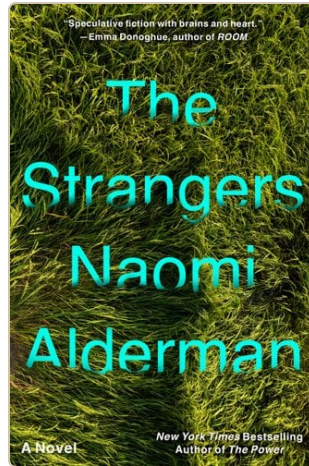


BOOK CLUB NIGHT KIT



The Strangers

Naomi Alderman

🌙 COZY NIGHT

A grieving novelist sets a camera in her mother's garden and catches the first photo of a creature nobody can explain, and the world quietly rearranges itself around it. It is a strange, tender book about loss, wonder, and what we do when the impossible shows up in the back yard.

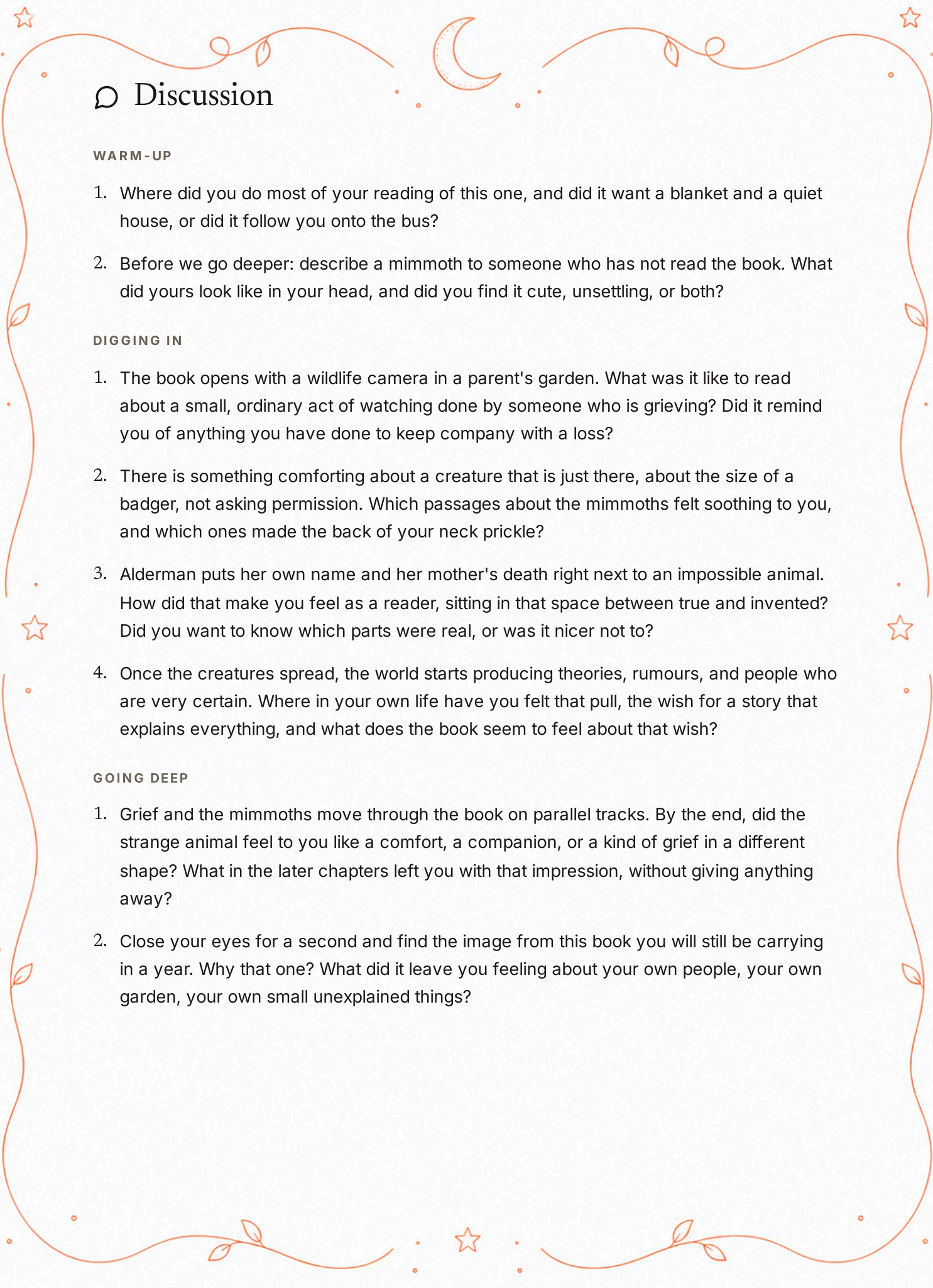
Something Small Is In The Garden. Bring A Mug.

