



I love how Henry Hoke plays fast and loose with autobiography and genre. *The Book of Endless Sleepovers* is wry and finely-wrought, a philosophical fever dream studded with the pleasure of proper names and surprising turns of phrase, a lyric page-turner.

– MAGGIE NELSON, author of *The Argonauts*

## TEACHING GUIDE

# The Book of Endless Sleepovers

by Henry Hoke

978-1937865771 / 166 pages / \$15.95

### Recommended Classes:

- Creative Writing
- Creative Nonfiction & Memoir
- Queer Theory
- American/Contemporary Literature

### Keywords:

Childhood / Queer Theory / Cross-genre / Hybrid / Memoir / Autobiography / Creative Nonfiction / Meta-literary / Post-modernism / Gender / Sexuality / Coming of Age / Illness / Romance / Disability / Masculinity / Family

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *The Book of Endless Sleepovers* is described as playing “fast and loose with autobiography and genre.” What effect does the breaking down of barriers between genres and the barriers between truth and fiction have?
2. What stories do you regard as “true” and which feel fabricated, and why? How does this affect the reading of these texts?
3. Many themes and characters recur across the various sections. How do these recurrences build on or subvert the consistency of the narrative as a whole?
4. The sections in *Sleepovers* are ordered, but not numbered or assigned a table of contents. How does the fragmented sequencing influence your reading experience?
5. What role does gender play in this book?

6. What moments resonate most with your own childhood experiences, or experiences with family?
7. What literary figures were crucial to your childhood? How did they contribute to your personal narrative and identity?
8. At what points does the book draw attention to itself as a book, employing post-modernism or the meta-literary? How did you respond to these moments?
9. What philosophical or existential ideas emerge from the text for you? How do these ideas relate to the title of the book?
10. Do you read this as a collection of stories or a novel? Does it matter?
11. The tone often shifts from one of humor to one of tragedy. What other tone shifts do you observe and how do these tone shifts affect your reading experience?
12. How do you experience the various proper names and pop cultural sources that appear in the text? Do these help ground the text or create distance?

**Possible Assignments:**

- Borrow/Steal a character/characters from a canonical literary or pop cultural source and place them in a different context (perhaps in your own context)
- Write a childhood memory in five different forms (i.e. a ghost story, a film trailer, an instruction manual, a police report, a haiku)