

BOOK CLUB KIT

ALECSANDRA KAKON

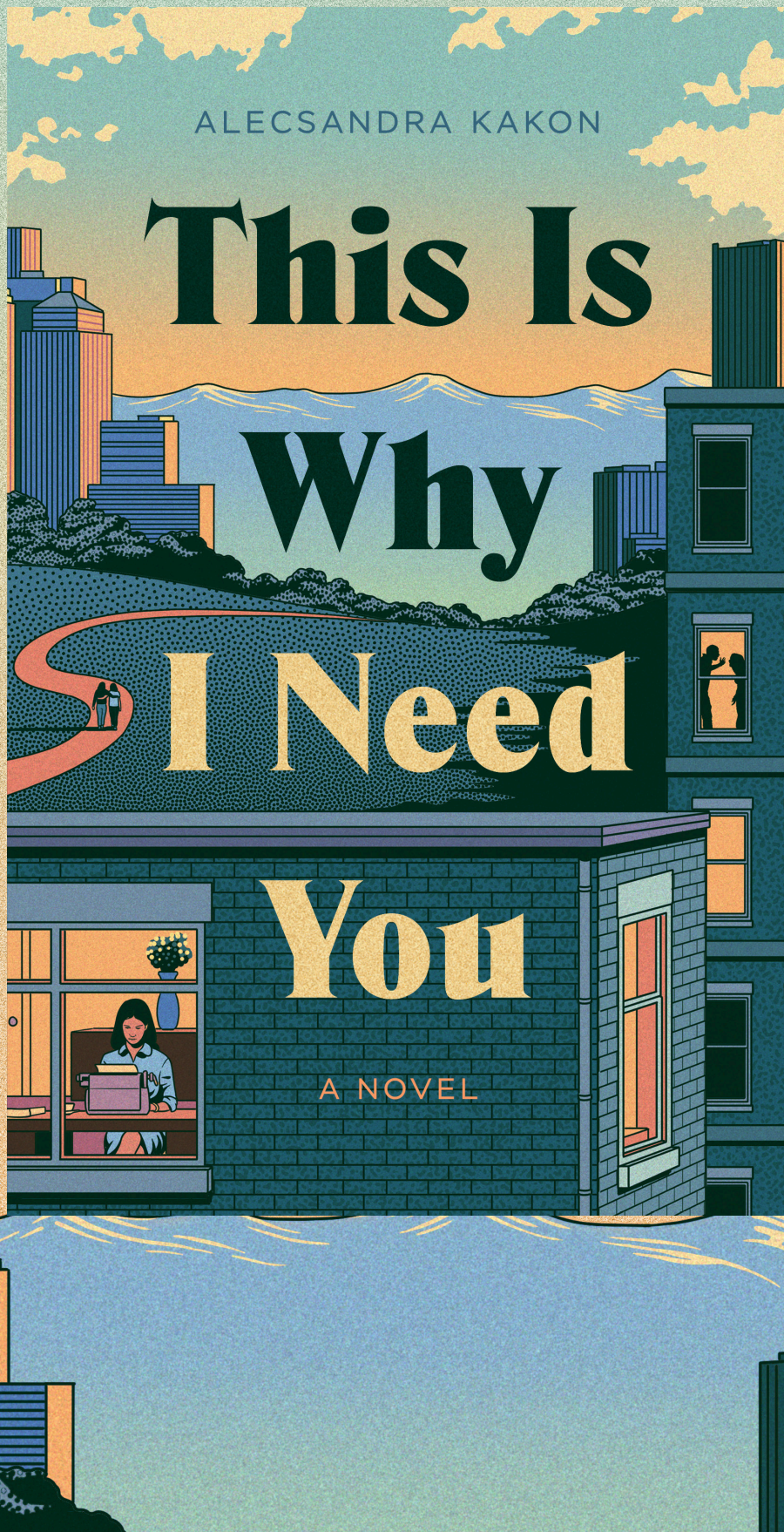
This Is

Why

I Need

You

A NOVEL



“Don’t be sorry. You don’t need to make excuses or diminish how he makes you feel. You can hide your feelings inside to keep the peace, but eventually, they’ll find their way out. So whatever you’re feeling, it’s worth exploring.”