Come read about a creature nobody can explain and a daughter missing her mother, then sit in a warm kitchen and talk about both. Stew on the stove, tea forever, and bring a bake from a family recipe if you have one.

Reading level: Moderate **Pages:** 288

Best for: A club that likes odd, warm books and does not mind a night where feelings come up alongside the weirdness





Discussion

WARM-UP

1. Where did you do most of your reading of this one, and did it want a blanket and a quiet house, or did it follow you onto the bus?
2. Before we go deeper: describe a mimmoth to someone who has not read the book. What did yours look like in your head, and did you find it cute, unsettling, or both?

DIGGING IN

1. The book opens with a wildlife camera in a parent's garden. What was it like to read about a small, ordinary act of watching done by someone who is grieving? Did it remind you of anything you have done to keep company with a loss?
2. There is something comforting about a creature that is just there, about the size of a badger, not asking permission. Which passages about the mimmoths felt soothing to you, and which ones made the back of your neck prickle?
3. Alderman puts her own name and her mother's death right next to an impossible animal. How did that make you feel as a reader, sitting in that space between true and invented? Did you want to know which parts were real, or was it nicer not to?
4. Once the creatures spread, the world starts producing theories, rumours, and people who are very certain. Where in your own life have you felt that pull, the wish for a story that explains everything, and what does the book seem to feel about that wish?

GOING DEEP

1. Grief and the mimmoths move through the book on parallel tracks. By the end, did the strange animal feel to you like a comfort, a companion, or a kind of grief in a different shape? What in the later chapters left you with that impression, without giving anything away?
2. Close your eyes for a second and find the image from this book you will still be carrying in a year. Why that one? What did it leave you feeling about your own people, your own garden, your own small unexplained things?

☕ On the table & to sip

TO EAT

🍲 **Slow-cooked root vegetable and barley stew with buttered bread**

Low-to-the-ground, dug-from-the-garden food for a book about something that appears in the soil of an ordinary back garden. One pot, made in the morning, ladled out whenever people are hungry.

🍰 **Mum's-recipe tray bake (whatever yours is: lemon drizzle, flapjack, brownie)**

Invite each member to bring a bake that comes from a parent or grandparent, ideally with a story. The book is partly about a mother's house and what stays behind in it.

🧀 **Cheese, apples, walnuts and honey on a wooden board**

Trunk-and-snuffle food, the kind of thing you would leave out for a garden animal. No cooking, and it sits out happily all evening.

TO SIP

🍷 **Hot spiced apple and pear cordial (non-alcoholic) (no alcohol)**

Warm orchard-and-garden flavours, served in mugs so people can hold something while they talk. Keep a pot on low all night.

☕ **Big pot of strong tea with a proper milk jug (no alcohol)**

The most English possible grief-and-strangeness drink. Alderman is a London writer, and this book lives in kitchens.

🍷 **Mulled red wine with orange and clove**

Gentle, warm, and low effort. A glass of something spiced makes the uncanny bits easier to sit with.



Run of show

7:00

Door, mug, blanket

Tea and cordial already hot. Hand everyone a warm drink before they take their coat off. No talking about the book yet.

7:20

Stew and the bring-a-bake table

Eat first. Let the parent-recipe bakes get introduced with their stories, which quietly warms people up for the book's themes.

7:45

Warm-ups by the lamp

Dim the overheads, run the two warm-up questions round the circle. Everyone speaks once, briefly, so no one is left out later.

8:05

The garden round (theme questions)

Work through the four theme questions loosely. If a tangent about somebody's mother or somebody's fox starts, let it run.

