

FREDRIK BACKMAN

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF  
*ANXIOUS PEOPLE*

# BRITT-MARIE WAS HERE

"Backman's truest,  
most satisfying  
book to date."

—*Paste Magazine*



# ESL 360

# BOOK CLUB

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Chapters 27 - 29

15 April 2026

## Weekly Book Club Assignments, Group A (10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.)

Week	Date	Reading	Ira	Flavia	Maria	Lisa	Mariana	Banu	Fatemeh
2	28 Jan	Ch 1-3	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Time Keeper
3	4 Feb	Ch 4-5	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Time Keeper
4	11 Feb	Ch 6-8	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Time Keeper
5	18 Feb	Ch 9-11	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Time Keeper
6	25 Feb	Ch 12-14	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Time Keeper
7	4 Mar	Ch 15-17	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Time Keeper
	11 Mar	NO BOOK CLUB							
	18 Mar	NO BOOK CLUB — SPRING BREAK							
8	25 Mar	Ch 18-20	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Time Keeper
9	1 Apr	Ch 21-23	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Time Keeper
10	8 Apr	Ch 24-26	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Time Keeper
11	15 Apr	Ch 27-29	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Time Keeper
12	22 Apr	Ch 30-32	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Time Keeper
13	29 Apr	Ch 33-34	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Time Keeper
14	6 May	Ch 35-36	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Time Keeper
15	13 May	Ch 37	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Time Keeper
16	20 May	Ch 38	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Time Keeper

## Weekly Book Club Assignments, Group B (11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.)

Week	Date	Reading	Monica	Cristy	Esmeralda	Yulianna	Lily S.	Yariela	Lily L.
2	28 Jan	Ch 1-3	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker
3	4 Feb	Ch 4-5	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer
4	11 Feb	Ch 6-8	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker
5	18 Feb	Ch 9-11	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder
6	25 Feb	Ch 12-14	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter
7	4 Mar	Ch 15-17	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer
	11 Mar	NO BOOK CLUB							
	18 Mar	NO BOOK CLUB — SPRING BREAK							
8	25 Mar	Ch 18-20	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist
9	1 Apr	Ch 21-23	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker
10	8 Apr	Ch 24-26	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer
11	15 Apr	Ch 27-29	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker
12	22 Apr	Ch 30-32	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder
13	29 Apr	Ch 33-34	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter
14	6 May	Ch 35-36	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer
15	13 May	Ch 37	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist
16	20 May	Ch 38	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker

# 60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

LISA

Chapter 27: Sven and Kent arrive at the pizzeria to check if Britt Marie is okay. They don't know what to do. Then they start arguing with each other. Britt Marie has never seen Sven this angry before. So she asks them to calm down so many times but they don't listen to her. Finally, she yells: "Get out of here! The pair of you!" Britt Marie is upset with Kent for not noticing her hurt hand and with Sven for talking about her feelings.

Chapter 28: Two policeman from the town come to ask some questions to all witnesses, but Britt Marie is more worried about her list, which has been destroyed. Somebody tells Britt Marie that her car is fixed, but she admits she didn't tell her before because she was afraid that Britt Marie could leave Borg. She also asks how she feels about a white car with a blue door.

Britt Marie walks back through Borg with Vega and Omar. Vega calls Sami, but there is no answer. They don't know where Sami is and they are concerned about him. So, Britt Marie decides to make dinner for the kids. Then she hugs them hard and they cry together. Later, Sami returns home after trying to find Psycho. Britt Marie and Sami drink whiskey and smoke together. Sami tells her how he lost his mother and about his fear of losing his siblings too.

Chapter 29: The next day, Britt Marie arrives at the recreation center. Sven also comes there and apologizes her for hurting her feelings. At the same time, Britt Marie receives a bouquet of tulips and a card from Kent, saying "I love you".

Two ancient women come and speak to Britt Marie in a different language. They bring fruits for the boys on the team. It's the soccer cup day!

Britt Marie takes her car to drive the kids to the game. She doesn't know how to fill up the car, then Vega helps her. For the first time, Britt Marie fills her own car by herself. It's a big day. It's soccer cup and probably Britt Marie's farewell.

# DEEP THINKER

.....  
LISA

1. After the argument between Kent and Sven, do you think Britt-Marie changed her feelings about Sven?
2. Britt Marie didn't tell about her last day in Borg. Do you think she plans to stay there? Why or why not?
3. At the end, Britt Marie puts fuel in her own car. Why is this small action important ?

