



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Guide

The Friend by Sigrid Nunez

1. How is the narrator's love for her friend different from that of a wife, of which he'd had three? For years till his death, even after their early affair as student/teacher, the narrator considered him her dearest friend. Why?
2. Talk about the ways in which Apollo provides comfort to the narrator. What experience with dogs (or other pets) have you had in terms of their uncanny ability to recognize our moods and, consciously or not, offer solace?
3. What do you think of the friend, a womanizer who slept with his students, including the narrator? Were his actions ethical, especially if there is equal attraction?
4. The narrator wonders about castration as a "fix" for her friend who, with such frequency, engaged in "disgusting...antics of a dirty old man." Discuss your thoughts of the narrator's thoughts?
5. Why do her own students disappoint the narrator? What are the views some espouse in their papers?
6. "If reading really does increase empathy, as we are constantly being told that it does, it appears that writing takes some away." Why does the narrator feel this way about her fellow writers?
7. There is little in *The Friend* when it comes to drama; it's primarily a study of character and an exploration of ideas. Would more action have made a difference to you in terms of how you experienced the book?
8. Nunez includes a large number of quotations and stories from the works of writers. Are they well integrated into the novel? Did you enjoy them or find them distracting?

The above questions were taken from <https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/11237-friend-nunez?start=3> to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Sigrid Nunez lives in New York City. She has taught at Columbia, Princeton, Boston University, and the New School. Her works have been translated into nine languages and it is in the process of being translated into fourteen more. *The Friend* won the 2018 National Book Award.

<https://sigridnunez.com/bio/>

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