8:45

Second pot, then the deep two

Refill mugs, spoiler warning out loud, then the two deep questions. Slower pace, longer silences are fine here.

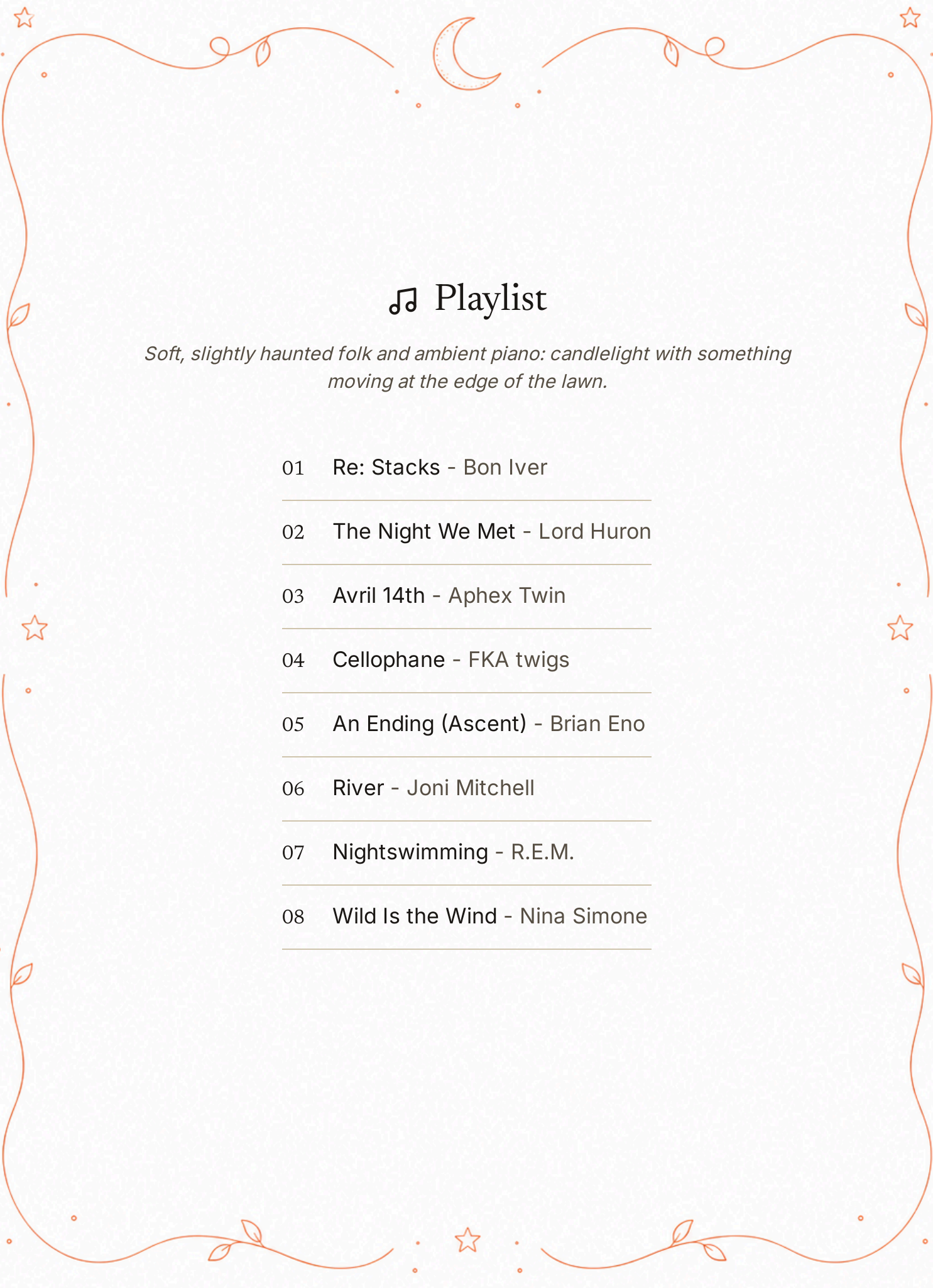
9:15

Trivia, scorecards, soft landing

Light trivia to lift the mood, fill in scorecards, hand out bookmarks, pick next month's book with the leftovers out.

