

THE MEASURE

book club questions



- How did you feel about the concept of everyone receiving a box with a string that shows how long they will live? What initial reaction might you have had if you were in this situation?
- If you were a character in the book, how would you react upon receiving your string? Would you choose to look at it or ignore it, and what factors would influence your decision?
- Do you believe knowing the exact number of years you have left to live would be a blessing or a curse?
- How would you spend your time differently if you knew your lifespan?
- Can you relate to any of the characters' reactions to receiving their boxes?
- The strings introduce a fixed element of fate into the characters' lives. How does this impact their views on free will and making personal choices?
- How did you react to the concept of receiving a string that predicts lifespan? Discuss your thoughts using Hank's experience as an E.R. doctor who constantly deals with life and death.
- How do you think the wooden boxes symbolize in the story?
- What do you think the string symbolizes in the broader context of the story? Were there other symbols that played a significant role?
- Look at the relationship dynamics in the book, especially between those with long strings and those with short strings. How do these relationships impact the characters' decisions on how to live their lives?
- Throughout the book, characters must make significant life decisions based on their strings. Discuss how knowing their string length influences or changes the characters' life choices, particularly looking at Hank and Nina.

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- Do you think the characters' decisions were influenced more by fear or curiosity?
- The story explores how governments handle the knowledge of string lengths. What are your thoughts on the book's portrayal of government intervention in personal lives? Does it seem plausible?
- Jack's uncle uses the strings to fuel political agendas. How does this character's actions reflect on the use of personal tragedies for political gain? Do you think this is a realistic portrayal?
- Prejudice against short-stringers becomes a theme in the book. How do the societal reactions to short and long strings mirror real-life societal issues? Consider the support group that becomes a makeshift family in your discussion.
- The novel introduces a variety of reactions to the strings—from acceptance to denial. How does Nina's and Maura's debate about marriage and children highlight the personal dilemmas faced when confronting a finite timeline?
- Amie and Ben's relationship develops through anonymous letters. What does their evolving relationship tell us about human connection in times of crisis? How do their interactions contrast with the novel's faster-paced narratives?
- The mysterious origin of the boxes is a central mystery in the story. Why do you think Erlick chose to focus less on the technicalities and more on the impact? How does this choice affect your reading experience?
- Discuss the moral implications of knowing one's lifespan.
- How does the concept of fate play into the story?
- Do you think people would live more fulfilling lives if they knew how long they had left?
- Did any characters' choices surprise you? Why or why not?
- What role does uncertainty play in the human experience, and how does the novel address this?

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- How does the author use the boxes as a metaphor for life's uncertainties?
- How do you interpret the ending of the novel? Did it satisfy you?
- Are there any parallels between the fictional world of the novel and our own society?
- What does the story suggest about the human capacity for resilience in the face of uncertainty?
- Discuss the role of hope and despair in the characters' lives after receiving their boxes.
- Discuss the significance of the title, "The Measure,".
- What do you think the author is trying to say about the human condition through this narrative?
- The novel can be seen as a form of escapism from real-world issues, as mentioned by Erlick. Discuss whether you think "The Measure" provides a comforting escape or if it challenges you to think about real-life issues differently