



Best Book Club

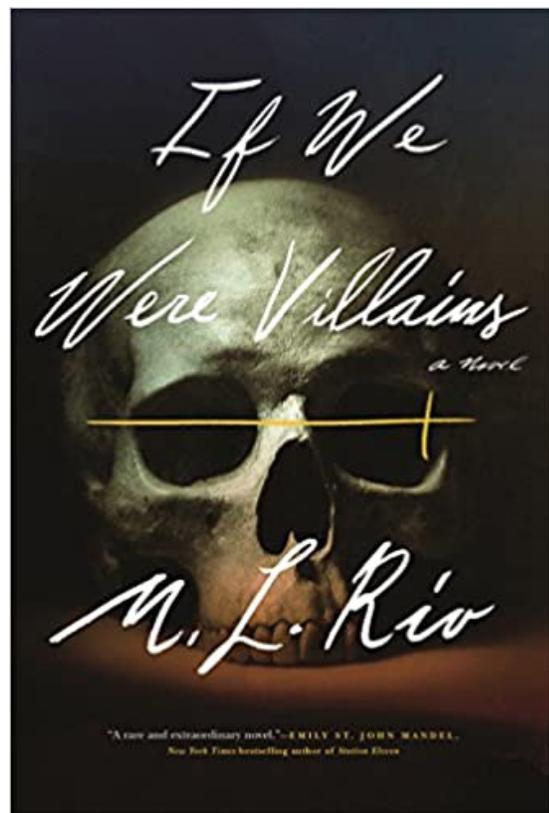
Where We Talk About All Things Books and Book Club

Author Bio- M.L. Rio

M.L Rio was born in Miami but raised in North Carolina. She holds an MA in Shakespeare studies from King's College London and Shakespeare's Globe, and she is currently pursuing her PhD in early modern English literature at the University of Maryland. She has been writing stories ever since she was a small child but also loves music and acting and has played many Shakespearean roles over the years. *If We Were Villains* was her debut novel and so far her only book.

Synopsis

Oliver Marks has just served ten years in jail - for a murder he may or may not have committed. On the day he's released, he's greeted by the man who put him in prison. Detective Colborne is retiring, but before he does, he wants to know what really happened a decade ago. As one of seven young actors studying Shakespeare at an elite arts college, Oliver and his friends play the same roles onstage and off: hero, villain, tyrant, temptress, ingenue, extra. But when the casting changes, and the secondary characters usurp the stars, the plays spill dangerously over into life, and one of them is found dead. The rest face their greatest acting challenge yet: convincing the police, and themselves, that they are blameless.



Discussion Questions

1. The story is told entirely from Oliver's point of view. What did you think of this choice of narrator?
2. Often, the characters speak to each other using Shakespearean language and direct quotes from his works. How did this impact your enjoyment of the story? Do you think that it affected the way each character acted and reacted in situations?
3. The book is structured in Acts and scenes instead of parts and chapters and the characters were written to represent common archetypes. Do you think that this style of writing was imperative to the story and did you enjoy it?
4. How did you feel about James and Oliver's relationship?
5. Were you able to guess who killed Richard before the truth was revealed?
6. The end is left intentionally ambiguous. What do you think happened and did you like the ending?
7. Are you a fan of dark academia and if so, does this book stand up to the others that you've read?

General Questions

1. Did you race to the end, or was it more of a slow burn?
2. What did you think of the writing overall? Were there any standout sentences?
3. Which was your favorite part? What about your least favorite?
4. Did reading the book impact your mood? If yes, how so?