

Anxious People Book Club Questions

1. The book starts with the passage, “A bank robbery. A hostage drama. A stairwell full of police officers on their way to storm an apartment. It was easy to get to this point, much easier than you might think.”

How do you feel this passage sets up the rest of the book? What kind of expectations did it lead to? Were they accurate in the end?

2. The book mentions several times what the story could be about, but how it’s “mostly about idiots.” Baukman tempers that statement by saying it’s also idiotically difficult to be a human, especially these days.

Do you agree that in many aspects, life is many ways harder these days than “before”? In what ways?

3. One theme of the book is the fragility of our sense of control is, and how much of the time we are going about pretending that “our jobs and our children and everything else” are fine.

Who in the book do you think was pretending the most up to the point of the hostage drama? Who was the authentic? Why?

4. The bridge plays a large role in the book and is the main way the story ties the characters together. How did that bridge change the course of the different characters' lives?

Why do you think Baukman kept mentioning you could see it from the apartment?

5. Our two police officers are father and son. How does that change the way the investigation plays out?

6. As the story unfolds, did you feel more empathy for the father’s behavior or the son’s? Why?

7. One device used to feel the drama of the situation is for the book to in and out of witness transcripts. How effective was that? How did it change the pacing of the book?

8. Does your opinion about the bank robber change when you realize they were only trying to pay rent so they wouldn't lose their children? How about when you found out they were a woman?

If so, why do you think that is?

9. Through her therapy sessions and the narrative, we get a good look at Zara’s life and how she feels about her position now working for a bank.

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What stood out to you the most about her by the end of the book? What do you imagine happening for her going forward after the book ends?

10. Ro and Julie are both terrified of being parents for different reasons and see their partner as the stronger role model. How does the bank robbery help them face their fears?

11. Frederik Baukman's writing style is very all over the place and at times seems almost random. Did you enjoy this style? Why or why not? How did it influence the way the story unfolded?

12. What moment in the book really stood out to you as the most memorable?

13. How did you feel about the resolution of **Anxious People** and where all the characters ended up? Is there any part of the ending you would change?

14. What ultimately surprised you most about the book?

15. Frederik Baukman's other novels have been highly celebrated. Did **Anxious People** make you interested in reading any of his other books? Why?

Anxious People book club questions are available as