# 60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

LILY L.

## The Choice of a Heart

In this part of the story, we see a beautiful and painful transformation. The setting shifts between a dusty football field and the quiet realization of what it means to truly belong. The children of Borg have found their heart on that pitch. To the rest of the world, this town is a place that is "dying," but on the field, these kids finally feel like they exist. They aren't just invisible shadows anymore; they are a team. And even though Britt-Marie still worries about being "proper" and having everything in order, she is the one holding that team together. She is navigating a world of logistical chaos and loud personalities, and she's doing it with a quiet strength she didn't know she had. However, as the big match approaches, the messy reality of Borg begins to clash with Britt-Marie's lifelong desire for perfect order. She has spent her whole life trying to do the "right" thing. Now, she realizes that the people here—the children and even Sven, the policeman—don't just need her to be a coach; they rely on her presence. They see her as a person, not just a background character. Everything changes when the past literally drives into town. Her husband, Kent, arrives, and it feels like a collision of two different worlds. Kent represents the life where she was invisible, defined only by his needs. Borg represents a life where she is recognized by her own name. Now, she is at a crossroads: does she go back to the safety of her old life, or does she stay in the chaos where she finally feels seen?

# DEEP THINKER

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LILY L.

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# VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIANA

## 1. Plagued

Sentence from the book (p. 223): “Sees how they are plagued by bad conscience because they weren’t here to protect her”.

Dictionary meaning: Caused trouble, problems, or suffering again and again.

My definition (in my own words): Plagued means something keeps bothering you or causing problems over and over.

Example sentences:

The town was plagued by heavy rain all week.

He was plagued by bad dreams at night.

Our team was plagued by mistakes during the game.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIANA

## 2. Disdainfully

Sentence from the book (p. 225): “Kent imitates disdainfully”.

Dictionary meaning: In a way that shows dislike or that you think something is not good enough.

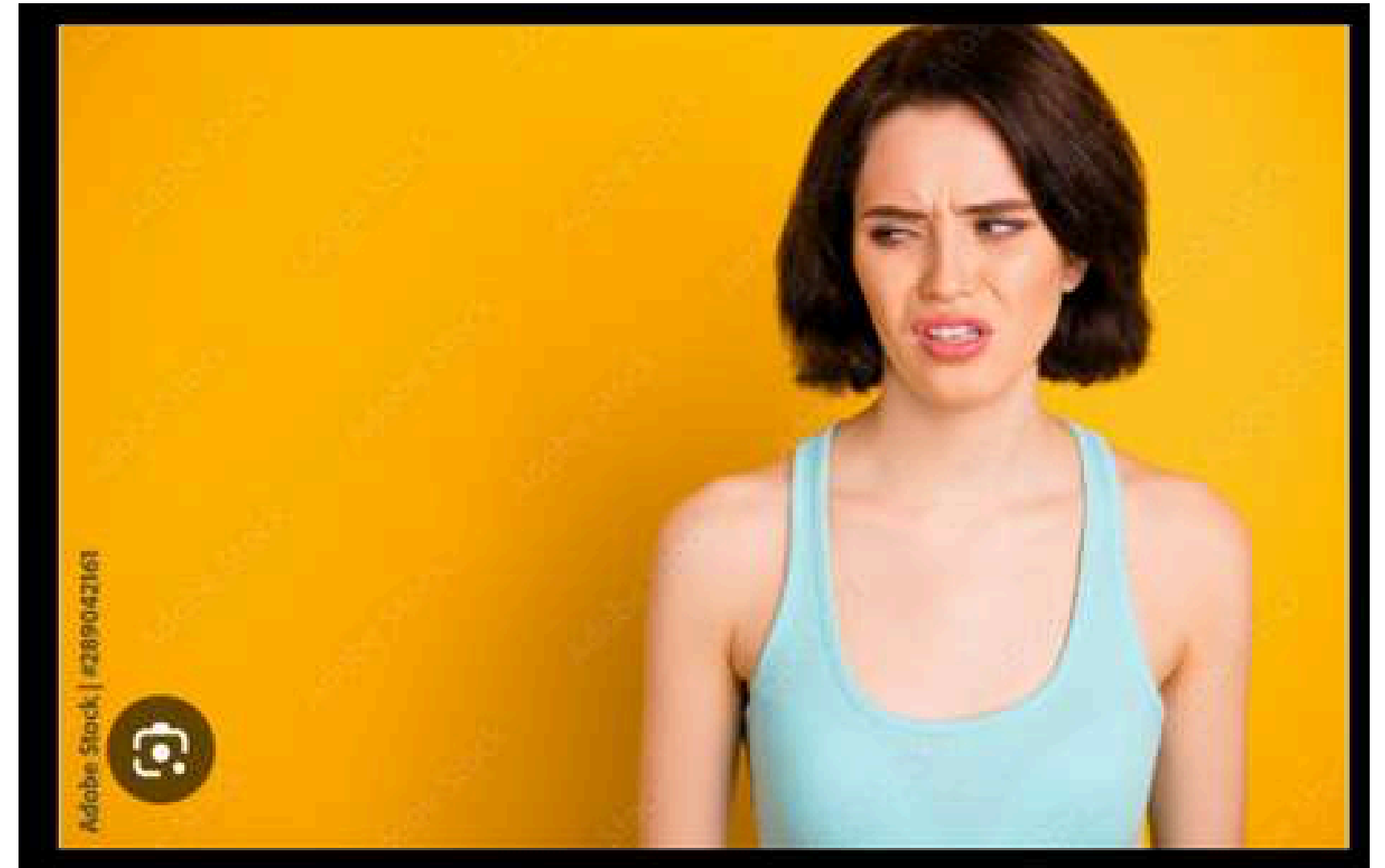
My definition (in my own words): Disdainfully means acting like something is not important or not good, and you don't respect it.

