



[The mother]

By Jane Caro

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Genre and Subject

Widows -- Fiction

Mothers and daughters -- Fiction

Family violence -- Fiction

Australian fiction

Psychological fiction

Thrillers (Fiction)

Synopsis

Recently widowed, Miriam Duffy is a respectable North Shore real estate agent and devoted mother and grandmother. She was thrilled when her younger daughter Ally married her true love, but as time goes by Miriam wonders whether all is well with Ally, as she moves to the country and gradually withdraws, finding excuses every time Miriam offers to visit. Their relationship has always had its ups and downs, and Miriam tries to give her daughter the distance she so clearly wants. But is all as it seems? When the truth of her daughter's situation is revealed, Miriam watches in disbelief as Ally and her children find themselves increasingly vulnerable and cut off from the world. As the situation escalates and the law proves incapable of protecting them, Miriam is faced with an unthinkable decision.

Author Biography

Jane Caro wears many hats; including author, lecturer, mentor, social commentator, columnist, workshop facilitator, speaker, broadcaster and award-winning advertising writer. Jane runs her own communications consultancy and lectures in Advertising Creative at The School of Communication Arts at UWS. She has published three books: *The Stupid Country: How Australia is dismantling public education* co-authored with Chris Bonnor (2007), *The F Word. How we learned to swear by feminism* co-authored with Catherine Fox (2008), and *Just a Girl* (UQP, 2011). She has also appeared on Channel 7's *Sunrise*, ABC's *Q&A* and ABC's *The Gruen Transfer*.

Discussion Starters

1. What was your favourite part of the book?
2. What was your least favourite?
3. Did you race to the end, or was it more of a slow burn?
4. What did you think of the writing? What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that states the book's thematic concerns?
5. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
6. Describe the main characters—personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities.
 - Why do characters do what they do?
 - Are their actions justified?
 - Describe the dynamics between characters (in a marriage, family, or friendship).
 - How has the past shaped their lives?
 - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
 - Do they remind you of people you know?
7. Are the main characters dynamic—changing or maturing by the end of the book? Do they learn about themselves, how the world works and their role in it?
8. What surprised you most about the book?
9. How did your opinion of the book change as you read it?
10. Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world? Do you think you'll remember it in a few months or years?
11. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask? Have you read other books by the same author? If so how does this book compare. If not, does this book inspire you to read others? How does the book's title work in relation to the book's contents? If you could give the book a new title, what would it be?
12. Is this book overrated or underrated?
13. Did this book remind you of any other books?
14. Would you ever consider re-reading it? Why or why not?
15. Are there lingering questions from the book you're still thinking about?
16. Did the book strike you as original?
17. Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?

If you liked this book, you may also like...

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- *The cane by Maryrose Cuskelly*