

Reading Group Guide
for

**My
Movie**

stories by

David Pratt

The suggested questions are included to enhance your
group's reading of
My Movie by David Pratt

Questions for Discussion

How do the three parts of the story “My Movie” relate? Do the hero’s struggles and disappointments remind you of your own youth?

How do movies function for the heroine of “Another Country”? How did movies function for Percy and Larry?

How would you complete the sentence, “The two men in ‘Please Talk to Me, Please’ break up because...” The author wrote this story about a break-up that happened to him, but his narrator is not himself; it is the other man. Try writing about one of your break-ups from the point of view of the other guy. What is it like?

What is your own experience with the intersection of art, AIDS, and sex? The hero of “Series” and his boyfriend find “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” comforting, but that show was, in its time (1970-1977), considered revolutionary for portraying a happy, single, childless working woman. How do the societal changes of the late 1960s / early 1970s compare with – or, in some cases, lead to—changes wrought by AIDS?

What does Calvin’s experience in the world of Roddd and Joey in “Calvin Gets Sucked In” say about the nature and function of pornography? The story mentions two works by Kafka—“The Metamorphosis” and “In the Penal Colony.” How are these references appropriate to “Calvin?”

What is the effect in “Possession” of fetishizing certain words—“late,” “tiny,” “far,” etc., and objects, like the Empire desk? Do you see connections between “Possession” and “Calvin Gets Sucked In”?

In “The Island,” Jim imagines what it will be like when he dies. What other transcendent experiences do characters in these stories have, seek, or anticipate? Think of Robert’s release of the check in “Not Pretty,” Sherman’s fate in “Edge,” etc.

Is there a piece of writing to which you have written or would like to write a “reaction,” as the author wrote “All the Young Boys Love Alice” as a reaction to Alice Munro’s “Lying Under the Apple Tree”? Which piece of writing? What did you—or what would you—say in your reaction? If you have never written such a reaction, give it a try!

“One Bedroom” is one of several stories in the collection involving sex with strangers. What are commonalities and differences between these stories? Do you feel differently about a casual pick-up when the character is “cheating,” like the narrator of “Series”?

Sex, money, food, “Not Pretty.” Discuss.

Do you ever imagine that natural objects have feelings and personalities, as they do in “*Ulmus Americana*”? How about your house, car or other objects? Try writing a dialogue between yourself and an object, or imagine two objects conversing.

Have you dealt with an active addict in a context similar to the one in “The Addict”? What moments in the story define “addict behavior”?

Compare/contrast “Edge” and “The Island.” When you have spent time with ill or disabled people, including those with AIDS, have you felt drawn into another world? What defined that world? How does the world of the sick subvert conventional reality? Have you experienced this when sick yourself?

“The Snow Queen”—When you were a child, did you have adult friends who your parents did not understand or discouraged you from seeing? What became of those friends? Are you in touch with them today? (Note: Another story with Jo and Steven is online at: www.blithe.com/bhq6.2/6.2.03.html.)

Overall, why do you think the story title “My Movie” was used for the collection? How are acts of seeing, capturing, and projecting images (real or personal) used in these stories? How do these ways of treating images relate to the creation of identity?