### Example sentences:

She looked at the messy room disdainfully.

He spoke disdainfully about the idea.

The girl turned away disdainfully when she heard the joke.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIANA

### 3. Halfheartedly

Sentence from the book (p. 227): “ The bell above the door tinkles dolefully and halfheartedly behind Kent and Sven”

Dictionary meaning: Doing something without much interest, effort, or enthusiasm.

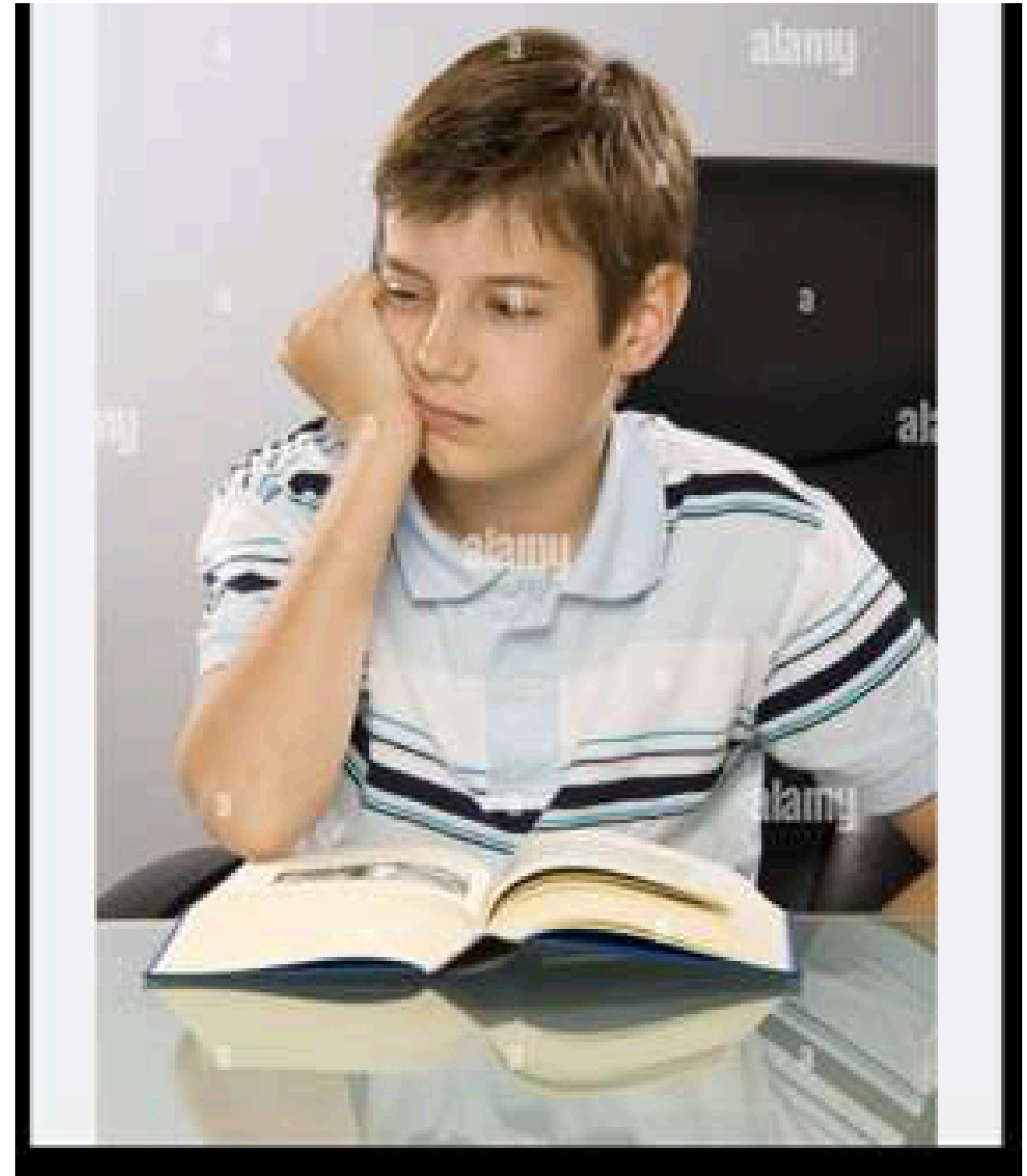
My definition (in my own words): Halfheartedly means doing something with little effort or not really caring much.

