

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 35 - 36

6 May 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

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I R A

Britt-Marie realizes with horror that she is no longer needed here, she is no longer needed by Vega and Omar, because Sven contacted social services and they will send a girl who will take care of them, she is no longer needed by Somebody, because the children's parents, guided by Somebody, have already cleaned up and put everything back in the pizzeria. Meanwhile, Sven has said that every time there is a knock on his front door, he'll open it in the hope of seeing Britt-Marie, and Somebody has said she won't take the money until Britt-Marie checks the repairs and only then returns to Borg with payment.

But Britt-Marie has one more thing on her list, written in ink, and she persistently "storms" the town hall. The task isn't easy, and with unwavering determination, and with the unexpected and invaluable support and assistance of Kent, on the fifth day, Britt-Marie hears long-awaited good news, but as usually happens in life, with a bitter pill: "...the local council will either budget for a new soccer pitch, or budget for you to keep your job."

DEEP THINKER

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I R A

1. Do you think it's "good" or "bad" that Sven doesn't support a certain team?
2. "One remarkable thing about communities built along roads is that you can find just as many reasons for leaving them as excuses to make you stay."(p.300, p.309)

What do you think this means?

3. Were you surprised by how selflessly Kent helped Britt-Marie?

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

ESMERALDA

Everyone in Borg is grieving Samy's death, especially Vega and Omar, whose emotions fluctuate between deep sadness and fleeting moments of calm. The townspeople often remark on what a beautiful funeral Samy had. Yet, when the children play soccer, they find brief relief, laughing and forgetting their loss. More strangers join the games, while Sven and Kent quietly guide and support the children, each reinforcing their roles through their actions.

Britt-Marie watches the children play with renewed joy. Sven reassures her that social services have been arranged, and Kent joins in, connecting with the kids through the game.

Some time after the funeral, Britt-Marie arrives in Borg determined to secure a soccer field for the children. She faces uninformed town officials and endless, often comical, bureaucratic meetings. Despite these obstacles, Kent supports her as she persists in her goal. After several days of effort, the combined pressure of the community and Kent convinces the authorities to consider funding the field or retaining Britt-Marie's position, highlighting the challenges of balancing personal dedication with small-town bureaucracy.

DEEP THINKER

YULIANNNA

Not yet submitted

VOCABULARY BUILDER

FLAVIA

SUITS /su:ts/ verb

“ He’s a policeman who believes more in justice than in the law. It suits him, she thinks to herself. ...” P- 296

verb - match, to be appropriate, convenient

Ex: That color really suits you.

noun - outfit / business executive / one of the four sets in playing cards (hearts, spades, clubs, diamonds)



VOCABULARY BUILDER

FLAVIA

PREPOSTEROUS /prə'päst(ə)rəs/ adjective

“It was very brave of you, putting that tie on. Because it looks absolutely preposterous.” P-301

Means: completely unreasonable and ridiculous; not to be believed
Ex: The bag’s price is preposterous.



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ADD TO BAG

VOCABULARY BUILDER

FLAVIA

DEJECTED /dəˈjektəd/ adjective

“His face is dejected, as if it knows this is what is expected of it.” P - 303

Means: unhappy, disappointed, depressed, discouraged or without hope

Ex: He felt dejected after failing the exam.

Dejected: sad + discouraged (She looked dejected when no one came to her party.)

X

Dismayed: disappointed + surprised, and it bothers you (I was dismayed to hear the results.)

astounded: surprised by something you did not expect because it defies logic, common sense, etc.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

