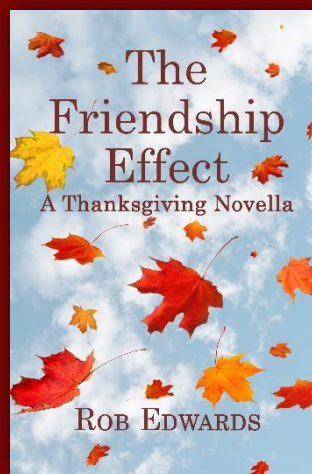


BOOK CLUB READERS GUIDE

The Friendship Effect:

A Thanksgiving Novella
by Rob Edwards



The story explores how unexpected, brief connections can alter the course of a lifetime. The narrative centers on Ken Pritchard, a successful bank CEO who looks back on his elementary school days—specifically a pivotal intervention by his school principal that transformed his relationship with his former bully, Bobby Booker, into a foundational friendship. Set against the reflective backdrop of Thanksgiving, the novella highlights the power of empathy, second chances, and the lasting ripple effects of small acts of kindness.

Character & Theme Cheat Sheet

- **Ken Pritchard:** A bank CEO whose reflective journey uncovers how a childhood dynamic shaped his adult perspective and success.
 - **Bobby Booker:** Ken's former childhood bully whose life trajectory shifts following a key intervention.
 - **Mr. Fenstamaker:** The school principle whose perceptive and thoughtful mediation alters the course of both boy's lives.
 - **Core Themes:** Redemptive power of empathy, short-term relationships with long-term impacts, perspective shift over time, and gratitude.
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Discussion Questions

Opening Impressions

- How does the Thanksgiving backdrop influence the tone and reflective nature of Ken's story?

- Did your perception of Bobby Booker change as Ken's memories unfolded, or were you skeptical of his transformation throughout the story?

Character Dynamics & Conflict

- What role did the school principal play beyond basic discipline? How effectively do you think real-life adult intervention shapes childhood conflicts today?
- In what ways did Ken's adult status as a bank CEO contrast with his childhood vulnerabilities? How did his success tie back to the lessons learned from Bobby?

Thematic Reflection & Real-World Application

- The novella suggests that even short-term or childhood relationships can leave a lifelong imprint. Has a brief interaction or temporary friendship altered your life's direction?
- Is empathy something that can be taught through structured intervention, as seen in the story, or does it require a personal crisis to develop?
- How does the book define "The Friendship Effect"? Do you agree with its premise that former adversaries can form genuine bonds?

Craft & Closing

- How did the novella structure—moving between present-day reflection and past memory—impact the pacing and emotional resonance of the story?
- What message about forgiveness and gratitude do you think the author wants readers to take away heading into the holiday season?

Further Exploration

- Have each member share a memory of a brief acquaintance or mentor who had an outsized impact on their character or career path.