#### Example sentences:

He halfheartedly cleaned his room.

She halfheartedly said “okay” when her mom asked her to help.

The student halfheartedly finished the assignment.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIANA

## 4. Tackles

Sentence from the book (p. 233): “Max tackles Vega just as she’s about to score and she takes two swings at him with both fists “.

Dictionary meaning: To try to deal with or solve a problem or difficult situation. (In sports, it can also mean stopping another player by taking the ball.)

My definition (in my own words): Tackles means trying to solve something difficult, or stopping someone in a game.

### Example sentences:

She tackles her homework right after school.

The team tackles tough problems together.

The defender tackles the player and takes the ball.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

## MARIANA

### 5. Menacingly

Sentence from the book (p. 237): “Britt - Marie collects herself and points her cigarette at him menacingly”.

Dictionary meaning: In a way that shows a threat or danger; making someone feel scared.

My definition (in my own words): Menacingly means acting or looking scary, like something bad might happen.

#### Example sentences:

The dog growled menacingly at the stranger.

He looked at me menacingly from across the room.

Dark clouds moved menacingly over the city.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

MONICA

## **Stumbling /'stʌmbəlɪŋ/, verb**

Book. The two men come stumbling in, white-faced standing crestfallen the door.

Definition. Walking in an unsteady, clumsy way. Tripping

New sentence. The sailors were stumbling out as they were walking out of the bar.

