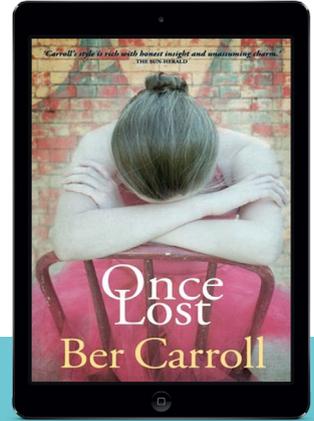


Reader Discussion Points for
Once Lost by Ber Carroll
#togetherweread



7-21 September, 2017

- 1** We live in a society that has resources at its fingertips, answers at the click of a button. As result, it can be argued that we aren't very used to things being grey or unresolved. Do you believe that it is particularly difficult for our generation to deal with ambiguity?
- 2** By the end of the novel, we have a more sympathetic view of Jamie and his personal tragedy: how the boy who wanted to be an architect became a drug addict instead. There is no doubt that Jamie loves his daughter, but there's no doubt either that she is at risk from him: the potential to relapse will always be there and she will not be safe if this happens. Do you think Jamie deserves another chance with Isla? How do you feel about custodial arrangements when one parent cannot be fully trusted or relied upon?
- 3** As a society, we have progressed hugely in our attitude to mental illness. We have improved both public education and patient treatment programs, and made great strides in reducing the social stigma. But when mental illness drives someone to acts of the utmost cruelty, the act immediately overshadows the illness and our attitudes regress. Louise's mother has left a trail of destruction and broken lives. If you were in Louise's shoes, having been callously abandoned at such a young age, do you think you could find understanding (and forgiveness) in your heart?
- 4** Both Louise and Emma and Louise were rebellious teenagers, and there have been lifelong consequences as result. Is there anything you did as a teenager that you wish you could undo? Are there any specific decisions or actions or relationships that set you on the wrong path?
- 5** In a certain percentage of missing person cases, there are no clues, no reasons and no resolution. The families find themselves vacillating between feelings of confusion, hurt, anger, hope, fear and regret, a horrible merry-go-round that will continue on and on, with no end in sight. For their sanity and future quality of life, do you believe there comes a time when a line should be drawn, a point after which they should look forward instead of back?