



## Book Club Guide

A.G.R. Goff

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## Discussion Guide

**The Sky Above** is a dystopian psychological thriller set during the collapse of civilisation following a religious civil war. As violence, hunger, and fear reshape daily life, the novel follows Mark and Ben — former schoolmates from different religious backgrounds — as they attempt to survive while protecting Ben's younger sister. The novel explores survival, prejudice, moral compromise, fear, and the fragile nature of trust during social collapse. Rather than focusing only on violence, the story examines how ordinary people change under pressure and how identity can become politicised during periods of instability.

- 1) How does the novel portray the breakdown of normal society? Which aspects felt most believable?
- 2) How do fear and uncertainty influence the decisions characters make throughout the story?
- 3) How does the relationship between Mark and Ben challenge wider divisions within the world of the novel?
- 4) In what ways does the novel examine prejudice and group identity?
- 5) How does caring for Ben's younger sister change the emotional dynamic of the story?
- 6) How do survival situations affect moral boundaries within the novel?
- 7) Which characters adapt most successfully to the collapse of civilisation, and why?
- 8) How does the novel explore trust when social structures no longer exist?
- 9) What role does violence play in shaping the psychology of the characters?
- 10) How does the story portray the tension between self-preservation and responsibility toward others?
- 11) Which moments in the novel felt psychologically realistic rather than traditionally heroic?
- 12) How does the book explore the long-term emotional effects of fear and instability?
- 13) In what ways does the setting contribute to the atmosphere of hopelessness and tension?
- 14) How does the novel reflect contemporary political or social anxieties?
- 15) Does the novel ultimately present hope, survival, or emotional endurance as its central idea?

## Themes

- survival and collapse
- religious conflict
- fear and radicalisation

- prejudice and identity
- friendship under pressure
- moral compromise
- violence and trauma
- social breakdown
- trust and betrayal
- human resilience
- family responsibility
- psychological survival

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