With the promise of nothing but fun in the sun, Zinnia, Fay, Kiara, and Valentina are all geared up to reconnect on their 10th annual girls’ trip that brings them together from all different cities. What they don’t know, however, is that some baggage comes on vacation whether you pack it or not. Their outside lives slowly seep into their seaside getaway, and when the weekend proves to be a series of secrets, snide remarks, and non-stop bickering, tensions escalate. Suddenly they are all forced to wonder: Have they outgrown their childhood friendships?

Shedding light on the power and complications of lifelong friendships, *This Is Why I Need You* questions the choices we make in life that can bring us closer together — or pull us further apart — from people we need most: our friends.

PRAISE

“I can’t wait until *This Is Why I Need You* becomes the next great Canadian love story.”

– ANNE T. DONAHUE, AUTHOR OF *NOBODY CARES*

“The perfect blend of romance and women’s fiction, *This Is Why I Need You* is a heartwarming examination of friendship and forgiveness that’s filled with the kind of multilayered characters that feel like your own lifelong best friends, the kind who remind you that you’re worthy of being loved even when you’re at your messiest.”

– BIANCA MARAIS, USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR AND COHOST ON *THE SHIT NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT WRITING*

““An intimate portrait of female friendship in all its messy, complex, beautiful glory, *This Is Why I Need You* is an unforgettable story full of humor and heart. Aleksandra Kakon writes with uncanny empathy and insight and has created characters who will feel like your best friends by the end of the book. *This Is Why I Need You* is a remarkable debut, and Kakon is a writer to watch.”

– AMY JONES, AUTHOR OF *WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER* AND *PEBBLE & DOVE*

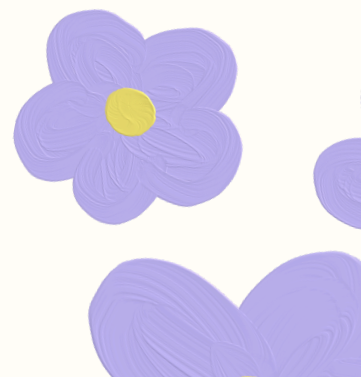
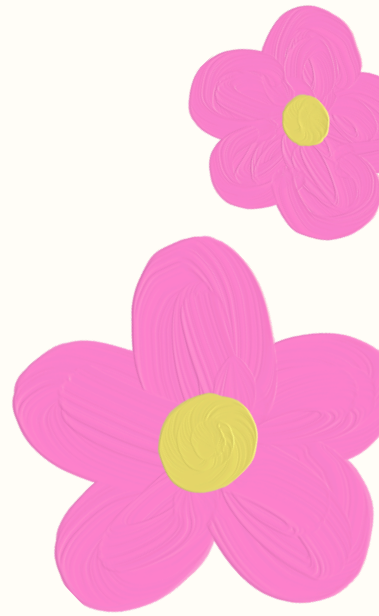


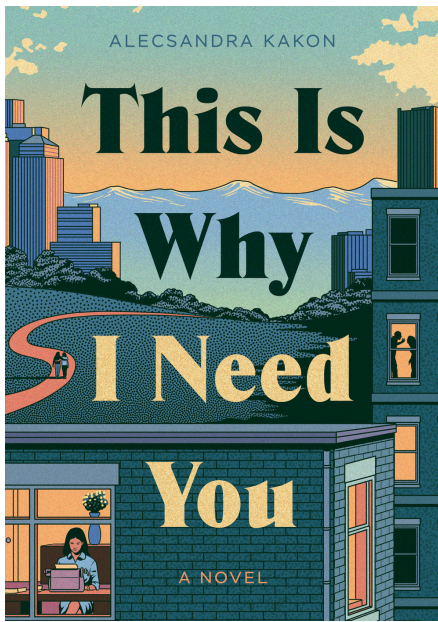
SOUNDTRACK

The Official *This Is Why I Need You* Soundtrack

You know **Fay**, **Kiara**, **Valentina**, and **Zinnia** made an epic playlist for their annual trip. Here's what they're listening to:

