

PICADOR

Reading Group Gold

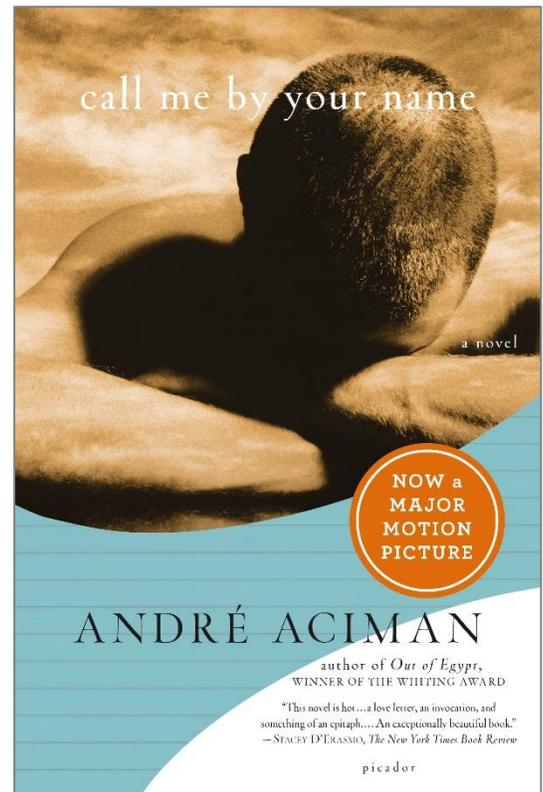
Call Me By Your Name: *A Novel*

André Aciman

ABOUT THE BOOK

Now a major motion picture from director Luca Guadagnino, starring Armie Hammer and Timothée Chalamet, and produced by the Academy Award winning producer of *A Room with a View*

Call Me by Your Name is the story of a sudden and powerful romance that blossoms between an adolescent boy and a summer guest at his parents' cliffside mansion on the Italian Riviera. During the restless summer weeks, unrelenting but buried currents of obsession, fascination, and desire intensify their passion as they test the charged ground between them and verge toward the one thing both already fear they may never truly find again: total intimacy. André Aciman's critically acclaimed debut novel is a frank, unsentimental, heartrending elegy to human passion.



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QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The opening word of the novel, “Later!” becomes one of Oliver’s common refrains, meaning “in the future” or “not yet,” “just a sec,” and “goodbye,” but also “a way of avoiding saying goodbye.” How do these multiple interpretations of this word play out thematically in the novel? Why try to encapsulate so many underlying meanings in one word?
2. Though the novel is intimately narrated from Elio’s perspective, much of the focus is on Oliver and Elio’s perception of him. Imagine that the narration is switched—that the story is framed through Oliver’s perspective instead. How do you think he would describe Elio?
3. At one point when Oliver is being standoffish, Elio wonders, “How is it that some people go through hell trying to get close to you, while you haven’t the haziest notion and don’t even give them a thought when two weeks go by and you haven’t so much as exchanged a single word between you?” Do you think Elio’s initial desire is heightened by Oliver’s lack of acknowledgment? How would you describe the relationship between desire and attention?
4. Would you consider Elio an unreliable narrator? Why or why not?

5. Throughout the novel Elio relates his physical desire for Oliver to different tropes and traditions in Judaism that connote bonding, homecoming, and community. What do you make of Elio's marriage of romantic desire and religious tradition? How do you think the fact that Oliver is also Jewish impacts Elio's view of him?
6. The communication between Oliver and Elio in the beginning of the novel is notably nebulous, almost evasive. Elio is constantly trying to parse the meaning behind their encounters, and he's frustrated by his inability to be forthright about what he wants from Oliver. Contrast that to Elio's interactions with Marzia. He notes, "I loved her simplicity, her candor. It was in every word she'd spoken to me that night—untrammelled, frank, human." Why do you think their communications are so different? In what ways might the homosexual nature of Elio and Oliver's relationship make it less "speakable?"
7. When Oliver first kisses Elio, Elio notes, "I was not so sure our kiss had convinced me of anything about myself." In what ways do you think connecting with others is a way of learning about ourselves?
8. Why do you think the author chooses to leave the names of the Italian towns ambiguous, denoting them only with a single letter?
9. Discuss the role of shame in the novel. How do shame, desire, and sexuality interplay?
10. After making love to Oliver for the second time, Elio wonders, "Would I always experience such solitary guilt in the wake of our intoxicating moments together? Why didn't I experience the same thing after Marzia?" Why do you think Elio feels so differently with Oliver and Marzia? Is it only because of their genders or do you think there are other factors at play?
11. Discuss the significance of the title, *Call Me By Your Name*. In what ways does it speak to how Elio views his relationship with Oliver?

Guide written by Laura Chasen

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