

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 30 - 32

22 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

## MARIA

### Chapter 30

Britt-Marie continues to become more confident and independent. She becomes more involved with the children in the community, particularly through the soccer team, taking on the role of the caretaker, although the team is struggling, she remains an essential part of it by encouraging them to keep practicing. A significant moment occurs during a match when they execute an unexpected play. "Borg is in the lead by 1-0. Sami charges around the stands with his arms outstretched, like an airplane. Kent and Sven bounce up from their seats so abruptly that they accidentally end up hugging each other."

### Chapter 31

Britt-Marie remembers when she was a little girl, she would go to the beach with her sister and always look for the highest rocks to jump into the water. When she surfaced her sister would shout "Jump Britt-Marie, Jump" and that was when she realized that if you don't do it in that very moment, you won't dare to do it at all. Now with her own experience, she will help children understand that they can do anything if they set their minds to it, in this case, playing court, and pour all their passion into the ball.

She begins organized drills, deciding positions, even explaining how the game should be played, even though she doesn't understand football. The kids are surprisingly listening to her, and she ends up becoming an active part of the team.

### Chapter 32

Britt-Marie finally faces the consequences of her decision about her future. Britt-Marie begins to embrace her independence and question her old life with Kent. She finds a new sense of purpose through her connection in Borg. She chooses not to return to her old life with Kent, showing her full growth and independence. Although the choice is difficult and emotional, she deserves a life in which she is valued and respected.

# DEEP THINKER

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## MARIA

1.- Why Max won't let Vega into his house?

2.- Why is Max's dad angry with Britt-Marie?

3.- Why does Sami trust Britt-Marie to take care Omar and Vega, in case he doesn't return?

# 60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

JULIANNA

Borg was a half-abandoned, gray town, yet somehow, on the most important January day, it came alive, as if it had woken from a long sleep and been completely transformed. Everyone who had not already moved away had gone to the cup match, because the children needed support—and, on that day, they had it.

Their team scored the first goal, and it would be their only one. For the rest of the match, they were losing. Still, they fought like lions, refusing to give in, and the townspeople could not stay silent. They shouted, whistled, and called out, carrying the children forward with their voices. The struggle was not confined to the field. It had begun long before the game, in quiet arguments with those who held the power to decide whether the children would be allowed to play at all.

By the end of it, Vega and Max were taken to the hospital. Yet, despite their injuries, the children were happy—and that was what puzzled Britt-Marie most. The time she had spent with Vega left her with much to reflect on. On the road back to Borg, she kept encountering small, persistent signs, as though the world itself was urging her to make a choice: to stay, or to leave. And it was not an easy decision.

DEEP THINKER

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YARIELA

# VOCABULARY BUILDER

LISA

## Secluded

### Sentence from the book:

*"Max lives in one of the big houses beyond the boundaries of the village, on its own secluded street and with windows so big..." (page 249)*

**Definition:** Hidden from most people.

**My own sentence:** My father dreams of having a house in a secluded mountain area to escape the noise of the city.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

LISA

## Stutters

### Sentence from the book:

*“Oh...I...sorry. Don't worry about it! It'll come off with baking soda!” Britt-Marie stutters. (page 251)*

**Definition:** Speak with pauses or slow

**My own sentence:** I stutter when I speak English because I translate a lot of things in my head.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

LISA

## Hoarse

### **Sentence from the book:**

*“Your voice is hoarse,” says Sven with a smile. “.  
(page 271)*

**Definition:** Unclear voice

**My own sentence:** After the concert, my voice was hoarse because I sang so loudly.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

LISA

## **Clutching**

### **Sentence from the book:**

*"She's still clutching the vase as she sits in the car, the town and the road swishing by". (page 272)*

**Definition:** Holding tightly

**My own sentence:** Sometimes I clutch the straps during my Pilates class to stretch my body.



# VOCABULARY BUILDER

LISA

## Drowsy

### **Sentence from the book:**

*"Britt-Marie?" she manages to say, sounding drowsy.  
(page 276)*

**Definition:** feeling sleepy

**My own sentence:** The movie was not interesting,  
then I started to feel drowsy.



# VOcabuLARY BUIlDER

LILY L.

## 1. Pout

Sentence from the Book: "He stands beside her with an embarrassed pout around his mouth,..." (Ch 30, page 251)

Dictionary Definition: Pout (noun): a facial expression of annoyance or disappointment, pushing one's lips forward.

In My Own Words: A pout is that face someone makes—usually by sticking out their bottom lip—when they are unhappy, bored, or didn't get their way.

My Own Sentence: My toddler gave me a dramatic pout when I told him he couldn't have a second cookie before dinner.

Bonus: I used this word during lunch today when I told my coworker, "Don't pout just because the cafeteria ran out of sushi!"