FLAVIA

VENGEFUL /'venjəfəl/ adjective

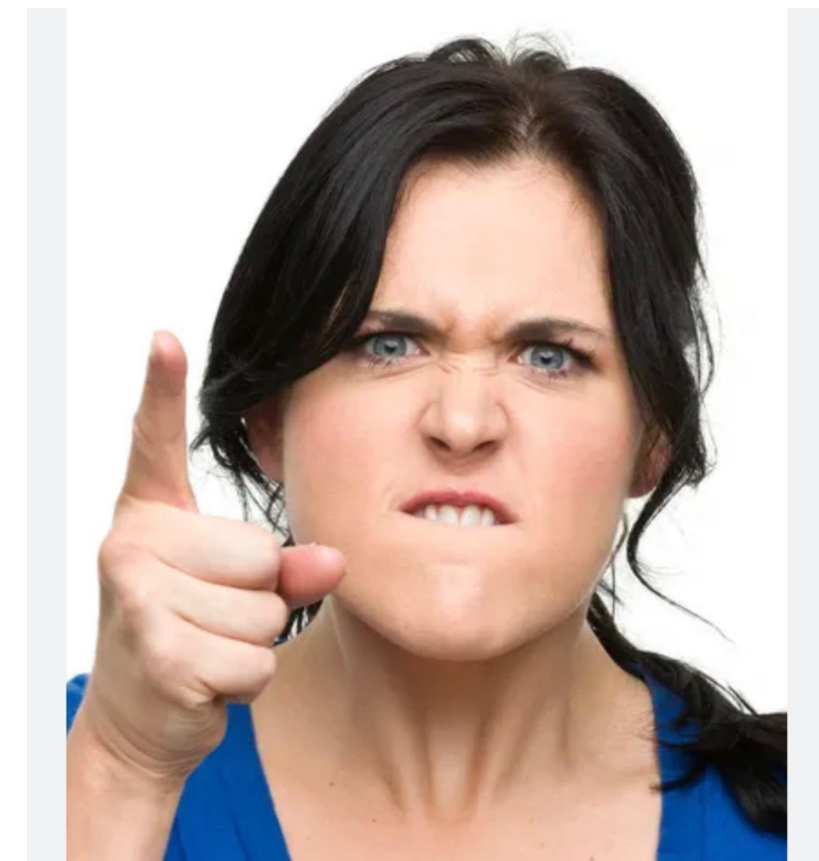
“ A sort of determination appears in Kent’s eyes when he sees this, almost like something vengeful, but she doesn’t notice it at that point.” P-306

Means: to punish a person for having hurt or disagree you. Retaliation

Ex: A vengeful person rarely finds peace.

Vengeful: more dramatically, literally (She gave him a vengeful look.)

Vindictive: more common to describe toxic personality, spiteful (He’s very vindictive and never forgets a mistake.)



VOCABULARY BUILDER

LILY S.

Not yet submitted

SOUND SPOTTER

MARIA

Word: **Astonishingly** Adv. IPA: ə'stɑ:nɪʃɪŋli

Definition: Is an adverb used to describe actions, situations, or qualities that are extremely surprising, amazing or unexpected.

“Really astonishingly tall.” (P 291)

It's difficult to me the sound sh

Ex. The food was astonishingly bad.

He was too astonished to speak.

Word: **Crumples** is a verb IPA: 'krʌmplz

Definition: Means to crush, bend, or press something out of shape, using wrinkles or fold, or to collapse suddenly.

“Sven looks up and crumples in the brief instant between the first question and the realization that what she's asking is whether the children need her.” (P 293)

I struggle with the letters mp.

Ex. I crumpled the letter up and put it in the trash can.

Word: **Straightens** Verb IPA: `stre ins

Definition: To make or become free from curves, bends, or angles.

“Britt-Marie straightens out a crease in his shirt, her hand landing as lightly as butterfly, without actually touching his body under the fabric.” (p296)

Ej. The girl straightened her curly hair.

Word: **Soothingly** Adv. IPA: 'su:ðɪŋli

Definition: To act, speak, or behave in a manner that produces calmness, comfort, or relief from pain, anxiety, or distress.

“We'll come back tomorrow, darling, don't worry about it,” Kent says soothingly as they are walking out. (P 302)

Ex . He spoke soothingly to the horse

SOUND SPOTTER

M A R I A

Word: **Encouragingly** Adv. IPA: ɪn'kʊrɪdʒɪŋ.li

Definition: An action done in a manner that inspires hope, confidence, or support, usually with the goal of boosting someone's morale or motivating them to continue.

"It seems too charming there, says the woman encouragingly, as if the village some twelve miles from her office is an exotic island only accessible through reliance on magic spells."

Ex. The teacher spoke encouragingly to the students.

SOUND SPOTTER

YARIELA

Not yet submitted

CHARACTER ANALYZER

LISA

Character: Sven (Policeman)

Trait: Gracious

What it means: This trait describes someone kind, polite, and gentle.

Evidence:

Sven introduces Dino's uncle to Britt-Marie. He's an immigrant who lived in three different countries before coming to Borg, so he has a heavy accent. He wants to talk about Sami and thanks Britt-Marie for coaching the team, and Sven politely helps by translating everything for her, just in case she doesn't understand.

Sven is also kind because he contacts social services to find a good person to take care of Omar and Vega for a few days while they decide what to do.

After the funeral, the kids start playing soccer, and Sven kindly sees this in a positive way. He connects life and soccer thinking that there's always a new match, a new season, and the hope that things can get better, even after difficult moment. He believes that soccer forces life to move on.