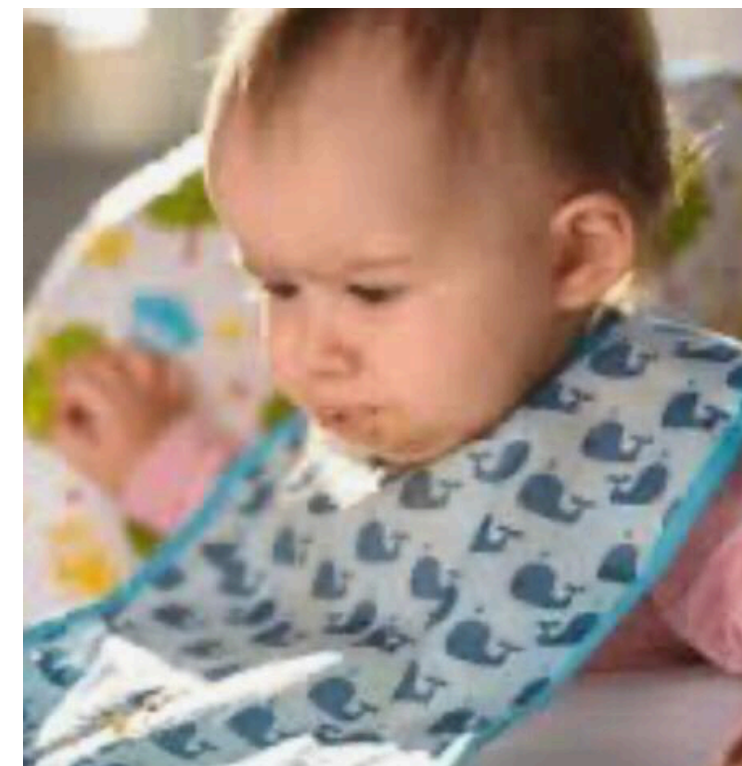


## **Splutters /'splʌtərz/ verb**

Book. I mean the real police, the kind that can stop robberies! Splutters Kent.

Definition. Making noises in an explosive way, like choking or spitting.

New sentence. The baby splutters his food all over the bib.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

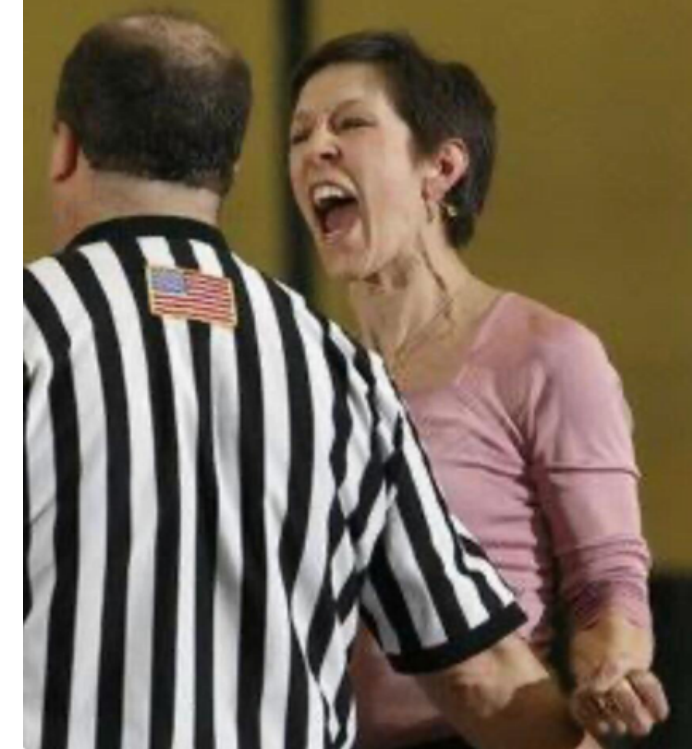
## MONICA

### **Rails /ˈreɪlz/ verb**

Book. Upon which Kent rails at him.

Definition. Talk loudly criticizing in a severe manner.

New sentence. The parents railed the referee for not calling the penalty.



### **Tottering 'tɒtərɪŋ in UK English and 'tɑːtərɪŋ in US English.**

Book. “They have started tottering about double over ...”

New sentence. The passengers were tottering on the cruise because of the large waves.



# SOUND SPOTTER

BANU

## **WORD 1: PERPETRATOR**

From Chp. 28: "We need to know if you got a good look at the perpetrator," the other policeman attempts to say.

### PRONUNCIATION:

IPA: /'pɜː.pə.treɪ.tə/ (American)

How to say it: PER-puh-tray-ter

Syllables: PER (strong) - pe - TRAY (medium) - tor (weak)

WHY IT'S DIFFICULT: Four syllables - long word that's easy to get lost in

Multiple "R" sounds - challenging for non-native English speaker

Fast middle syllables - "pe" goes by very quickly

MY SENTENCE : "The security camera records helped police identify the perpetrator who stole packages from our neighborhood."

# SOUND SPOTTER

BANU

## WORD 2: DISTINGUISHING

From Chapter 28: "But you really don't remember anything else? Any distinguishing characteristics?"

### PRONUNCIATION:

IPA: /dɪ'stɪŋ.gwɪ.ʃɪŋ/

How to say it: dih-STING-gwih-shing

Syllables: dis - TING (strong) - gwish - ing

### WHY IT'S DIFFICULT:

Silent letters - the "U" after G is silent, which confuses spelling vs. pronunciation

"ngw" cluster - very hard consonant combination in middle of word

Four syllables - long word with complex sound patterns

### MY SENTENCE

"the distinguishing features of my new car is its advanced driver-assistance system."