# VOcabuLARY BUIlDER

LILY L.

### 3. Utterly Exhausted

Sentence from the Book: “They stand with their foreheads locked together, breathing heavily, and both utterly exhausted.” (Chapter 31, page 266)

Dictionary Definition: Utterly (adverb): completely and without qualification; absolutely.

Exhausted (adjective): drained of one's physical or mental resources; very tired.

In My Own Words: Being utterly exhausted is more than just being "tired." It means you have zero energy left in your body or mind—you are 100% finished and need to sleep immediately.

My Own Sentence: After finishing my final exams and working a double shift, I was utterly exhausted and slept for twelve hours straight.

Bonus: I told my gym partner yesterday, "I am utterly exhausted after that last set of squats; I don't think I can walk to the car!"



# SOUND SPOTTER

MARIANA

## 1. Secluded

Book sentence (page 249): “Max lives in one of the big houses beyond the boundaries of the village, on its own secluded street and with windows (...).”

Pronunciation: IPA: /sɪ'kluːdɪd/

How to say it: si-KLOO-did

Why is difficult: “clu” sound can be hard and Stress is in the middle.

My Example : They stayed in a secluded cabin.

## 2. Stutters

Book sentence (page 251): “Britt-Marie stutters, and goes to dig out some spare clothes from the trunk”.

Pronunciation: IPA: /'stʌtərz/

How to say it: STU-terz

Why is difficult: Repeating “t” sound.

My Example : He stutters when he is nervous.

# SOUND SPOTTER

MARIANA

## 3. Emblazoned

Book sentence (page 252): “Britt-Marie has to admit that most of the people in the stands, many of them wearing jerseys and scarfs emblazoned with the name of their own team (...).”

Pronunciation: IPA: /ɪmˈbleɪzənd/

How to say it: em-BLAY-zənd

Why is difficult: “blay” sound / -“ ed” ending is soft.

My Example : The logo was emblazoned on his shirt.

## 4. Straightened

Book sentence (page 259): “Max stands over him with his chest out and his arms straightened.”

Pronunciation: IPA: /ˈstreɪtənd/

How to say it: STRAY-tənd

Why is difficult: Silent letters “gh”and Looks harder than it sounds.

My Example : She straightened her hair.

## 5. Haphazardly

Book sentence (page 259): “ On the pitch three players have collided and the ball has bounced haphazardly towards the touchline (...).”

Pronunciation: IPA: /hæpˈhæzədli/

How to say it: hap-HA-zərd-lee

Why is difficulty: Long word and Many syllables.

My Example : He packed his bag haphazardly.

# SOUND SPOTTER

MONICA

## **1.uncomprehendingly /,ʌnkɑːmpriˈhɛndɪŋli/**

Book: Max blinks uncomprehendingly

It is difficult for me to pronounce long words.

Definition. Don't understanding

New sentence: Doctors handwriting is uncomprehendingly.

## **2.chastened /'tʃeɪsənd/**

Book: Chastened by experience.

In the pronunciation of this word is not common imaging the letter t is silent.

Definition: Having a restraining or moderating effect on. Being humbler, corrected.

New sentence: The chastened athlete vowed to improve after the loss.

## **3.Guffaws /gʌ'fɔːz/**

Book: He guffaws, and when she doesn't immediately laugh he says it again.

Its difficult for the pronunciation on the first syllable and the stress on the second syllable.

Definition: A loud boisterous or unrestrained burst of laughter.

New sentence: People erupted a loud guffaw at the comedy movie.

# SOUND SPOTTER

MONICA

## **4.inappropriate /,ɪnə'prɒʊprɪt/**

Book: She thinks is inappropriate

The las syllable is always confusing instead of saying pritt I pronounced priat.

New sentence: Alda thinks is inappropriate not to dress with the right attire for the funeral.

## **5.haphazardly /,hæp'hæzədli/**

Book: Three players have collied and the ball bounced haphazardly towards the touchline.

The ph sound and the z sound together make it difficult to pronounce.

Definition: In a random, unorganized manner

New sentence: The team kick the ball most of the time haphazardly.

# CHARACTER ANALYZER

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BANU

## **PERSONALITY TRAIT ; Fearless (brave, courageous, unafraid of danger or pain)**

### **EVIDENCE:**

1. What she DID: Chp.31: Vega threw herself in front of a soccer ball with her face to block a shot, even though it could seriously injure her.

The text says: "Vega threw herself in front of the ball and covered the shot. With her face. There was blood on the ball when it bounced back." Her entire face became "dark purple and swollen from her lacerated eyebrow down across her bloodshot eye, her nose with coagulated blood in her nostrils, and her split lip"

### **2. What she SAID and THOUGHT:**

When Britt-Marie asks why she would risk herself like that, Vega simply says: "They would have scored" ,like this completely justifies throwing her face at a ball.

