characters, who did you find the most relatable? Who was the most exasperating?

Please share the story of a romantic blunder from your youth.

Everyone at this book club has to join forces to run a business. What are you selling and who has what role?

Characters in the book often look back at their younger selves with affection or annoyance. If you could talk to your younger self, what would you say?