

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

Chapters 33 - 34

29 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 37-38	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist	Connection Maker	Summarizer & Deep Thinker	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 37-38	Connection Maker	Summarizer	Deep Thinker	Vocab Builder	Sound Spotter	Character Analyzer	Word Artist

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

FLAVIA

Britt Marie comes back to the village to say goodbye to Somebody and the rat. In the kitchen, she rubs her wedding ring, talks to the rat and reflects deeply about her life while she is waiting for a black car, Sami's car.

Before dawn, the car stops on the gravel. The headlights are switched off at the same time as the pizzeria lights are turned on. Sven is there. Something bad has happened. Britt Marie yells and falls to the ground.

“Death is the ultimate state of powerlessness. Powerlessness is the ultimate despair”

After Sven carried Britt Marie into the car, they drive and find Vega lying on the gravel, crying in pain. They go to look for Omar, and Vega manages to stop him from taking revenge for his brother's death.

Britt Marie stays with Vega and Omar for several nights, sleeping in Sami's bed between them.

One afternoon, Sven arrives at the apartment with a young woman from the social services, they talk but no one is able to concentrate.

The following night, Britt Marie wakes up by Vega cleaning everything frenetically, as if that could give her everything back. Sami is buried next to his mother. Everyone in Borg is there, offering their condolences to Vega.

Max is standing outside, leaning on his crutches and swinging his uninjured leg at the soccer ball. When Vega gets close enough he lets the ball roll toward her. She cries without measure.

DEEP THINKER

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FLAVIA

Gossip Question:

Do you think Kent is a distracted person? (when Britt Marie says he often leaves his wedding ring especially when he meeting the Germans.)

Reflections Questions:

Are we who we are because of the decisions we make (choices) or because of the situations in which life puts us (circumstances)?

Can life circumstances prevent us from making our own choices, and is there a time limit for that?

What is the meaning of forgiveness?

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

JULIANNA

Britt-Marie decided to leave Borg. She chose not to say goodbye to anyone; only the rat knew what was going on inside her.

She kept replaying what Sami had said, finding justification for what she was about to do. That night she was waiting for Sami, who had gone to help a friend. When the car arrived and Britt-Marie saw Sven, horror took over her. She understood everything.

Britt-Marie did not expect such a turn of events. She lost her sense of reality. Not remembering how she got into the car, everything felt as if it wasn't happening to her. They went to pick up Vega and Omar. The whole of Borg mourned Sami.

DEEP THINKER

EVERYONE

Not yet submitted

VOCABULARY BUILDER

M A R I A

1.- Blithering (Adjective)

“The rat sits on the floor, looking on the plate in front of it as if the plate had stepped its tail and collect a blithering idiot.”
Page 281.

Definition: (verb) Talking in a long, confused or foolish way.

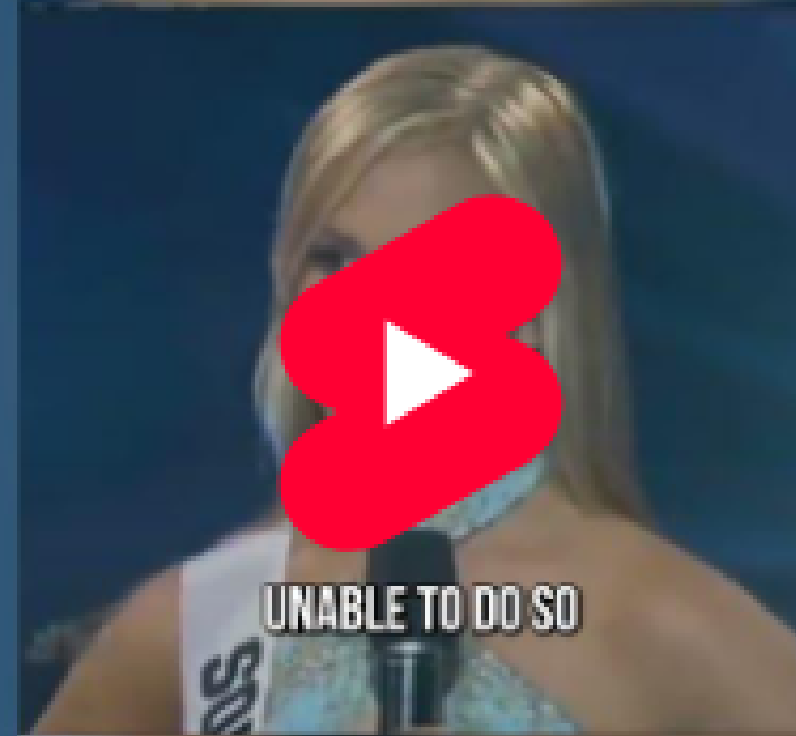
Examples: She was blithering about things that didn't make sense.