She doesn't apologize or show regret ,she just explains calmly: "I covered the shot"

Vega tells Britt-Marie: "I don't feel pain anymore when I'm playing soccer... Any pain."

When she's playing, she doesn't feel ANY pain ,physical or emotional

This means she can be completely fearless because pain doesn't exist for her in that moment

Soccer is her safe place where she can be brave and in control

She may use soccer to escape emotional pain (her mother's death, abandoned by her father's)

This shows she uses soccer as a way to be fearless ,when she's playing, nothing can hurt her emotionally, so physical pain doesn't matter

Britt-Marie describes Vega as being like her sister Ingrid: "Fearless"

**WHY THIS TRAIT MATTERS:** Vega's fearlessness isn't reckless .It's about protecting her team and escaping emotional pain. She lost her mother, her father abandoned them, and soccer is where she can be brave and in control.

# CHARACTER ANALYZER

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CRISTY

I would like to do a brief analysis of three characters:

First, **Britt Marie**. She demonstrates a significant change in the game, showing more help others and she realizes that she has this change. Even when she spoke with the social worker, who didn't know she had a son, I think that once she realizes the changes and found the empathy and affection the other people have with her, she is going to make good decisions.

I also want to analyze **Vega** and **Max** a bit. Vega judges Max without knowing what's really going on in Max's life, and Max has to pretend to have a good life because his father force him only for fit into "society." I think it's important to analyze this, because how many people live pretending to have a good life only for belong to a social group, and how many of us judge others without knowing what they're really going through?

This happens a lot on social media, where some people pretend through photos to live a life they don't have actually and other people get jealous thinking it's real.

# WORD ARTIST

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I R A

If a human being closes her eyes tightly enough and for long enough, she can remember, and even clearly see, everything that has made her incredibly happy. The fragrance of her mother's skin, the incomparable aroma of raspberry jam being stirred in a gleaming copper bowl (basin), its polished side catching the sunlight, with a long, lathe-turned wooden handle, at the age of five and how they fled giggling into the porch with slightly creaky steps crafted from old, yet incredibly beautiful wood, and wide balustrades where her grandmother would set out vases to dry, to get out of a sudden, warm, ozone-scented, heavy summer downpour. The cold tip of her father's nose, and the feeling of a slight tingling (prickling) of his stubble against her cheek, as they stood together at the winter skating rink, its ice shimmering beneath the lamplight like a thousand precious gems scattered across the surface. The consolation of a rough paw, stained with mud following an accidental incident, of a sacramental soft toy, present from Santa Claus, that she has refused to let them wash, for fear that its magical dust might vanish forever. The sound of waves stealing in over rocks, breaking into splashes, during their last seaside vacation. The applause, deafening and prolonged, in a theater whose antique interior was utterly mesmerizing, adorned with crystal chandeliers, velvet curtains, and gilded bas-reliefs. Her sister's hair, thick and lush, with golden curls that glowed like a halo in the sunlight, afterwards, carelessly waving in the breeze as they're walking down a cozy, cobblestone street lined with a large number of fascinating stores, each one hiding countless treasures within its walls.

And apart from that? When has she been happy? A few moments...

# WORD ARTIST

ESMERALDA

The day of the cup has arrived in this quiet and forgotten village of Borg. The afternoon of the final breaks the usual silence. Although the soccer field normally looks dirty and neglected, today it's in its best condition. Though it's still made of dirt, it has some patches of grass and plenty of dust blown by the wind. The field, which used to be just a training ground, is now full of life. The thuds of the ball against the ground, the laughter of the children running, and the cheers of encouragement create an electric atmosphere that fills the air.

Britt-Marie, who for a moment feels a bit out of place, can't help but smile. Her attitude, which is usually quiet and submissive, suddenly takes an unexpected turn as she's caught up in the joy when the first goals from the Borg team are scored. She, along with the entire village, erupts in cheers of joy. Britt-Marie finds herself surrounded by smiles and hugs between players and spectators. The air smells of hot earth and freshly cut grass. Even though the heat is intense, something in the atmosphere sparks energy in everyone present. The applause mixes with the echo of victory, and for the first time, Britt-Marie feels like she's part of something bigger. This soccer, this simple passion, gives her a sense of community she'd never experienced before.

It's the end of the cup, and everything in Borg, even the tranquility it usually has, fills with a fleeting but profound enthusiasm. Though the village returns to its calm after the final whistle, that spark of life remains, and Britt-Marie knows something has changed in her—something she never expected to find in such a small place.

