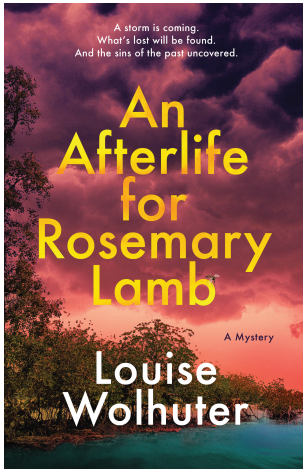


BOOK CLUB NOTES



An Afterlife for Rosemary Lamb

Louise Wolhuter

Jessie Else disappeared the summer the Lambs came to Magpie Beach. Not that the two events were connected at all, in reality; only in my own head, in my own world. They marked for me the end of a certain quiet time and the start of a more complicated living.

Magpie Beach is a quiet seaside town, full of small-town prejudices and small-town cliques. Meg, Rosemary and Lily are all outsiders. Meg and Lily because they came to Magpie Beach to escape their former lives, Rosemary because her upbringing was the subject of much local gossip and upturned noses. The three women come together as friends, partly because their homes are so close together on the outskirts of town – and partly because their neighbours treat them with such suspicion.

When Jessie Else, all of 9 years old, goes missing – it's easy to see why this small band of outcasts are first on the list of suspects – but what they didn't realise is that Jessie's disappearance is only the beginning of their troubles. Soon all those secrets they've been trying to hide are going to be uncovered – and nothing will ever be the same again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Meg, Lily and Rosemary are an unlikely trio who become friends. What do you think the author was trying to say about friendship by bringing three seemingly disparate characters together?

Magpie Beach is described as a small community that feels quite claustrophobic, what is the appeal of small towns when creating a story, and what do you think is the message about small towns, good and bad?

Much of the story revolves around a tight knit community and those who might go unnoticed. What do you think the motive was in focussing on the forgotten members of society?

As each of our three characters is a different age and from a different background, what do you think the beauty and benefits are to friendships that bridge generations and class?

Returning to the idea of characters who might go unnoticed in society, what is the message the author is trying to convey about the first impressions we might have of those we meet? How does it make you reflect on your own response to first impressions?

Each of our characters finds themselves at a point in their life when they are responding to a stage of grief or existential conflict. Do you think the characters responded to their own concerns in a believable fashion? If so/if not, why?

As our society continues to focus on what is seen to be 'different to normal' – do you think the novel effectively portrays how people can be sidelined for not conforming?