HOST TIPS

- Say out loud at the start that the deep questions come last and are the only spoiler zone, so anyone still finishing can relax until then.
- This book touches on a mother's death. Mention it kindly at the start and make it explicitly fine to pass on any question. A pass should cost nothing.
- Keep the pot of something hot topped up all evening. In a cozy night the refill is the pacing device: when conversation stalls, get up and pour.



♪ Playlist

Soft, slightly haunted folk and ambient piano: candlelight with something moving at the edge of the lawn.

- 01 Re: Stacks - Bon Iver

- 02 The Night We Met - Lord Huron

- 03 Avril 14th - Aphex Twin

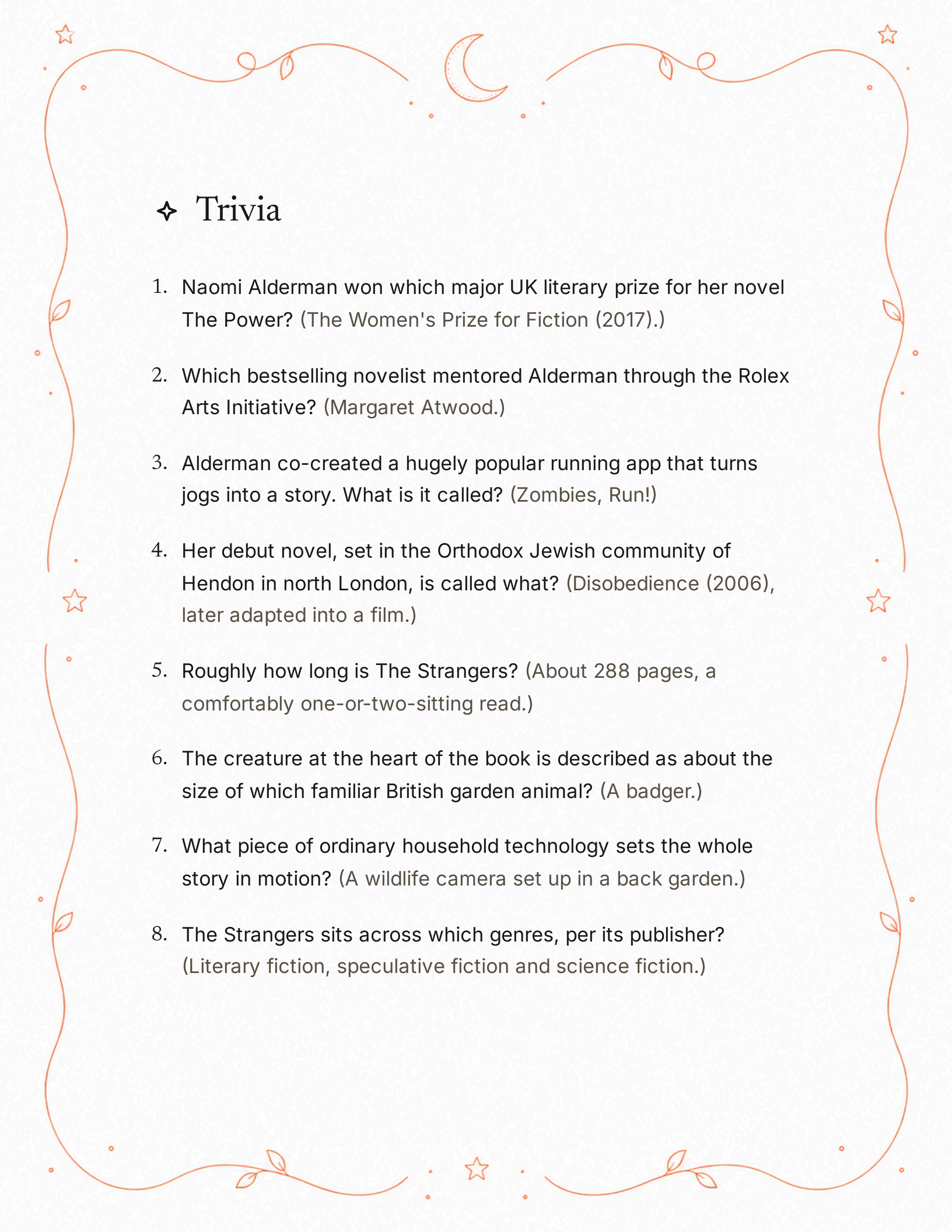
- 04 Cellophane - FKA twigs

- 05 An Ending (Ascent) - Brian Eno

- 06 River - Joni Mitchell

- 07 Nightswimming - R.E.M.

