

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 37 - 38

13 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

MARIANA

Chapter 37

In Chapter 37 Britt-Marie prepares to leave Borg after realizing the town has changed her more than she expected. She visits Sami's grave, finally accepting that her life there meant something and that she is not invisible.

At the recreation center, she cleans everything one last time. When social services arrives, the people of Borg unite to protect the children, proving they have become a real "village." Even though she is leaving, Britt-Marie is deeply emotional and touched by their care.

As Kent arrives to take her back, Britt-Marie is divided between her old life and the new one she has found. The soccer match ending 2–2 reflects this personal conflict. But Kent does not understand her transformation.

She refuses to return with him and walks away. Omar and Vega tell her they understand her feelings, and Vega encourages her not to go back, but to choose her own path.

Before dawn, Britt-Marie quietly takes her belongings and leaves Bank's house, passes Kent's car, and goes to a door. The story ends with her knocking—choosing independence, identity, and a completely new life.

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

MARIANA

Chapter 38

In Chapter 38, Britt-Marie finally understands that she has spent her life living for others instead of herself.

Reflecting on Alf, Kent, Sven, and her past choices, she realizes she has never truly chosen her own path.

Before she can leave, the children of Borg stop her. Omar and Vega reveal they have collected money and calculated enough petrol for her journey to Paris. Their gesture shows deep love and gratitude, turning her departure into a shared act of care. Britt-Marie finally gets into her car and drives away, while the village waves her off.

After Britt-Marie leaves, Borg is still transformed. Even without the recreation center, the community is stronger, more connected, and full of life. Children still play, families stay united, and soccer continues under the headlights of old trucks.

The story ends by confirming Britt-Marie's lasting impact: she may have left Borg, but she changed it forever.

DEEP THINKER

.....
M A R I A N A

Questions:

1. Why Omar and Vega say “We know” instead of letting Britt-Marie speak?
2. What does Bank symbolize in the ending?
3. Why is Britt-Marie’s final decision so important?

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

CRISTY

They are building a soccer field. Britt Marie is at Sami's grave, justifying why she is leaving Borg. Britt Marie is at the recreation center, checking one last time a place she will miss, following with her eyes the tracks of the rat that had company. When she goes to hand over the keys to the recreation center, the social services person arrives and Pirate's parents comment that they want to keep Omar and Vega, and also, Ben's mother and also Dino's uncle and somebody. All Borg love the children. Britt Marie returns to Bank's house and Kent looks for her; they are watching the game where Villa vs Liverpool.

She asks Kent for more time to think. She goes to look for the children and runs into them on the way; they tell her she doesn't have to knock on Kent's or Sven's door, that she has to keep going. The next morning, she goes to knock on Vega and Omar's door. They have a surprise for her: bowls of petrol so she can go to Paris. In the end, she decides to knock on one more door.

DEEP THINKER

ESMERALDA

Why did Britt-Marie choose Omar and Vega, even though Kent warned her that they would eventually leave her all alone?

Do you think Britt-Marie ultimately became one of those people who jumped and lived out their dream? Why was Britt-Marie always afraid to jump?

Why didn't Britt-Marie decide to stay with Sven, even though he was a good person?

VOCABULARY BUILDER

IRA

1. stifle [starfəl]

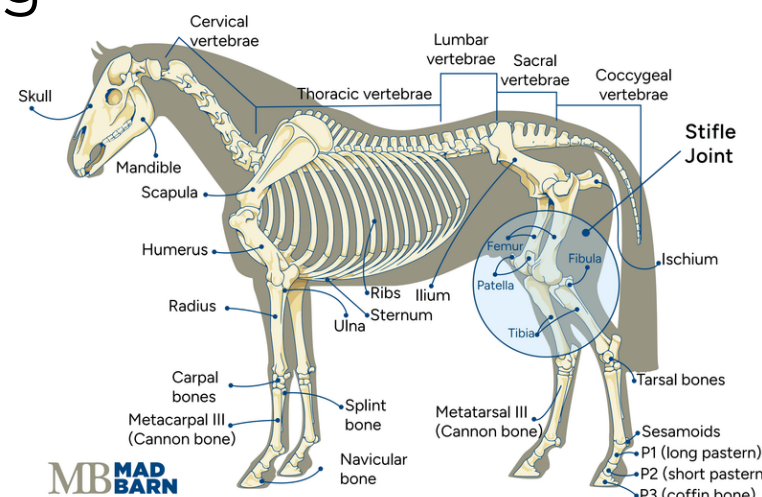
Stifled everything welling up inside her. (p.312)

verb

- (emotional control) hold back or repress emotions
He stifled his anger to stay calm.
- (suppress action) prevent or constrain an action or process
The unimaginable heat stifled any desire to go outside.
- (development prevention) prevent something from developing
The new policy stifles innovation.
- (suffocation) cause someone to stop breathing
The smoke stifled the trapped miners.

noun

- (medical) joint in the hind leg of a horse
The horse injured its stifle during the race.

