



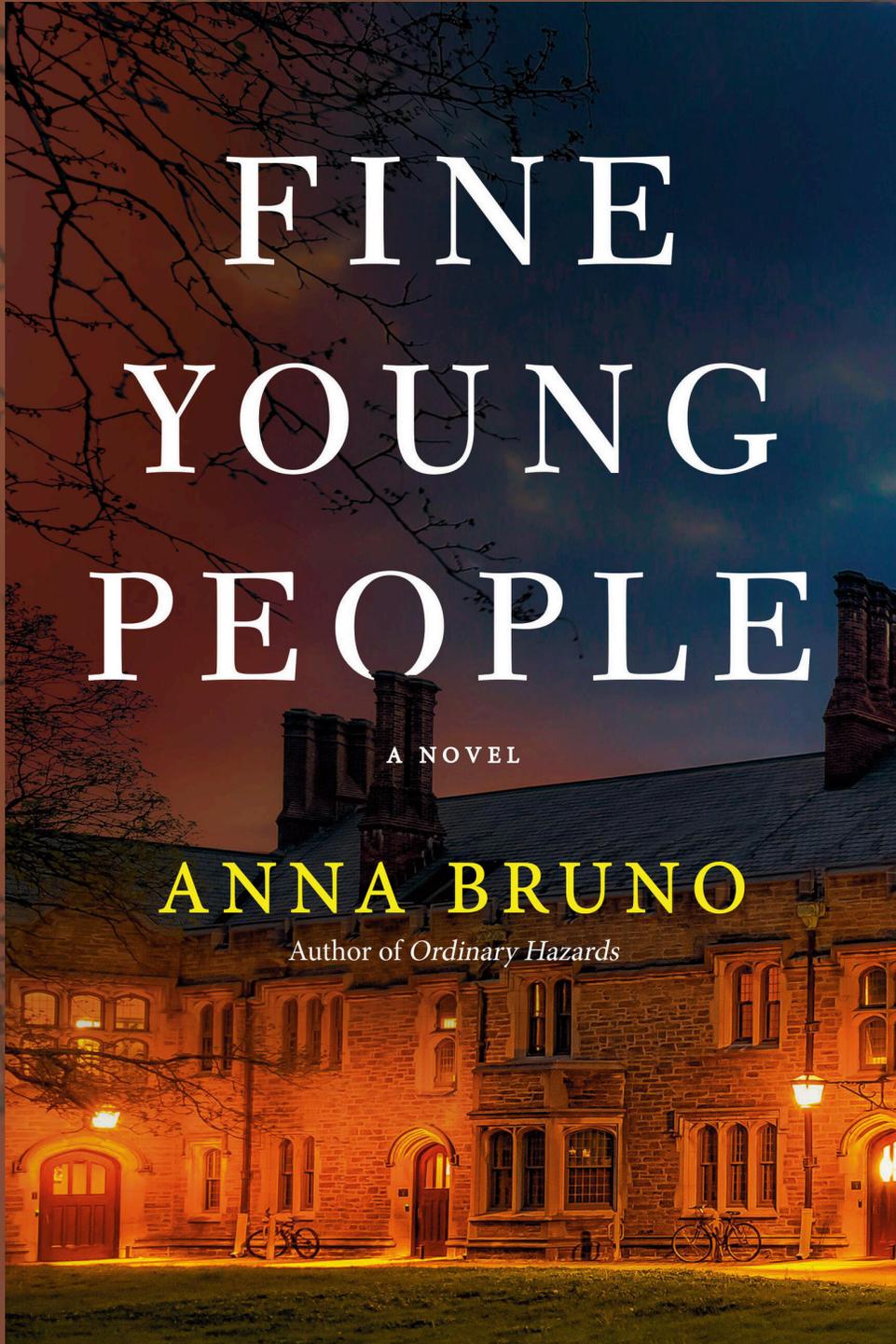
BOOK CLUB KIT

FINE YOUNG PEOPLE

A NOVEL

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Author of *Ordinary Hazards*



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1** The epigraph for the novel is “Who are these gods that govern us? Is there no limit to their powers?” (Arundhati Roy). What secular gods are worshipped in the novel? Do you think their powers have become insidious?
- 2** Campus novels can be a good way to explore some aspect of the broader society. Do you find that the problems at St. Ignatius are a reflection of American life more generally? If so, how?
- 3** What role does sports culture play in the novel? As a whole, is the success of the hockey program beneficial or detrimental to the school?
- 4** What do you make of Frankie and Shiv’s friendship? What do you think brings them together?
- 5** Why does Frankie keep hooking up with Ingo even though she knows he’s messing around with Barbara? Frankie states that her generation is “over boys” (pg 55). Why do you think she is unable to act accordingly?
- 6** Frankie is raised by a single mother who is a high school history teacher. Does the wealth disparity between Frankie and some of her peers matter to her? How do her feelings about wealth and class shift throughout the novel?
- 7** About halfway through *Fine Young People*, Frankie is surprised by a major reveal. She says, “I was overcome with a feeling of transcendence” (pg 147). Describe your reaction to the reveal. Were you as surprised as Frankie, or did you see it coming?
- 8** Many of the characters in the novel could be described as casually Catholic. Some practice, some don’t; some are believers, others are not—but they all grapple with religious inheritance. Did you identify with this exploration of religion? In what ways?
- 9** Throughout the novel, after Frankie talks to Maddie, Vince, and Susanna, readers are dropped into their close third-person POVs. How did these shifts away from Frankie’s first-person narration color your reading experience? How did you feel about switching between Frankie’s and Shiv’s investigation in the present to Woolf’s story in the past?
- 10** When Frankie and Shiv finally title their essay for Community Journalism, they call it “The Body Attacks Itself,” comparing St. Ignatius to an autoimmune disease. Do you agree with this assessment? To what extent should institutions be held accountable for events that occur on their campuses?
- 11** *Fine Young People* takes place at a fictitious prep school in Pittsburgh. If you’re familiar with the city, what aspects of the novel ring true to the community? If you’re unfamiliar with Pittsburgh, what did you learn about the city while reading?
- 12** Towards the end of the novel, Father Michael quotes William James, referring to success as a “bitch-goddess” (pg 265). What is he saying about the ambitions of St. Ignatius students, parents, teachers, and administrators? Do you agree?
- 13** Have you ever had to do a project investigating your city or community? If so, what did you learn?