Some people blither when they are drunk.

Most common usage:
“blithering idiot”



Miss Teen USA 2007 - South Carolina Answers a Question
Contemporary Shorts



VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIA

2.- Blasted (Adj.)

“So the only thing that’s right must be to blasted well stay where you belong.”

Definitions:

1. Used as an expression of annoyance or frustration. Ex. Where are my blasted keys. I could have sworn I put them in my purse!
2. Damaged or destroyed by an explosion. Ex: The building was blasted apart by the explosion.
3. Very drunk. Ex: My boyfriend got blasted at the party last night.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIA

3.- Futile (Adjective)

Pronounced two ways: `few-tile or `few-tuhl

“Despair, which has run down his cheeks and caused red lines, speaks, volumes about just how futile his attempt has been.” Page 284.

Definition: Having no useful result or no chance of success.

Example: It was futile to argue with him.

It was futile to keep studying without getting enough sleep.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIA

4.- Plastered (Adjective)

“Her hair is plastered to her skin her words come out in stuttered gurgles, as if tears have filled her lungs.” Pg. 285

Plastered has a few meanings depending on context:

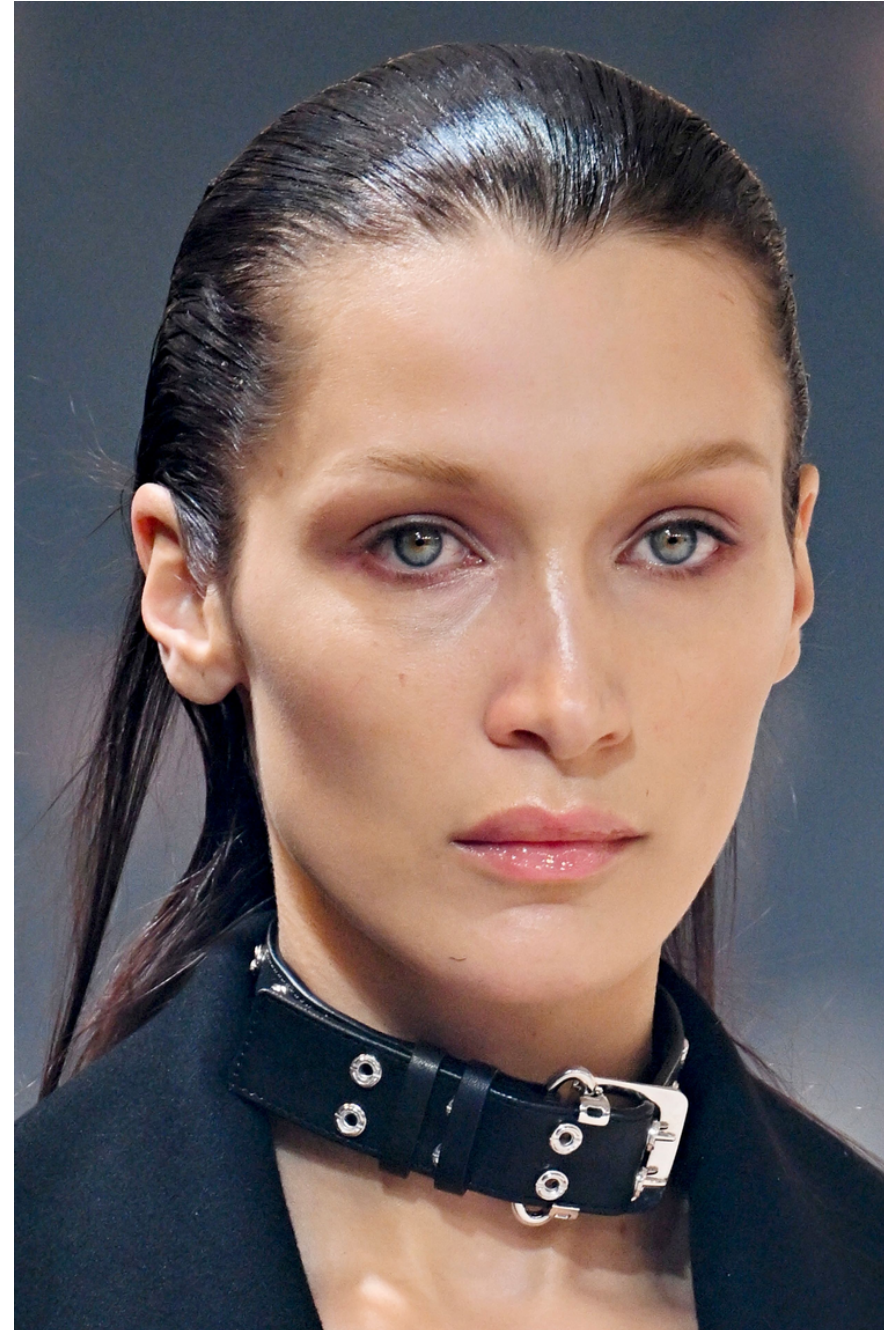
Definition: 1. Covered or coated
Something spread over a surface