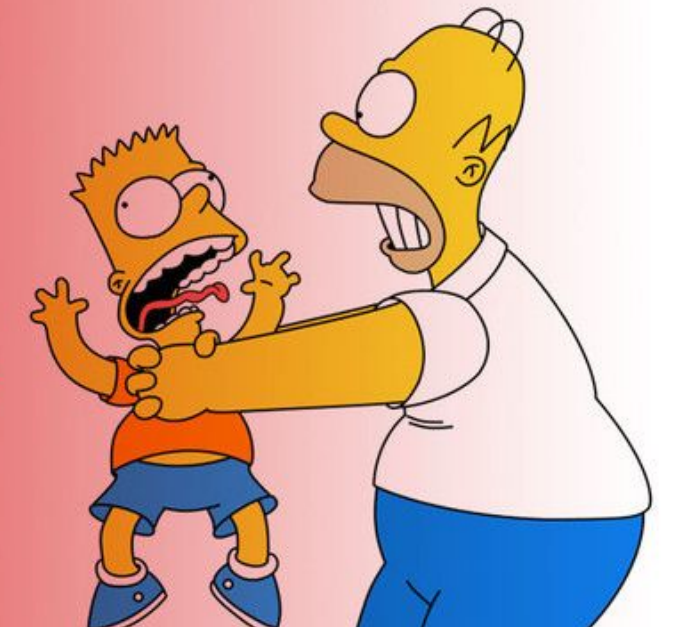


gradeup

Stifle

(verb)

make (someone) unable to breathe properly; suffocate.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

I R A

2. sneak [sni:k]

By that stage, Britt-Marie had already put the keys to the recreation center on the dish track and sneaked out behind them. (p.313)

verb

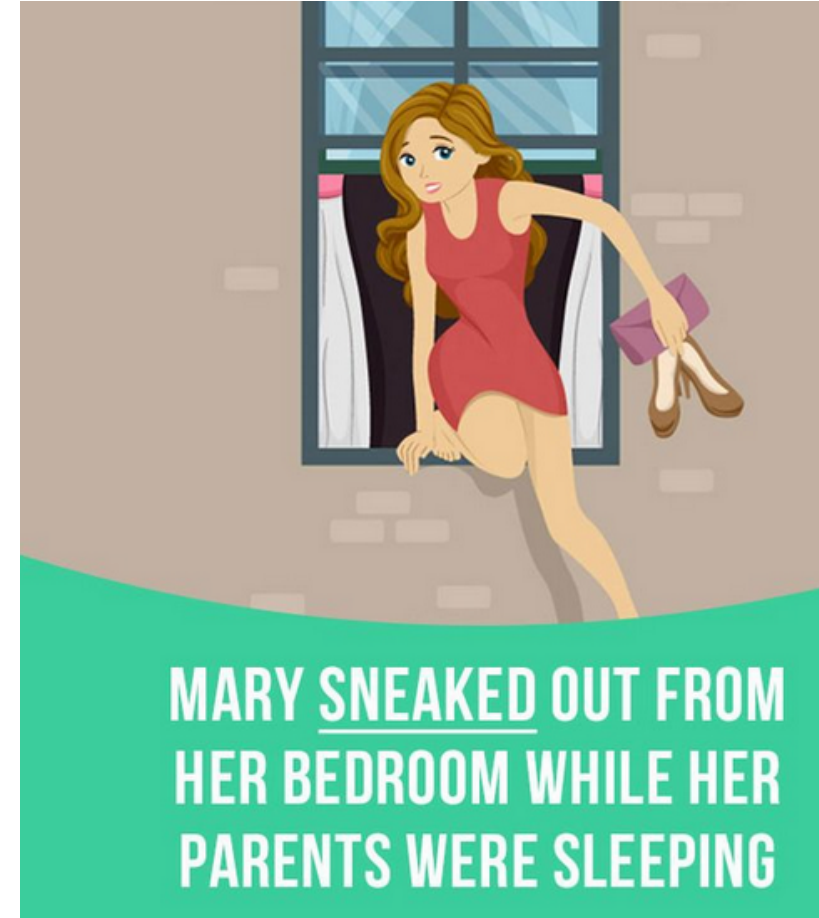
1. (move stealthily) move quietly and secretly to avoid detection.
He tried to sneak out of the house at night.
2. (quiet departure) leave quietly without being noticed.
He decided to sneak out of the party early.
3. (covert handoff) bring something secretly to someone.
He would sneak notes to her during class.
4. (sneaky glance) have a quick secret look at something.
She sneaked a look at the answers.