1. **YOU CAN CALL ME AL** by Paul Simon
2. **ANTS MARCHING** by Dave Matthews Band
3. **DREAMS** by Fleetwood Mac
4. **BORN IN THE U.S.A** by Bruce Springsteen
5. **I'M STILL STANDING** by Elton John
6. **BOYS** by Lizzo
7. **TEXAS HOLD 'EM** by Beyoncé
8. **NO SCRUBS** by TLC
9. **LOVE THE WAY YOU LIE** by Eminem (ft. Rhianna)
10. **WE ARE YOUNG** by Fun.
11. **BIRDS OF A FEATHER** by Billie Eilish
12. **BRUXELLES JE T'AIME** by Angèle
13. **CONFETTI** by Charlotte Cardin
14. **LE COUP D'SOLEIL** by Bon Entendeur
15. **ADORE YOU** by Harry Styles
16. **ISLAND IN THE SUN** by Weezer
17. **LIKE A PRAYER** by Madonna
18. **FRIDAY I'M IN LOVE** by The Cure
19. **THE LOCO-MOTION** by Kylie Monogue
20. **POISON** by Bell Biv DeVoe





This Is Why I Need You

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Four lifelong friends explore romance, motherhood, sexuality, and loss, forcing them to confront the strength of their bonds and the direction of their lives. Character driven and sharply observed, *This Is Why I Need You* captures the realities of friendships in your 30s.

1 How does the contained vacation setting heighten the tensions between the women?

2 Even though there are history and loyalty, can friendship survive the unspoken?

3 Discuss the sexual awakening storyline. How does it challenge assumptions about identity?

4 Do you believe lifelong friendships require reinvention? Why or why not?

5 If the novel continued five years into the future, where do you imagine each woman?

6 What does the title *This Is Why I Need You* mean to you by the end of the book? Is it healthy to “need” a friend? Why do you think the author chose that word?

7

Fay worries that she wouldn't belong in the friend group if it weren't for her connection to Zinnia. What drives that belief? Is it justified?

8

The characters often hurt each other yet remain deeply connected. What does the novel suggest about the mirrors that friendships hold up for us?

9

How do the arcs of regret, reconciliation, and reflection resonate with your own experiences of friendship or life transitions?

10

Discuss how Frankie and Wren bring out different versions of Kiara.

11

Valentina and Zinnia are both in relationships that make them feel trapped. Discuss the similarities and differences between Valentina and Jack versus Zinnia and Adam.

12

Reflect on your childhood friendships — how they shaped you, supported you, or perhaps held you back, and how they have evolved over time. Do you still have the same friends from childhood? If so, are they the same people they were ten years ago?

Dear Reader,

Why do we need friends?

That was my point of departure when I first started writing. I thought up four characters and a conflict and went from there.

Friendships, like all relationships, are a place of self-discovery. Friends round each other out, complement one another. They intertwine, get tangled up, mirror one another, and eventually, blur together. One person's problems spill over onto the other, we project, we resent, we compare. That isn't a sign of a bad or "toxic" friendship; it's a sign that the friendship needs to be examined. Decipher what belongs to whom. I set Val, Kiara, Fay, and Zinnia up with enough history to weave them together — wins, losses, issues, dreams — so as to explore the concept of need. I wanted to understand each of them as individuals and as a group in order to know if their friendship was worth saving. Should they abandon their friendships and find ones that reflect the women they've become? Or should they reflect upon their needs and find a way back to their friendship in a new way?

I think the word "need" gets a bad rap. But I contend that we all need each other in some capacity, and more so, we need to feel needed, and that's a beautiful thing that we should not only accept but cherish. The relationality of our existence — the gift of having a true friend show up for you when you need them and being a true friend who shows up when needed — is where we find connection, belonging, and deep, enduring love.

Friends by choice, not history. That's why Val, Kiara, Fay, and Zinnia's friendship was worth saving. Because they took the time to calibrate, to recognize what support looks like, how to give and receive it.

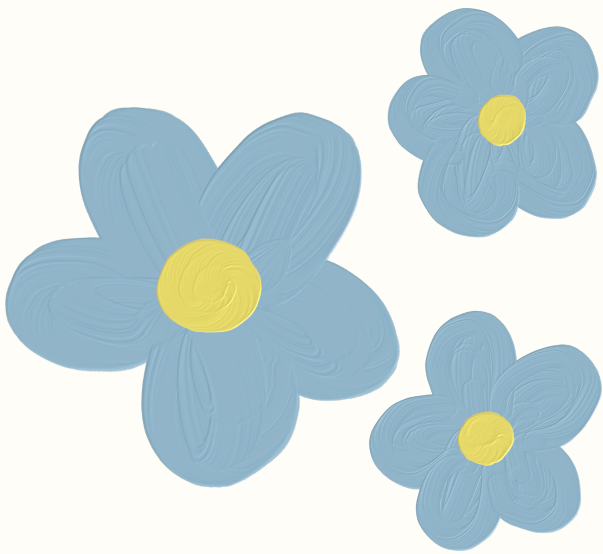
That's true romance.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Kakon





Are you a Fay, Kiara, Zinnia, or Valentina?

