

Reading & Reflection Guide to

REFLECTIONS  
BENEATH THE  
BUCKEYE  
TREES

NOTES FROM A LIFE



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## **COMPANION & TEACHING GUIDE**

by

Antwone Fisher

## A NOTE TO THE READER

These reflections were not written as lessons—but they carry lessons.

They came in quiet moments, in memory, in the spaces  
between what happened and what stayed with me.  
Some are  
gentle. Some are heavy. All of them are true.

You don't have to rush through this book.  
You don't have to understand everything at once.

If something speaks to you, sit with it.

That's enough.

# HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Reflections Beneath the Buckeye Trees isn't meant to be read straight through like a traditional story.

You can come to it in your own way:

- Open to any page
- Read one reflection at a time
- Return to the ones that stay with you

There is no single path through this book.

The experience is personal.

Let the reflections meet you where you are.

# THEMES IN THIS BOOK

The reflections in this book move through a number of shared experiences—things many of us carry in different ways.

Questions of identity. Memory. Forgiveness. Survival.

Love. And the sense of where we come from, and where we belong.

## IDENTITY

Many of these reflections explore the question of who we are—  
not just by name, but by experience.

Identity is shaped by where we come from,  
what we've been through,  
and how we choose to understand it.

Sometimes identity is something we're told.  
Sometimes it's something we discover.  
And sometimes, it's something we reclaim.

## SURVIVAL

Survival shows up in different ways.

Sometimes it's physical—  
finding a place to stay, a way to eat, a way to keep  
going.

Other times it's emotional—  
holding on to yourself when everything around you  
feels uncertain.

These reflections don't always speak about survival  
directly,  
but it's there—in the choices, in the endurance,  
and in the quiet decision to keep moving forward.

## FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is not simple.

It doesn't always come quickly,  
and it doesn't always come all at once.

Some reflections speak to the process of letting go  
—  
of anger, of hurt, of what should have been.

Forgiveness doesn't erase the past,

but it can change how we carry it.

## BELONGING

The search for belonging appears throughout these pages.

Sometimes it is found in people.

Sometimes in place.

Sometimes only within oneself.

Belonging is not always given.

It is often something we grow into—

or recognize after we've come through something.

# DISCUSS & REFLECTIONS

## Glenville

- What role does place play in shaping who we become?
- How does memory preserve what time cannot?

## A Night on the Street

- How does fear shape the way a moment is experienced?
- What does survival look like here—beyond the physical?

## Valencia

- How is love expressed in quiet or unexpected ways?
- What does this reflection reveal about protection and connection?

## What Forgiveness Gave Me

- What does forgiveness ask of a person?
- How does forgiveness change the one who offers it?

## **DISCUSSION**

- What does “home” mean in this book?
- How does memory shape identity?
- Where do you see moments of change or growth?
- What emotions stayed with you after reading certain reflections?
- What truths are spoken here that are often left unsaid?

# WRITING PROMPTS

Use these prompts to engage more deeply with your own experiences.

- Write about a place that shaped who you are.
- Describe a moment when you felt unseen or misunderstood.
- Write a letter to your younger self.
- Reflect on a time when forgiveness changed you.
- Describe a memory that has stayed with you over the years.

# FOR CLASSROOM USE

This guide is designed for:

- High school classrooms (upper grades)
- College and university courses
- Book clubs and reading groups
- Community and faith-based discussions

The reflections encourage:

- Personal connection
- Critical thinking
- Open conversation
- Creative expression

There is no single interpretation—only honest engagement.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antwone Fisher is a writer, speaker, and former U.S. Navy serviceman.

He is the author of the memoir *Finding Fish* and the screenplay for the film *Antwone Fisher*. His work is known for its honesty, emotional depth, and commitment to truth.

*Reflections Beneath the Buckeye Trees: Notes from a Life* continues that tradition—offering a collection of lived moments shaped by memory, resilience, and love.

## **CLOSING NOTE**

If something in these pages stayed with you,  
then it has done its work.

Take what you need.  
Leave with what matters.

And carry it forward.



This companion guide was created to deepen the  
experience of  
\*Reflections Beneath the Buckeye Trees: Notes  
from a Life.\*

It is designed for classrooms, book clubs, and  
individual readers  
who wish to engage more personally with the  
themes of memory,  
identity, resilience, and forgiveness.

Use this guide as a starting point for  
conversation, reflection,  
and creative exploration.

There is no single interpretation—only honest  
engagement.

Download this guide and additional resources:  
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