noun

1. (behavior) person who acts in a secretive or deceitful manner
Everyone knew he was a sneak after the incident.
2. (stealthy person) person who moves stealthily to gather information
The sneak was caught eavesdropping on the conversation.

adjective

1. (secrecy) done in a secretive or stealthy way
He took a sneak approach to avoid being seen.
2. (advance) released before the general public
We got a sneak preview of the new movie.



SNEAK

- ◉ Verb, meaning: To go or move in a quiet, stealthy way.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

IRA

3. beam [bi:m]

A group of grown men with beards and caps are moving about in the beams of light, huffing and puffing . . . (p.314)

noun

1. (light) ray of light

A beam of sunlight entered through the window.

2. (construction) long piece of timber or metal used in construction

The workers installed the steel beam across the ceiling.

3. (physics) line of energy or particles in a direction

The laser beam was visible in the dark.

4. (emotion) broad smile

She had a beam on her face after the win.

5. (gymnastics) gymnastic apparatus for balancingRare

She performed a flip on the beam.

6. (maritime) maximum width of a vessel

The ship has a beam of 30 feet.

verb

1. (smiling) smile broadly

She beamed with pride as watched her daughter's performance.

beam from ear to ear

2. (light) emit light or shine brightly

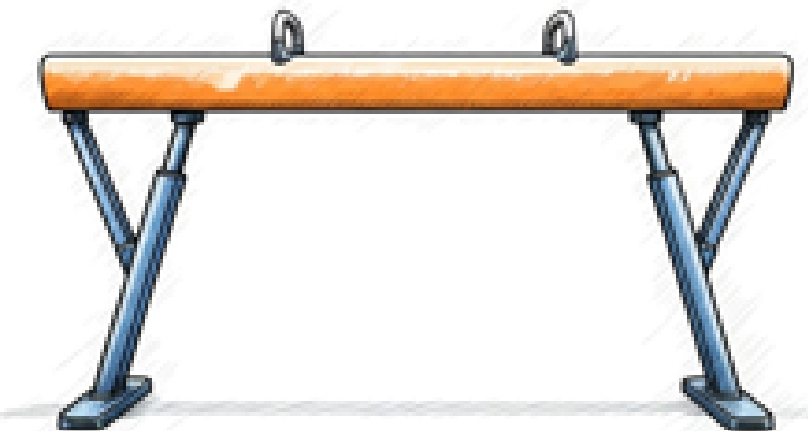
The lighthouse beamed across the dark sea.

3. (technology) transmit signals or data electronically

The satellite beamed the images back to Earth.

4. (construction) furnish or supply with beam

They beamed the ceiling for extra support.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

IRA

4. rebelliously [rɪˈbeljəsli]

She shakes her head. But defiantly, rebelliously, not with sadness and dejection.(p.318)

adverb

1. (defiant manner) in a way that shows defiance or opposes authority

She spoke rebelliously to the teacher.



5. pant [pænt]

"Goodness grac... Liverpool have... well I certainly don't know exactly what they've done, but I am under the impression that they're going to win against these... whatever their name was. Villa something!" pants Britt-Marie, so out of breath that she sees stars and has to steady herself, in the middle of the road, by resting her hands on her knees. (p.318)

verb

1. (breathing) breathe quickly after exertion or excitement

He began to pant after the long run.

