



"Tender and sexy and messy  
and deeply human.  
I absolutely love this novel."  
—NINA LACOUR, bestselling  
author of *Yerba Buena*

TOMAS MONIZ

*Author of* BIG FAMILIA

ALL  
FRIENDS  
ARE  
NECESSARY

*A Novel*

BOOK CLUB KIT

# A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Friends,

*All Friends Are Necessary* came to life during the winter solstice of 2016: I was sprinting down the soft gray sand on Ocean Beach, naked and embarrassed, still in disbelief at the outcome of the recent presidential election. My best friend and I, under a waning moon, jumped into the cold cold Pacific Ocean to cleanse ourselves of anger and fear, to mark a new beginning of joy and resistance and risk-taking, despite the devastation we felt inside.

And so the first iteration of this novel was a celebration of pleasure, of intimacy, of music and dating, of trying to get sober, of standing up to the growing alt-right movement, of returning home to family and friends. But like most projects, they never end where or when you imagined.

As with so many others, my community and I suffered a lot of anxiety and trauma during the pandemic. I couldn't imagine how things could get worse: but they did. In early 2021, my daughter-in-law suddenly passed away—leaving my son a widower, with a five month old baby to care for.

I wrote nothing for a solid year; instead, all our immediate family and friends banded together and did the daily work of supporting each other through grief: rocking a baby, washing dishes, singing lullabies, changing diapers, getting groceries, sleeping over. In many ways that kind of work never really ends; it evolves and changes as does grief, as do our stories.

When I finally returned to writing, I didn't know where to start or how to begin, so I simply read everything I could get my hands on. When I picked up the earlier version of this book, it was a cathartic experience, rereading how friends can support each other through joy as well as grief. But now I realized what the second theme of the book needed to be: a story about what is necessary to heal.

Dear readers, I offer this book to you: the story of a group of people who survive, despite everything. There's joy and pain, there's ritual and celebration, there's nighttime graffiti escapades and Korn concerts, there's sex and dogs and handholding and Peloton classes and street protests. All of it—the silly and the serious—necessary.

I hope the book makes you want to reach out to hug the people you love.

Finally, I love pen pals and postcards. Write to me and I promise to write back. Better yet, write to your friends and tell them you love them.

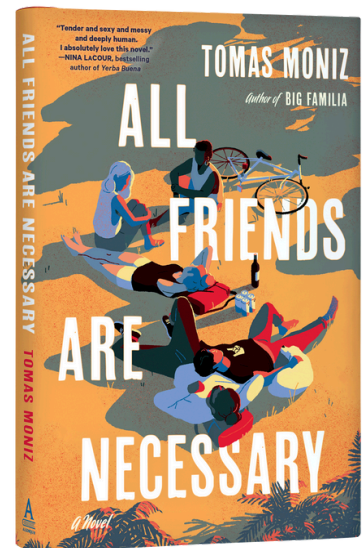
Love,



PO Box 3555  
Berkeley, CA 94703

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Generally, in movies and fiction, adult friendships are seen as less important as we age and enter relationships and begin families. Does this reflect your experience? Why or why not?
2. How would you characterize the different portrayals of friendship in the novel? How do Efren's friendships evolve throughout the book? How have your own friendships evolved throughout your life?
3. From the sexy scene involving spaghetti to the moment of desire that centers on the uvula, discuss the representation of desire in the book.
4. In many ways, the novel is a love letter to the Bay Area. Discuss the book's various settings and how they impact the story and its themes.
5. Part of the book takes place during the pandemic. How does Covid impact the characters throughout the novel? How did it feel to relive that moment in time through fiction?
6. Grief is a key theme in the book. How does Efren move through his grief in the novel? What characters and events do you think played the most central role in Efren's journey through grief?
7. There's a scene in the book where Efren and friends venture out to explore the forgotten literary histories of San Francisco. Discuss the artists and creative history of your own community. Are there people or groups who would benefit from late-night guerrilla graffiti action to get more recognition?
8. Each chapter of the book gets its own title, such as "Like Needle to Record," "Anonymous Armpits and Desire Paths," and "Masks Up, Pants Down." Discuss the tone of the chapter titles. How do they inform your reading of the book?
9. Part Two of the novel is titled "Life Cycle of a Fern." This section marks a formal shift in the book and is composed of mostly prose poems. What do you think about this shift in form and tone? How do ferns function as a symbol throughout the book?
10. The author, Tomas Moniz, loves writing and receiving letters. When was the last time you wrote a letter to someone? Discuss the importance or difference of communicating through the act of letter writing. Bonus points: The author challenges you to write to a friend, a parent, or a person who inspires you.



# ALL FRIENDS LOVE MUSIC: A PLAYLIST

## All Friends Are Necessary

**"Fade To Black" — Metallica**

**"We Got The Beat" — The Go-Go's**

**"9th Wonder (Blackitolism)" — Digable Planets ft. Jazzy Joyce**

**"It's Been Awhile" — Staind**

**"Paranoid" — Black Sabbath**

**"My Homeboy's Chevy" — Andre Nickatina & Mac Dre**

**"Germfree Adolescents" — X-Ray Specs**

**"Mariner's Apartment Complex" — Lana Del Rey**

**"Asking For It" — Hole**

**"Rebel Girl" — Bikini Kill**



2:48



3:29

LISTEN ON  
SPOTIFY