# SOUND SPOTTER

BANU

## **WORD 3: SYNCHRONIZED**

From Chapter 28: "The police emit synchronized sighs."

### PRONUNCIATION:

IPA: /'sɪŋ.krə.naɪzd/

How to say it: SING-kruh-nyzed

Syllables: SYN (strong) - chro - nized

### WHY IT'S DIFFICULT:

Silent letters - "CH" makes a "K" sound, not "CH" as in "church"

Three syllables but many letters - 12 letters for 3 syllables!

Consonant cluster "chr" - difficult combination

The "Y" sounds like "I" -

### MY SENTENCE :

"My sisters and I have synchronized our vacation schedules so we can all visit our parents at the same time."

# SOUND SPOTTER

BANU

## **WORD 4: IRASCIBLE**

From CHP. 28: "But Britt-Marie is possibly just slightly irascible. That is how you get when people shoot at you."

### PRONUNCIATION:

IPA: /ɪˈræs.ə.bəl/

How to say it: ih-RASS-ih-bull

Syllables: i - RAS (strong) - ci - ble

### WHY IT'S DIFFICULT:

Silent "C" -

Four syllables - long word

The "SC" combination - in some positions makes "S" sound, confusing

### MY SENTENCE :

"He becomes irascible when he's hungry, so his wife always make sure to have snacks ready during their road tri

# SOUND SPOTTER

CRISTY

## **Threatened (/threh·tnd)**

Book: (page 205 Kindle) She's been shouted at and pushed and threatened with pistols

Meaning: a stated intention to inflict harm, damage, or pain, or an indication of impending danger

Me: I have never been threatened with a gun

## **Slightly (/ˈslɪtlē/)**

Book: (page 208 kindle) But Britt-Marie is possibly just slightly irascible.

Meaning: to a small degree

Me: My kids are slightly different

## **Demonstratively (/dəˈmən(t)strədɪv/)**

Book: (page 214 Kindle) She goes with him on to the balcony, coughing dubiously and not at all demonstratively

Meaning: visible manner that clearly display feelings, emotions, or affection

Me: I hugged my friend demonstratively to show my support

# SOUND SPOTTER

CRISTY

## **Suitable (/sōodəb(ə))**

Book: (page 213 Kindle) I should like to clarify to you that it's not suitable for a gentleman to run around doing away with people

Meaning: something that is appropriate, fitting, or right for a specific purpose, person, or occasion

Me: That video game is not suitable for your age.

## **Precisely (//prē'sislē//)**

Book: (page 214 kindle) But my dear, that's precisely what I'm saying

Meaning: doing something with complete accuracy, exactness, or in a strictly defined manner

Me: We were talking about him, and then he precisely arrived to the restaurant

# CHARACTER ANALYZER

.....  
I R A

**Character: Britt-Marie, a free woman free to choose.**

**Trait: with courage (derived from the French "courage" - valor, boldness)**

"With courage" means doing something successfully, with a clear sense of purpose, enthusiasm, feigned boldness, ease, and self-confidence. It's a special psychological state of intense creative or combative activity, often accompanied by excitement and a "cheeky" demeanor.

Key characteristics:

1. Emotional uplift: inspiration, ardour, fire, courage.
2. Courage and confidence: "To catch courage" means to enter a state of complete confidence.

Courage is an emotional state in which a person performs every action with ease, grace and naturalness, involving others in his activities and instilling self-confidence in them.

Evidence:  
Why she reacts the way she does is something she's incapable of understanding, but there are an awful lot of things you are not equipped to know about yourself until you have a pistol pointing at your face. And so, to Brit-Marie's own surprise and the consternation of Somebody and the men with caps, she hears some words coming of her mouth: "First you have to buy something." (p.219)

They don't hear her the first, second, or third time. But then she fills her lungs with air and says as emphatically as she can: "I should like to ask you to leave." When they still don't listen to her she does something she hasn't done in twenty years, not since one of her flowers was blown off the balcony. She yells. "Get out of here! The pair of you!" (p.226)

# CHARACTER ANALYZER

## IRA

Brit-Marie chops her bandaged hand through the air in what could probably have qualified as a new form of martial arts and abruptly silences him.

"You might have asked how I hurt my hand, Kent, You might have asked, because then I might have believed that you actually cared." (p.226)

"... I smoked any numbers of cigarettes in my youth." He laughs out loud... so she goes on to clarify her statement: "For a period in my youth I was actually employed as a waitress!"