2. (emotion) long eagerly or desire earnestly

She panted for a chance to travel.

noun

1. (respiration) quick heavy breathing or the sound it makes

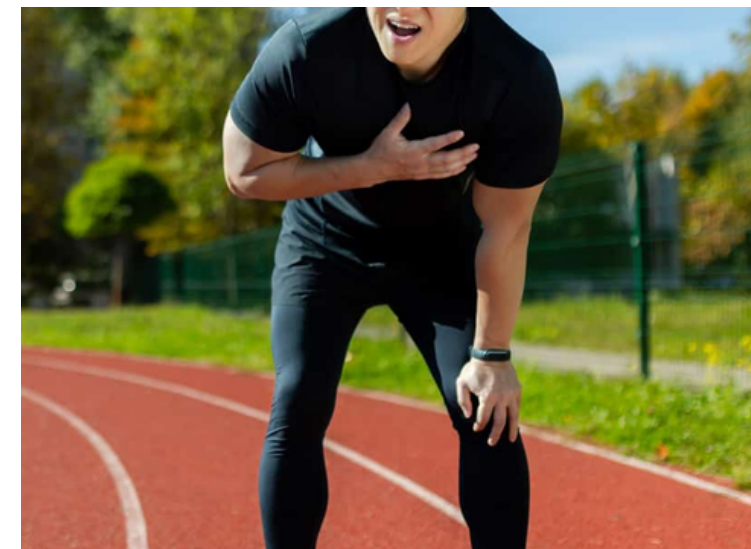
After running, his pant was loud and fast.

2. (emotion) eager longing or desire

His pant for adventure was evident.

3.(clothing) the part of a pair of trousers where the leg is inserted.

His pant leg (or pants) got caught in the bicycle chain.



SOUND SPOTTER

FLAVIA

UNREASONABLE (adjective) /ʌn'ri:zən.ə.bəl/ un-REE-zuhn-uh-buhl

P-310 “The day after the local council gave her an unreasonable choice...”

Difficult: long word, hard to identify the stress syllable

Ex: The bag’s price is unreasonable.

DAMAGED (adjective) /'dæm.ɪdʒd/ DAM-muhjd

P-311 “ Patted the coffee machine, which had once been damaged by flying stones;...”

Difficult: to say GD without e

Ex: The roof was damaged after the tornado.

RATTLING /'rætln/ RAT-uh-ling

P-313 “ The rattling sounds from the doorway intensified...”

verb: to make a series of short loud noises, describing an action

Ex: The car rattles along the road

adjective: describe a noise or something intense

Ex: The old fan makes a rattling sound

Difficult: the stress in the first syllable with letter R in the beginning the word follows by TL

BREATH /brɛθ/ BRETH

P- “...takes deep breaths, then she can remember all the men she has fallen in love with.”

noun: The air that goes into and out of your lungs.

Ex: Hold your breath

Difficult: unvoiced TH sound

****BREATH X BREATHE /bri:ð/ BREETH****

verb : the act of inhaling and exhaling

Ex: I need to breathe

SOUND SPOTTER

YULI ANNA

1. Intractable • IPA: /ɪn'træk.tə.bəl/ adj

- Sentence from the book: “It is just intractable you have to understand I want to ask you to try not to hold it against me” (page 310)
- Why it is difficult for me to pronounce: It is difficult for me because the word is long and hard to pronounce smoothly.
- My sentence: “Math homework can feel intractable when I am very tired after school.”

2. Premises • IPA: /'prem.ɪ.sɪz/ noun

- Sentence from the book: “Just smiled warmly as she looked at the premises ” (page 312)
- Why it is difficult for me to pronounce: I put the stress on the second syllable, but it should be on the first syllable.
- My sentence: “The school does not allow students to leave the premises during lunch.”

3. Wrung • IPA: /rʌŋ/ verb, past tense of “wring”

- Sentence from the book: “Karl wrung his cap and pointed both exactly and fearfully at the girl from the social services” (page 313)
- Why it is difficult for me to pronounce: It is difficult because the “w” and “g” is silent, and I want to pronounce it.
- My sentence: “After washing the towel, I wrung the water out with my hands.”

4. Exactly • IPA: /ɪg'zæk.tɪŋ.li/ adv.

- Sentence from the book: “Karl wrung his cap and pointed both exactly and fearfully at the girl from the social services” (page 313)
- Why it is difficult for me to pronounce: It is difficult because there are many consonant sounds together, especially “gz” and “ct.”
- My sentence: “My dad exactly checks every detail before we go on a trip.”

