



The People We Keep

Book Club Questions

1. Margo, who owns the local town diner, is the closest thing to a parent the reader is introduced to at the outset of the novel. Having once dated April's father, Margo took April out to lunch after they separated, telling her, "What I want you to remember, girl, is that I'm not breaking up with you." Though Margo was candid when she said this, a young April remembers feeling disheartened by the prospect of more loss in her life. Discuss how loss can shape one's life. Can just the idea of losing someone affect how you respond to building relationships?
2. *The People We Keep* takes place in the 1990s, a time when people's lives were not as easily accessible via social media and long-distance relationships were not as easy to maintain. In what ways did this propel the story forward?
3. April is described as "plucky" and the author shared that April was often seen as "unlikeable" until the Me Too Movement. Were you put off by this character's disposition? Can you see how the response may have changed given the advancements made by the awareness fostered through this movement?
4. April meets Adam, an architecture student, at the cafe shortly after she begins working there. When she needs a place to stay, he offers his couch. After initially hesitating, she decides to accept his offer. Adam thankfully proves both hospitable and generous, and in the following days, the two grow close. Discuss the likelihood and the risk of this kind of situation, as well as April's decision. Were you worried about how this scenario might work out for April?

5. April builds deep, lasting friendships with people who also feel lost and alone. As she grows close with Carly, the cafe manager opens up about her failed relationship, coming out to her parents, and being thrown out of her home. April and Adam even take Carly in for several nights. How does Carly's experience mirror/differ from April's? Consider how the two bond over what they share. Who else in the novel shares a lot with April?
6. At the end of part one, April leaves Ithaca, believing Adam will discover the truth about her keeping her age a secret from him. Similarly, at the end of part two, afraid the truth of her baby's parentage will hurt Robert and Ethan, April leaves Asheville. Would you leave?
7. How did the interview with the author impact your experience with this read?
8. Rosemary learns of April's fabricated date of birth on her ID after finding her wallet. Terrified that the truth about her age will be revealed, April makes the heartbreaking decision to leave Ithaca, and Adam and Carly. How do you think fear shapes this part of our story? Were you frustrated with April's decision to leave?
9. Once April arrives in Asheville she meets Ethan. When he asks about her music, April responds saying that it's her way of getting by. His response? "Your way of getting by is a lot of people's dream." What are some jobs that seem ideal, but are probably different in reality? What do you dream of doing, but know you wouldn't really want to execute in reality?
10. Through Ethan, April and Robert grow close and their connection becomes romantic. "I sleep at Robert's house. All night. I don't leave before he wakes up. Sex is one thing—just putting parts together. It's another thing entirely to exist together. Robert is someone I want to exist with." What does it mean for April to have this realization? Discuss how her perspective on leaving and home has or hasn't changed at this point in the novel.
11. Do you think this story deserves a sequel or do you feel like it is complete?
12. Where is YOUR Ithaca?

13. April's music is both her livelihood and her purest form of expression. Did this bring to mind any 90s songs that shaped your life? Any favorites or new-to-you favorites from this month's playlist?

Location of the Patreon Bonuses

[The People We Keep Song Playlist](#)

[Allison Larkin Author Interview Video](#)

[Allison Larkin Author Interview Audio](#)

Headline News You Can Use

NEWS ARTICLE: “This novel began in 2006, when Larkin started creating characters. Larkin heard the songs “Iowa” by Dar Williams and “This is the Sea” by The Waterboys and inspiration for her story struck. “Something about the combination of those two songs just jiggled something loose in my head and April kind of showed up,” Larkin said. She stopped that night after hearing those songs together and wrote 5,000-6,000 words about April. Larkin has been working through her story ever since. “I wrote this book because I couldn’t stop writing it,” Larkin said. “None of it was for any purpose other than that. In terms of just my heart and appreciation for the city [Ithaca], it would mean a lot to me if other people who also loved the city understand what I’m talking about.” ([source](#))

FACT: Curious what musicians make today from streaming? Spotify shares their ten takeaways from 2021 with some surprising information about what royalties really looked like for musicians. ([source](#))

FACT: It might not be the 90s, but the theme of a struggling musician persists in new formats. When the pandemic hit, many musicians were completely reliant on these streams for their income. Do you know how much a musician makes on a stream?

“Industry estimates put Spotify’s payout rate for recordings at about \$4,000 per million streams, or less than half a cent per stream. Since that money may pass through a record company before making its way to an artist, hundreds of millions of streams may be needed for a musician to net anything substantial.” Are you surprised by this? ([source](#))

FUN FACT: Want to learn some surprising facts about your favorite 90s songs? Here are 10 little-known facts for your next dinner party! ([source](#))

FUN FACT: 29 Things Only Ithaca College Students- I don’t know how true this is, but it did make me laugh ([source](#))