Example: The wall was plastered with posters.

2. Stuck tightly or pressed
Held flat against something.

Example: Her hair was plastered to her face from the rain.

3. Informal: very drunk. Slang for being heavily intoxicated.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

MARIA

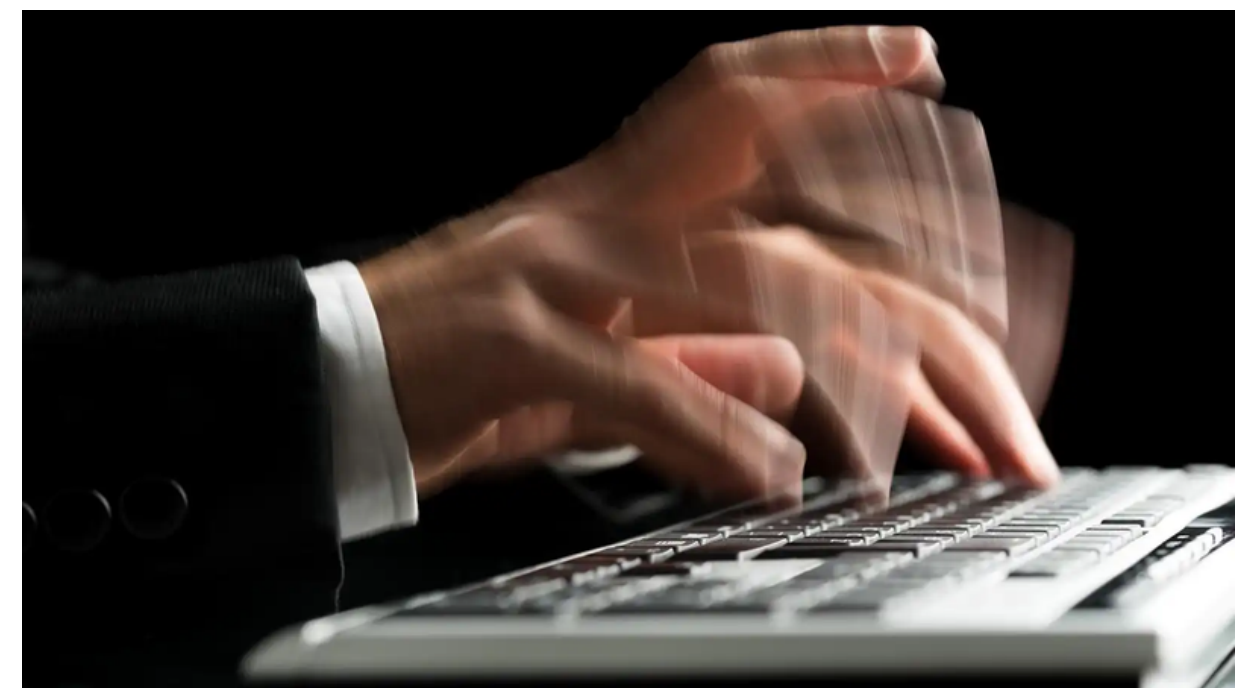
5.- Frenetically (Adverb)

“Her hands scrub frenetically at the dish rack and frying pans”. Pg 288.