CHARACTER ANALYZER

MARIA

Trait: Confident

Confident describes a feeling or a look of certainty, self-assurance, and trust in one's abilities, plans, or the future. It implies having a strong belief in oneself, being sure of success, or acting with bold assurance.

For Britt-Marie, it's hard to believe that Sami is gone. Sami doesn't answer, but she hopes he's listening when she says: "I want you to know, darling, that I'll never regret coming to Borg."

Sami, Omar, and Vega played an important role in Britt-Marie life. Sven also played a significant role, involving the children in soccer within the Borg community. Through Omar, Britt-Marie became more involved with the soccer team and began to believe in the children's potential.

She encouraged him and supported his dreams even when life in Borg was difficult. So she feels sad because she has to make a decision about whether to stay or leave Borg.

Vega said to Britt-Marie "Don't knock on any door tomorrow. Just get in the car and drive !"
She said this because she didn't want to see her leave and knew she would feel nostalgic in her absence.

Britt-Marie shows confidence and hope for her future. She has grown into stronger person who can make decisions for herself. Britt Marie is ready to start a new chapter in her life.

And whatever happen. Wherever she is.
Everyone knows Britt Marie was here.

CHARACTER ANALYZER

.....

YARIELA

NYS

WORD ARTIST

.....
L I S A

Scene: “It’s petrol. We’ve worked it out. There’s enough here to get all the way to Paris,” whispers Omar.

Britt-Marie happily fills her car’s tank. The kids stand on the road waving while she gets into the driver’s seat. Then she starts driving toward the horizon. After many hours on the road, the night arrives, turning everything dark. It becomes difficult to see but suddenly Britt-Marie arrives in a picturesque city full of lights.

It’s Paris.

She looks around and sees the Eiffel Tower, an incredible tower made of old iron. The tower is so tall that it almost seems to touch the sky. Britt Marie remembers her sister, feels emotional and proud at the same time.

A worker guides her to the elevator, and Britt Marie slowly goes up to the top of the tower. When the elevator doors open, she sees a beautiful and elegant restaurant. Everything is peaceful. There are candles on the tables, a huge chandelier hanging from the ceiling, a soft music playing in the background, and the pleasant smell of French wine in the air.

The worker continues guiding her. Then Britt Marie sees someone standing near the window.

It’s Sven.

He is holding a bouquet of flowers in his hands, and he has a nervous smile in his face. Britt-Marie is happily surprised. Looking at the lights of Paris beside Sven, she understands that her life is important and she feels that she deserves a new beginning. After all, Britt-Marie is here.

WORD ARTIST

LILY L.

NYS

CONNECTION MAKER

MARIANA

Connection Maker: Women and friends over 40

In these chapters, Britt-Marie's journey connects to many real-life women and my friends over the age of 40 who believe it is too late to start over, try new experiences, or change careers.

Like Britt-Marie, many women spend years in fixed roles such as wife and mother. Because of this, they may feel invisible or believe their value is limited to what they have already done in life. Britt-Marie also begins the story with this mindset, thinking her life is defined by duty, rules, and obedience.

However, the story challenges this belief. Through her time in Borg, she discovers that she is still capable of growth, learning, and making independent choices. Her final decision to leave Kent and choose her own path shows that it is never too late to start again.

Britt-Marie's transformation sends a powerful message: Age does not limit new beginnings. People can always change their lives, rediscover themselves, and choose a different future—no matter how old they are.

CONNECTION MAKER

MONICA

"There are many Britt-Maries everywhere. As a child, it was difficult to comprehend what they needed in order to change their lives, as they were not happy."

"I once thought this only applied to my mom's generation, but now I realize I know women in my own generation who experience the same thing. I still vividly remember the prenuptial counseling at church, where I was told it was my duty to endure whatever my husband did—implying infidelity and abuse. After that, I felt reluctant to keep attending church, but because it was a requirement to get married, I went through with it."

"We enter marriage believing it is until death separates us, with no room for divorce. But that vow only works within the principles of love, respect, and supporting one another".

"Seeing Britt-Marie's financial and emotional dependency made me question my own life. I began to ask myself if I truly have the financial freedom I desire, if my identity and dreams were lost somewhere along the way, and if I had abandoned my own needs just to prioritize my family."

"I have come to the conclusion that I love my life exactly the way it is. While it is important to have a plan B just in case, what rules my life after 27 years of marriage is the daily opportunity to work together toward our goals."