



## Book club 16: Love & identity

*Friday I'm in Love*  
by Camryn Garrett

### Rules

In this book club you will discuss *Friday I'm in Love* by Camryn Garrett in a group of 4-6 readers. The book club opens with a brief introduction that one of you reads out loud. The book club then continues in four rounds:

- 1 Round 1 consists of 5 questions about the plot. One of the group members acts as the quiz master who reads each question out loud, after which everyone (including the quiz master) writes down their answer. The correct answers will appear on the screen after you have turned over the final question card. You may then check your answers and calculate your scores.
- 2 Round 2 consists of asking and answering questions each of you have about the book/story. Each group member consults the group about elements of the text that they thought was unclear. Together, you try to find answers to the questions that are raised. After everything has been cleared up, your group is ready to proceed to the next round.
- 3 Round 3 consists of discussion questions. The person with the most correct answers to the quiz questions from round 1 gets to be the first to turn over a card and respond to the question. The other members of the group may then add to the discussion by responding and sharing their ideas. Take turns until all cards are flipped.
- 4 Round 4 is where you get to review the text. How many stars would you give the text and why? Discuss this together until you have reached a shared verdict. Use the text box to explain your choice.

This book club was developed by the editors of LitLab, a digital laboratory for high school literature research. For more teaching materials, visit [www.litlab.nl](http://www.litlab.nl). A teacher's guide and a didactic justification of this teaching method are available at [www.litlab.nl/docenten](http://www.litlab.nl/docenten).



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## Friday I'm in Love

### Introduction

*'I just feel like coming out shouldn't be this dramatic, sad thing. No one should be crying about it. You should be able to make it however you want. People should be happy to announce that they're queer.'*

Mahalia Harris, the protagonist of *Friday I'm in Love*'s, regrets not getting a Sweet Sixteen party because her mother couldn't afford one. After attending her best friend Naomi's Sweet Sixteen, Mahalia gets the brilliant idea to organise her own Coming-Out party instead. There is still the obstacle of money, however, **and** this really cute new girl Siobhan proves to be a real distraction...

*Friday I'm in Love* is a novel about acceptance, embracing one's sexuality, opening up to love, friendship, and family. Camryn Garrett's vibrant writing style and her main character Mahalia's humour make you want to dance to the song 'Friday I'm in Love'.

### Round 1: Understanding the plot

Take turns turning over a card and answering the question. After the person whose turn it is has answered, the rest may add to that answer or share their own views.

### Round 2: Initial questions

Take turns selecting one of the excerpts (*fragmenten/stukjes*) from the book listed below. Think of a question you would like to ask one of the characters, and work together to find an answer to that question.

1. Mahalia tells her mother about her plans for her party: 'That final... Naomi's number.' (p. 27-28)
2. Naomi takes Mahalia dress-shopping: 'I'm not... wearing it.' (p. 84-85)
3. Mahalia meets Siobhan's parents for the first time: 'It's nice... something bad.' (p. 118-119)
4. Mahalia and Siobhan talk about 'belonging' and have their first real kiss: 'Feel what?... things out.' (p. 155 – 156)

### Round 3: Discussion

Take turns turning over a card from a pile of your choice and answer the discussion question. The other members of the group may then add to the discussion by responding and sharing their ideas.

### Round 4: Opinion

Review *Friday I'm in Love* by rating the novel on a scale of one to five stars, and then provide an explanation for your choice. Discuss what aspects you enjoyed and what aspects you didn't, and provide reasons for your opinions. Reflect on whether the discussion influenced your individual perspective, and if so, how. Incorporate examples and arguments from your responses to the discussion questions to support your review.



### Question 1

Siobhan just moved to Mahalia's town from another country. Which country is that?

### Question 2

Mahalia and Naomi both have jobs at the same place. Where do they work?

### Question 3

What is the name of Siobhan's dog?

### Question 4

What does Siobhan's boyfriend Danny do that really annoys Mahalia?

### Question 5

What is Mahalia's favourite subject at school?

### Answers

1. Ireland
2. 'Fresh Abundance', a small natural foods store
3. Snickerdoodle / Doodle
4. Danny bangs his drumsticks on his desk, the floor or the wall
5. History



Question

3

Question

2

Question

1

Answers

Question

5

Question

4



### Personal connections? 1

The title of the book *Friday I'm in Love* is the same as the title of a famous song by the band The Cure. At several points in the story, Mahalia sings the lyrics out loud. The song makes her feel happy. Why do you think this specific song gives her this feeling? What song gives you a strong feeling? Can you explain why that is?

### Personal connections? 2

In *Friday I'm in Love*, Mahalia is trying to organise her own 'coming-out' party, to joyfully celebrate her sexuality and come out as queer to everyone all at once. If you had something as big as this to share with your friends and family, how would you deal with it and why would you do it like that?

### Personal connections? 3

Mahalia hasn't invited her father to anything since he failed to show up for her choir concert when she was 13. Why do you think Mahalia stopped inviting him to things? And what would you do if you were in Mahalia's place?

### Personal connections? 4

Mahalia makes an alternative 'mixtape' for Siobhan. How does she decide which songs should be on the final version? If you had to make a mixtape or a special playlist for someone, how would you select the songs?

### Personal connections? 5

At a certain point in the story, Naomi and Mahalia don't talk to each other for a while. The reason for this is that Mahalia only talks about her own problems, and doesn't give Naomi the same attention she expects to get from her. Have you ever been in a similar situation? What would you do if you were in Naomi's/Mahalia's place?

### Personal connections? 6

On the original cover there's a sentence: 'One party can change your life'. This is also similar to the title of the paper Mahalia wrote for History class at the end of the story. How did the party change her life? Have you ever experienced an event which changed your life?



Personal connections?

3

Personal connections?

2

Personal connections?

1

Personal connections?

6

Personal connections?

5

Personal connections?

4



### Food for thought? 1

*Friday I'm in Love* is written from a first-person perspective: we see the story through Mahalia's eyes and learn about her feelings. What are the advantages and disadvantages of that? If you could change anything about the perspective the story is written from, what would it be? Why would that make the book (even more) interesting?

### Food for thought? 2

Every chapter starts with a banner that states Mahalia's checking account balance, her recent transactions and her goal. Why do the transactions and Mahalia's goal change after chapter 21? Why do you think Camryn Garrett (the author) made money such a prominent theme in the book?

### Food for thought? 3

The book is about Mahalia wanting to throw her 'coming-out' party. Many books about people coming out are often about the struggle of accepting their own sexuality. Is this also the case with Mahalia? Explain your answer.

### Food for thought? 4

Although it's not a central theme, racism does play a role in the story, particularly when Mahalia discusses how *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Huckleberry Finn* are read in class. Both novels were originally written as anti-racist works. Why do you think Camryn Garrett uses these books in *Friday I'm in Love*?

### Food for thought? 5

When her mother brings her to Naomi's house (for what later turns out to be her own party), Mahalia doesn't know what to think. At one point, she's even afraid that her super-Christian mother has organised an 'intervention' for her. Look up what that is. Why do you think Mahalia believes this at first?

### Food for thought? 6

In *Friday I'm in Love*, we follow Mahalia during the months of April, May and June. The names of the months are printed on a page with a picture on it: April (chapter 1-16) has take-away cups, May (chapter 17-36) musical notes, and June (chapter 37) a rainbow. What do these pictures mean, in the context of the story? And why do you think the book ends in June?



Food for thought?

3

Food for thought?

2

Food for thought?

1

Food for thought?

6

Food for thought?

5

Food for thought?

4