# CONNECTION MAKER

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FLAVIA

This assignment was much more than just a connection for me, it became a reflection of some questions on pages 261, 262 and the whole chapter 31:

“How should you live your life?”

“How many times you let go of time and fall into the moment?”

“How many breaths are we allowed to take beyond the confines of ourselves?”

“How many pure emotions make us cheer out loud, without a sense of shame? “

“How many chances do we get to be blessed? ( by amnesia, written on the book, but particularly I took it from the question, because makes more sense for me without it)

Last weekend I danced with my daughter on the stage, at her first High School spring show. You might say, “ it’s a piece of cake for you!” Yes, I love dancing, but, in that case it was about much more than dance.

It was about, breaking barriers, building self esteem and self confidence, facing fears of judgement, and feeling a sense of belonging.

It was about stepping outside my comfort zone to experience a meaningful moment with my daughter, that will stay in our memories.

Despite being nervous, I gave myself to it completely, and it was amazing. I truly felt happiness, and afterward, a deep sense of fulfillment.

Life is too short to let some moments pass us without truly living them. Often we hold back because we worry about what others might think, instead of experiencing life deeply. And it doesn’t matter if the moments are big or small.

Don’t wait for the best or perfect time, it may never happen!

It’s not easy. But I’m trying to bring those mindsets into my life.

# CONNECTION MAKER

JULIANNA

I really liked the dialogue in the hospital between Vega and Britt-Marie. “Have you never loved anything like that?” “What do you dream about?” “So that’s why you don’t go to Paris now? Because you’re the type who doesn’t jump?”

All these days I’ve been thinking about these questions. They really touched me. I guess I am the kind of person who likes to jump without thinking... but my illness holds me back.

I realized that I haven’t dreamed in a long time. Right now, all my energy goes toward getting better. I make plans, I study, I try — but one day I realized that these are not dreams, but a necessity. My dreams seem to have stepped aside, making room for the struggle for health. I started thinking about my dreams again — what little Julianna used to dream about. Since I became a mother, somehow my dreams faded away. And yet, when I was little, I dreamed of being a mom — and I was given two miracles. I dreamed of becoming a teacher, a doctor, and even a taxi driver — and in different ways, I lived all of these roles through my children and my life. I dreamed of meeting my prince, and I met him. I dreamed of dancing with him, and we even took dance lessons together before our children were born. I dreamed of traveling, and life gave me its own kind of journeys. I dreamed of working in an office — and I worked in one. I dreamed of typing on a keyboard after seeing a secretary at my father’s job — and now I do it every day. I dreamed of working on television — and I experienced that too. Even visiting a sewing factory in my childhood, I once briefly imagined that kind of work, and later I tried it in an atelier, but realized it wasn’t mine. On a cold night during the blockade in Armenia, when life felt especially hard and uncertain, my sister and I would look through my mother’s old Quelle catalogues, pointing at clothes and furniture, dreaming that one day we could simply choose something — and it would appear in our home.

# CONNECTION MAKER

JULIANNA

When I was in first grade, my sister and I had a strict rule — to go to bed at nine o'clock in the evening, right after the children's program "Good Night, Little Ones." But on weekends, Indian movies were shown on TV. The next day, all the children in the yard would talk about them, retelling scenes, laughing, sharing every detail. And we couldn't join the conversations — we were already asleep. So we had a dream: that one day we would have tiny televisions that could fit in the palm of our hand, so we could secretly watch them under the blanket while everyone thought we were sleeping.

I can't believe it — I really dreamed all these things, and life later brought those dreams to reality. Now, I realized there is still so much more to dream about — and I've already started making a plan.

But let's return to the first question. This is a difficult question that I like- like Vega.

I love dancing. An again. When I was little, I dreamed of becoming a ballerina, but I wasn't accepted into ballet school. They said I was too big and not flexible enough. So I decided I would dance on my own. Every day, secretly, I practiced standing on my toes, stretching, and dancing. Now I miss dancing so much. When you dance, every cell of your body no longer belongs to you — it belongs to the music. Your heart beats in rhythm with the notes. And gravity disappears.

# CONNECTION MAKER

JULIANNA

Cake art baking was also my passion. When I created themed cakes based on what the customer gave me, but the customer allowed full freedom, while making the cake I often didn't even know where it would lead me. And I am grateful to my inspiration — it helped me create my masterpieces. I really disliked it when a customer gave strict limits that you could not go beyond, or said “do whatever you want.” I needed guiding ideas connected to what they expected, but not strict boundaries. Right now I am not baking, and at first it felt like my oxygen was cut off. A terrible feeling.

But I think, going back to the “Vega question,” I realized that I love creating, and I will keep searching for myself by trying something new. Also, I realized there is still so much more to dream about — and I've already started making a plan..