Definition: Means doing something in a very fast, wild, or uncontrolled way usually because of strong emotion like excitement, panic or urgency.

Example: I went to the Thrift Store and I spent 100 dollars frenetically, but I regretted my purchases later.

Bonus Challenge: I used the word frenetically: “I was typing frenetically to finish my assignment time.”



SOUND SPOTTER

LISA

1. Exactly

IPA: ɪg'zæktli | ig-ZAKT-lee

Book: “Sami told me I’m not the type to clear off, but you have to understand that that is most certainly exactly what I am.” (page 282)

Pronunciation: The sound doesn’t match with the letter combinations. There are “g” and “z” sounds.

Meaning: precision or agreement

My own sentence: I baked a cake in exactly 30 minutes.

2. Obviously

IPA: 'ɑ:bviəsli | AHB-vee-uhs-lee

Book: “Obviously I don’t mean to say that you also have to have a home.” (page 281)

Pronunciation: It’s not easy to pronounce long words. Sometimes I don’t know where I have to emphasize.

Meaning: easy to understand, something clear

My own sentence: Obviously, I want to speak English fluently, this will help me to talk to people and understand everything.

SOUND SPOTTER

LISA

3. Ultimate

IPA: 'Altɪmət | UHL-tih-met

Book: “Powerlessness is the ultimate despair.” (page 285)

Pronunciation: I used to say “ul” but it’s “uhl”

Meaning: the end, the final

My own sentence: My ultimate ESL presentation will be the Capstone project that it will happen next month.

4. Untouched

IPA: ʌn'tʌtʃt | un-TUHCHT

Book: “The plate remains untouched.” (page 290)

Pronunciation: The word ends in “ed” but the sound is “T”

Meaning: something not changed, not used

My own sentence: The boy left his meal untouched because he was not feeling well.

SOUND SPOTTER

LILY L.

Not yet submitted

CHARACTER ANALYZER

MARIANA

Character Analyser: Britt - Marie

Main Traits: Empathy , Loyal , Dependable, and compassionate.

In these chapters, we see that Britt-Marie has a very big heart. Even though she likes things to be clean and perfect, she uses these habits to help the people she loves.

When the community is sad and hurting, Britt-Marie doesn't just talk. Instead, she cleans. To her, cleaning is a way to make the world feel safe again. By tidying up the kitchen and the house, she creates a calm space for the children who are upset, being compassionate.

Britt-Marie shows great empathy for the children, Vega and Omar. She knows that when someone is very sad, they don't always want to talk. She stays near them quietly so they don't feel alone. She feels their pain in her own heart, showing she is no longer a "closed" person.

Britt-Marie believes that "a person needs to be needed." At first, she thinks she must go back to her old life with Kent. But her actions show she is already part of a new family in Borg. She even worries about the rat, making sure it has food (Nutella) before she thinks about leaving.

Britt-Marie shows her love by being loyal and dependable. She is like a shield for the people around her. Even when life is messy and sad, she stays to help because she cares more about others than herself. Her connection to the community is finally stronger than her fear of the unknown.

CHARACTER ANALYZER

MONICA

I chose Vega because her nature reflects a restless soul that nothing can break.

"In her mind, she is a fighter who accepts her circumstances but does not give up; she challenges destiny by forcing herself to be the best version of herself.

Sami's death brings up mixed feelings in her. She takes on the role of the older sister and now believes it is her responsibility to look after Omar, her youngest brother, who is only a few years younger than her.

Terrified by the hatred her brother Omar has toward the people who killed their brother Sami, Vega and Sven persuade Omar against seeking revenge.

To drown her pain, at the funeral, Vega acts distant and taciturn, repressing her grief. It is not until Max shows up at the funeral and kicks a soccer ball toward her that she finally releases the deep pain of her brother's death."

