

Reading Guide

You and Me and Us

William Morrow Paperbacks

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Introduction

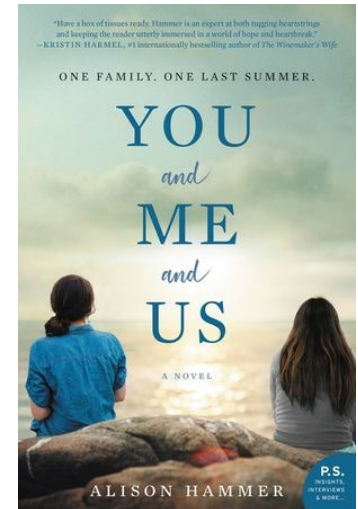
The heartbreaking, yet hopeful, story of a mother and daughter struggling to be a family without the one person who holds them together—a perfect summer read for fans of Jojo Moyes and Marisa de los Santos.

Alexis Gold knows how to put the “work” in working mom. It’s the “mom” part that she’s been struggling with lately. Since opening her own advertising agency three years ago, Alexis has all but given up on finding a good work/life balance. Instead, she’s handed over the household reins to her supportive, loving partner, Tommy. While he’s quick to say they divide and conquer, Alexis knows that Tommy does most of the heavy lifting—especially when it comes to their teenage daughter, CeCe.

Their world changes in an instant when Tommy receives a terminal cancer diagnosis, and Alexis realizes everything she’s worked relentlessly for doesn’t matter without him. So Alexis does what Tommy has done for her almost every day since they were twelve-year-old kids in Destin, Florida—she puts him first. And when the only thing Tommy wants is to spend one last summer together at “their” beach, she puts her career on hold to make it happen...even if it means putting her family within striking distance of Tommy’s ex, an actress CeCe idolizes.

But Alexis and Tommy aren’t the only ones whose lives have been turned inside out. In addition to dealing with the normal ups and downs that come with being a teenager, CeCe is also forced to confront her feelings about Tommy’s illness—and what will happen when the one person who’s always been there for her is gone. When the magic of first love brings a bright spot to her summer, CeCe is determined not to let her mother ruin that for her, too.

As CeCe’s behavior becomes more rebellious, Alexis realizes the only thing harder for her than losing Tommy will be convincing CeCe to give her one more chance.



You and Me and Us is a beautifully written novel that examines the unexpected ways loss teaches us how to love.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think Tommy made the right decision choosing not to get treatment? How would you approach weighing the factors he had to consider—quality of life versus quantity of life—if you were in his shoes? And what about his choice to spend his last weeks at the beach? Where would you spend your last days?
2. A lot of parents and teenagers have tough relationships. Do you think the way CeCe and Alexis saw each other was fair? Without Tommy's illness, do you think they would have been able to repair their relationship?
3. Alexis didn't want to get married because she equates the legal bond of marriage with her parents' relationship, which was nothing like hers and Tommy's. Why do you think she changed her mind in the end? How do you think this will affect CeCe's future views on marriage and relationships?
4. Alexis has two best friends—Jill and Becky. Her friendships with each woman fill very different purposes in her life. What are those purposes? Do you have more than one best friend? If life has ever brought you all together, did everyone get along?
5. CeCe has a moment when she realizes that Tommy isn't just her dad, but that he's also his own person. At what moment in your life did you realize that your parents were more than just your parents?
6. What did you think of Tommy's decision to see and forgive Monica? If you were Alexis, would you have been okay with having his ex over to your house?
7. Do you think Alexis made the right decision taking CeCe to California? Why or why not?
8. Where do you think Alexis and CeCe will be in five years? Ten years?