She nods with emphasis, just to underline that she's by no means just making this up off the top of her head. Sami looks impressed... (p.235)

And so they drink whiskey and smoke. Britt-Marie tries to blow some smoke rings, because she knows she wished she could do this at the time when she was working as a waitress. (p.236)

To everyone's surprise, Britt-Marie acts with courage that would seem entirely uncharacteristic of her. Not everyone can say at gunpoint, in a calm and unwavering manner, and insist on their point repeatedly, that in order to open the cash register, the robber needs to purchase something.

And at the same time, to put her "overzealous" admirers in their place. To stand up to a husband she had not once contradicted in years, and to do so in a way few others could: precisely and with absolute clarity.

And also with courage, after a long and incredibly grueling day, unexpectedly for yourself, to light a cigarette and drink whiskey, surprising and inspiring Sami who emotionally barely survived this day.

# CHARACTER ANALYZER

## ESMERALDA

Vega is a fascinating character who immediately caught my attention—a captivating young girl, despite her reserved nature.

Though guarded and distrustful, she is a character who truly shines within the story. She may appear tough and indifferent, but this demeanor merely reflects the environment in which she grew up—an environment that forced her to learn how to defend herself against others. Unlike Britt-Marie, Vega is a very direct girl who is unafraid to speak her mind; although she sometimes seems cold and distant—often responding in a brusque, blunt manner—she remains constantly on the defensive in order to protect herself and avoid getting hurt. She possesses a deep passion for football, which serves as a means of gaining acceptance within a group. For her, the sport acts as an escape from her daily life—a life in which she feels abandoned by her mother, who is too preoccupied with her own personal problems to pay her any attention. In a sense, Vega feels utterly alone; for even though her mother is physically present, she always feels emotionally absent.

Having grown up without receiving any affection, Vega has built a protective wall around her heart; however, as the story unfolds—and through her interactions with others—she begins to change, gradually shifting her attitude.

# WORD ARTIST

.....  
FLAVIA

I close my eyes, and for a few seconds, I let myself drift in a daydream, imagining him holding me in his arms and asking me not to leave Borg, not to leave him.

My heart beats very fast, like it wants to jump out of my chest. Heat rushes to my cheeks, like fire under my skin, while I feel butterflies in my stomach. It's a storm of sensations, feelings are new to me, or maybe I just don't remember them anymore. I wait until my common sense has silenced the part of me that wishes he'd touch me. "I'll get the vacuum cleaner," I whisper, with a weak voice, afraid of my heart jumping out of my mouth.

I know he is looking at me as I walk away. I try to walk with confidence, like a model, but my body betrays me. My steps become strange and unsure, like a child learning to walk in the dark. I want to walk like a model but I'm really walking like a drunk.

Talking to him feels strange, like being in a new place, unfamiliar, charged with curiosity. I feel confused, like I'm trying to find the light switch but keep turning on the wrong lights.

# WORD ARTIST

.....  
YULIANNA

The doorbell rang, and soon almost everyone had gathered in the pizzeria. The air was thick with anticipation and the soft buzz of voices. A faint smell of alcohol lingered on some of the guests. The scent of fruit and mothballs drifted through the room, filling the space with an odd contrast. The whole group spilled out into the parking lot, even the dog. The children were eating fruit, and the buzz of voices did not fade. Everyone was heading toward a white car with a blue door. The large group tried to squeeze into the small vehicle. Even the dog, running in and out in excitement, took part in the chaotic boarding process, afraid of being left behind. But there was a place for her too. Everyone was determined to make their presence known at their destination, to declare that Borg was alive and ready for an important game.

# CONNECTION MAKER

.....  
M A R I A

Britt-Marie begins to realize she is stronger and more independent than she thought.

This reminds me of times in my life when I had to do something on my own, even though I felt insecure at first.

For example, there was a time when I had to take my son to the hospital when the shunt in his brain was failing. The doctor did not seem to understand the health problem he was experiencing. As a result, I had to confront the doctors in English. It was during Covid 19, so my husband was not permitted to be there, but I was strong and with God's help I advocated for my son to ensure he received proper care.

Like Brit-Marie I learned how to solve problems in the moment. I had to step out of my comfort zone which helped me grow and give me more confidence.

# CONNECTION MAKER

.....  
LILY S.

Not yet submitted