1. **You 're looking for a new outfit, what store are you most likely to visit?**

- a. Abercrombie or American Eagle
- b. Anthropologie
- c. Aritzia or Sezane
- d. A vintage shop

2. **What are you reading right now?**

- a. A romcom
- b. You're more likely to be reading an article on substack than a book
- c. Probably one of the classics
- d. Literary fiction

3. **What word would your best friend use to describe you?**

- a. Competitive
- b. Intuitive
- c. Analytical
- d. Romantic

4. **What's your favourite food?**

- a. Grilled cheese or poutine
- b. Salad or some kind of organic bowl
- c. Dessert, you have a huge sweet tooth
- d. Sushi or poke

5. **It's Friday night, what movie are you watching?**

- a. *Miss Congeniality*
- b. *Funny Face*
- c. *Bridget Jones's Diary*
- d. *The Breakfast Club*

6. **You grab your bag on the way out the door, what is it?**

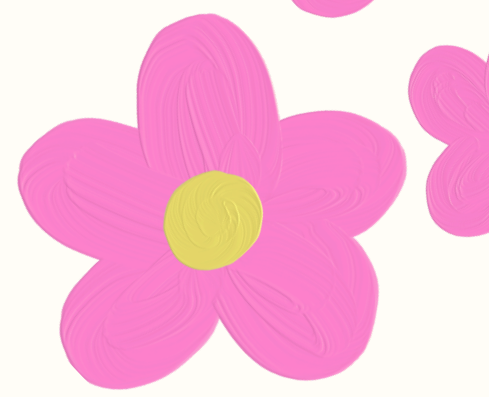
- a. An oversized tote
- b. A crochet market bag
- c. A classic brand name designer bag
- d. Leather fanny pack

7. **What's your sign?**

- a. Fire
- b. Air
- c. Earth
- d. Water

Mostly As: You're a Kiara

Kiara has always been the loudest laugh in the room and the first one on the dance floor. She feels everything in her body – joy, rage, love – and she refuses to apologize for any of it. Fiercely loyal and instinctively maternal, she is the friend who shows up with wine, bail money, or a plane ticket before you've even asked.



Mostly Bs: You're a Zinnia

Zinnia moves like wind – light, intuitive, impossible to contain. She is free spirited, sweet and go with the flow. She's a lover not a fighter and is always fiercely and truly herself.

Mostly Cs: You're a Valentina

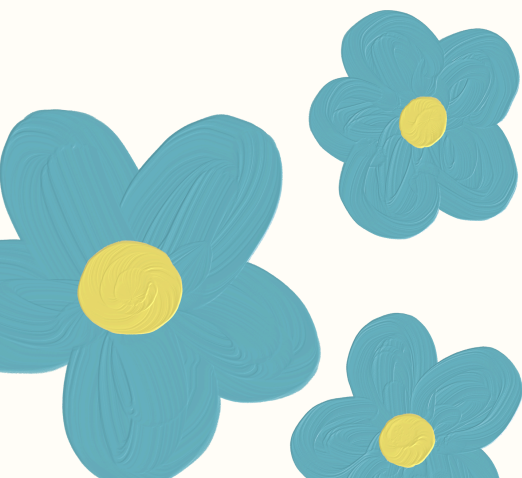
A writer at heart, Valentina dissects emotion the way others experience it – carefully, analytically, searching for structure beneath the chaos.

Raised inside her father's fashion empire, she understands legacy, expectation, and the quiet weight of destiny.



Mostly Ds: You're a Fay

Fay is an artist, cynical and raw – she is unfiltered and doesn't show vulnerability (despite being highly sensitive!). She has extremely strong moral convictions, is loyal to a fault, and loves to romanticize life.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alecsandra Kakon is an English Literature professor at Concordia University and Dawson College. She holds an MA in Hispanic Literature and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. Alongside her academic pursuits, she published *My Profile Projects*, an online series of personal essays that tell the collective memoir of 52 womxn. Alecs lives in Montreal with her three incredible children, Azalea, Ivy, and Brighton.