"In the end, Vega and her brother Omar are just two defenseless children from a dysfunctional family who live in a hostile world and have been forced to grow up faster skipping their childhood."

WORD ARTIST

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B A N U

I am standing among a group of people, all dressed in dark colors. The air feels heavy, like it is filled with sadness. No one speaks. Even the wind seems to move more slowly, as if it respects the silence.

I can hear soft breathing, quiet footsteps, and the sound of grief that no one say out loud. The silence feels louder than noise.

Suddenly, I hear the sound of a football being kicked. It breaks the silence like a sharp crack. My body tenses. It feels wrong... but also impossible to ignore.

I turn and see Max. He is kicking the ball again and again, his movements strong and determined. The sound echoes through the quiet space. Each kick feels like a protest, like he is refusing to accept what has happened. My chest feels tight. I feel shocked, but also something deeper and understanding. This is his way of showing pain with action.

The people around me are still, unsure how to react. But I feel that this moment is real and honest. Grief does not always look quiet. Sometimes, it is loud, unexpected, and impossible to control.

In that moment, everything feels different. The sadness is still there, but now it has a sound a powerful, echoing sound that no one can ignore.

WORD ARTIST

CRISTY

A new day begins, sunny, with the scent of coffee in the air. A sunny day in January is something to enjoy in a place as Borg. Britt Marie realizes it's a beautiful day, but she can't see it because inside she feels so sad, so heavy she can't walk, so short of breath, her head filled with unanswered questions, and yet, at the same time, her mind feels blank. She also knows she has to be strong for Vega and Omar and be there for them. Her vision is blurred and tired.. She bites her lips, and they taste of tears, also of anguish, and all the feelings when the heart breaks thinking of a young person whose future was stolen, and who, without knowing it, left two children without their only support. Could that day not be so sunny and so black at the same time?

CONNECTION MAKER

IRA

She wonders if Sami thinks about how one should live one's life, if he has ever had that luxury, A human being can't choose his circumstances, admittedly, but in Sami's life there have been more circumstances than events. She asks herself if choices or circumstances make us the sort of people we become...

That's a good question. Sometimes it seems to me that the answer is unequivocal: it is precisely the choices we make throughout our life's journey, especially in difficult circumstances, that make us who we are. Do what you must, and come what may.

But sometimes you find yourself in circumstances that leave you no choice.

She wonders how much space a person has left in her soul to change herself, once she gets older. What people does she still have to meet, what will they see in her, and what will they make her see in herself?

It seems to me that these questions, whether in a small way or a large one, are really about all of us. Do we still possess that magical quality we had in childhood: the ability to transform with ease, absorbing new knowledge, skills, and abilities, to rise effortlessly after a fall and move forward, knowing that there is still so much lying ahead?

Are we ready for new encounters and how many will there be? Will those we meet truly "see" us? And will they grant upon us the gift in the form of a newfound understanding of ourselves, revealing new edges of our inner world that, until now, remained entirely unrecognized?

CONNECTION MAKER

ESMERALDA

From the moment we are born, none of us is exempt from the possibility of facing death one day. It's an incredibly difficult reality, yet it is something we must deal with every day. Losing a loved one is profoundly painful, but it's inevitable. I've faced losses that were deeply painful and hard to bear: the death of my mother when I was only five years old, the loss of my father a few years ago, and the passing of other very dear family members—grandparents, cousins, and friends. Death is, simply put, inevitable; sad, yes, but inevitable.

My cousin passed away under circumstances very similar to Sami's: very young, with an entire life still ahead of him. He chose a wrong path—one with no return—and it cost him his life. It also reminds me of my cousin, who, under very different circumstances, recently passed away, leaving behind a baby just nine months old and another child, only twelve years old. And now, just last Saturday, a dear friend of mine also lost her life. Her death seemed so sudden that it's hard for me to process; she was such a strong and brave woman, always filled with hope. Now she leaves us not only with a great void but also leaves behind three beautiful young children, and that is truly heartbreaking.

That is why I urge you: live each day as if it were your last, and love your loved ones as if you might never see them again. Value life, because it is a gift from God, and we are only granted one. Choose to be happy every day, because there is always a reason to smile.