- 08 Wild Is the Wind - Nina Simone

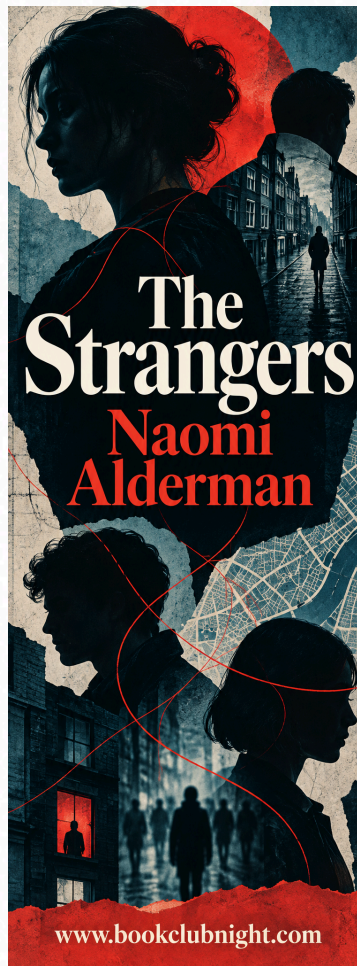
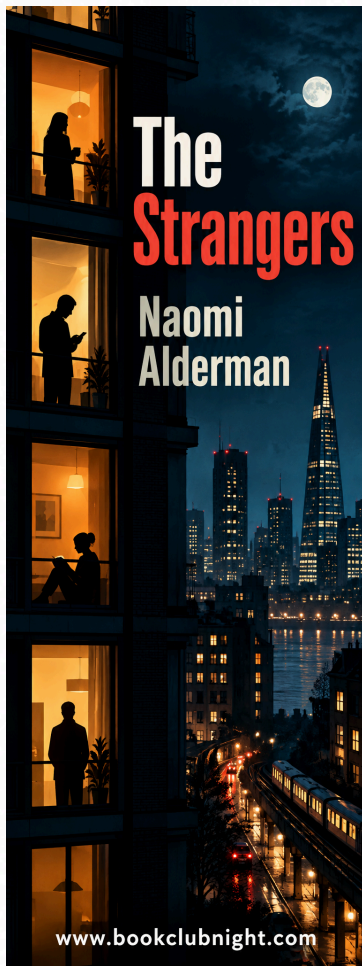


✧ Trivia

1. Naomi Alderman won which major UK literary prize for her novel *The Power*? (The Women's Prize for Fiction (2017).)
2. Which bestselling novelist mentored Alderman through the Rolex Arts Initiative? (Margaret Atwood.)
3. Alderman co-created a hugely popular running app that turns jogs into a story. What is it called? (Zombies, Run!)
4. Her debut novel, set in the Orthodox Jewish community of Hendon in north London, is called what? (*Disobedience* (2006), later adapted into a film.)
5. Roughly how long is *The Strangers*? (About 288 pages, a comfortably one-or-two-sitting read.)
6. The creature at the heart of the book is described as about the size of which familiar British garden animal? (A badger.)
7. What piece of ordinary household technology sets the whole story in motion? (A wildlife camera set up in a back garden.)
8. *The Strangers* sits across which genres, per its publisher? (Literary fiction, speculative fiction and science fiction.)

□ Bookmarks

Print, cut, and tuck one at every seat, a small keepsake from the night.



☆ Rate the book

Coziness (did it feel like company?) ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Tenderness ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

How strange it got ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Stayed-with-me feeling ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Would I press this on a friend? ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

One word for how this book left me: _____

The moment I read twice: _____

Who I thought about while reading it: _____

THAT'S A WRAP

Thank you for coming

We hope the company was good and the conversation even better. Until the next chapter.



Plan your own book club night

Scan the code or visit **bookclubnight.com**

Book Club Night