Britt-Marie asks Sven which soccer team he supports, and he politely says he has never supported a team because he loves soccer too much, more than just one team. He is different from Kent, who love a team that always win. Even after Britt-Marie says no to Sven, he shows respect and gently expresses his feelings, saying, "I want you to know, Britt-Marie, that every time there's a knock on my door, I hope it's you."

CHARACTER ANALYZER

LILY L.

Sven's Quiet Strength

In chapters 35 and 36 of "Britt-Marie Was Here", Sven is portrayed as a man of deep empathy and "understated" kindness. Unlike Kent, who uses loud actions and business pressure, Sven supports Britt-Marie by truly seeing her and valuing her emotional presence in the community.

Sven's character is defined by his choice to follow "justice" rather than just the "law". We see this clearly when he confesses to Britt-Marie that he delayed calling social services. He admits, "I just wanted to give Sami the chance to get things organized". This shows that Sven is empathetic. He understands that the children need stability and kindness more than they need a strict adherence to government rules.

Sven also reveals a vulnerable, poetic side during his conversation with Britt-Marie on the soccer pitch. He explains his love for soccer by saying, "Sometimes your passion for a team can get in the way of your love for the game". Britt-Marie observes that he is a man who believes more in "love than in passion". This identifies Sven as someone who is patient and observant, looking for the deeper meaning in life's small moments.

Sven provides Britt-Marie with something she has lacked for years. The feeling of being wanted for who she is, not just for what she does. When he says, "I want you to know, Britt-Marie, that every time there's a knock on my front door, I hope it's you," he validates her existence. Even when he is tired and his eyes are "glittering," he remains a supportive and hopeful figure, offering her a future based on kindness rather than obligation.

WORD ARTIST

M A R I A N A

Scene Description: The Stand-Off in the Suited People's Office

The office feels cold and tight, like a place where people don't relax. Everything is dark blue and grey, and the air smells clean but heavy, like rain and polish. Outside the tall windows, rain runs down the glass in long lines, making it feel like the room is trapped.

Inside, the only sounds are quiet typing and chairs moving. The people in suits look bored and tired, checking the time. It is a place of pressure and coldness.

In the middle of the room, Britt-Marie stands very still, holding her bag tightly. She looks neat and controlled, but also tense. Next to her, Kent looks different—his hair messy from the wind, bringing a bit of the outside world into the room.

When Kent drops the folder on the table, the loud shake breaks the silence. It feels important, like something real has entered a room full of rules. The papers inside represent their town—full of life, work, and people—while the office feels distant and uncaring.

The whole scene feels like a quiet battle between real life and cold decisions.

WORD ARTIST

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M O N I C A

Early in the morning Britt Marie and Kent arrive at The Town hall, an old building with the simplicity and austerity of governmental buildings. They're looking to talk to the members of the city council demanding to build a soccer pitch. The receptionist more of a gatekeeper persuades them to leave and return later.

After coming and going for four days Britt Marie and Kent finally talked to a person from the City Council. Despite the unwelcome behavior they were not stop from asking even when they were explained that there is no budget for the soccer pitch.

Kent pretends to have written demands from several star-ups in Borg, while Britt Marie finds courage just remembering that, beyond a game, soccer represents an escape from reality and the motivation to build that town from the ashes. In her mind, a dusty land lit by cars, no longer exist. She pictures a complete soccer field with goals and turf or natural grass to give the sport the dignity it deserves. She will not accept less than that.

By the fifth day, the city council buckled under the weight of twenty-one calls from the unemployment office with the pointed reminder that an election year was looming. The council capitulated and agreed to build the pitch.

CONNECTION MAKER

B A N U

proctor

CONNECTION MAKER

CRISTY

What Britt-Marie does for the love she has for the children, leaving them something they won't forget her. I remind the women who never had children of their own but they have a big maternal instinct and a deep desire to protect and help others.

My mother's sister, only have one son; but she has been like a mother to me. When I got married, she helped me put on my dress; when I had my first child, she was right there with me, helping me bathe and teaching me how to bathe my baby. In so many important moments when my own mother couldn't be by my side, she was there, because she wanted to have more children, but God never sent more, instead God blessed her with a big heart to share with me and my kids.

Britt-Marie had never had the opportunity to express her feelings or exercise her maternal instinct because she had no children of her own, and Kent's children showed her no respect. However, through living with the children in Borg who were in desperate need of love and understanding, she came to realize that she, too, was in desperate need—the need to give love.