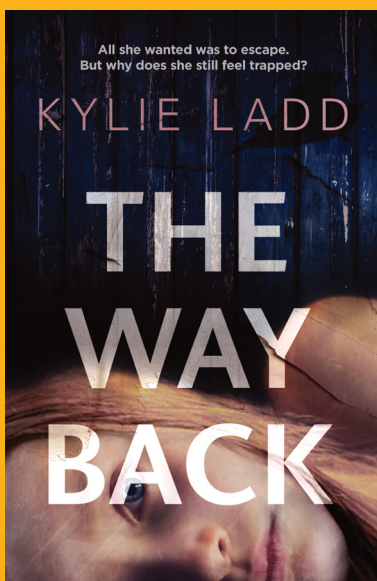




ALLEN & UNWIN'S
Book Group Guide
Conversation Starters



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About the book

All she wanted was to escape. But why does she still feel trapped? A gripping psychological drama by the author of *Mothers and Daughters* and *Into My Arms*.

Charlie Johnson is 13 and in her first year of high school. She loves her family, netball and Liam, the cute guy who sits next to her in Science—but most of all she loves horses and horse-riding. Charlie’s parents have leased her a horse, Tic Tac, from the local pony club, but one day they go out for a ride in the national park and only Tic Tac returns...

Four months later, long after the police and the SES have called off the search, Charlie is found wandering injured and filthy, miles from where she was last seen. Her family rejoice in her return, but can anyone truly recover from what Charlie’s been through? When a life has been shattered, how do you put the pieces back together?

A moving, haunting and all-too-real novel that takes you beyond the headlines and explores a family’s worst nightmare with compassion and insight.

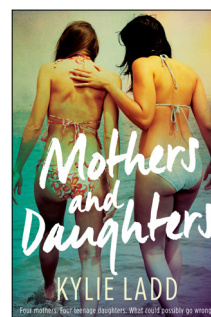
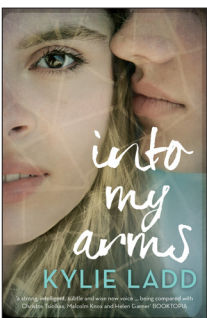
About the author



Kylie Ladd is a novelist and freelance writer. She has published four novels: *After the Fall*, *Last Summer*, which was highly commended in the FAW Christina Stead Award for fiction, *Into My Arms*, chosen as one of Get Reading’s ‘50 books you can’t put down’ for 2013, and *Mothers and Daughters*.

Kylie holds a PhD in neuropsychology and lives in Melbourne with her husband and two children.

Also by Kylie Ladd



Conversation Starters

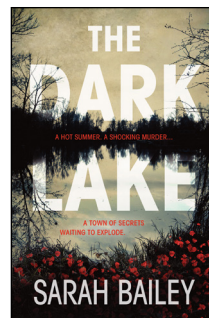
- *The Way Back* is written in three parts: Before, During and After. When you first met Charlie what were your impressions of her? How did these change as you read through each section of the book?
- How do you think the family dynamics and roles of Rachael, Matt, Dan and Charlie change throughout the book?
- When Charlie confronts Col in the hospital, why do you think she tells him about Blue?
- On page 294, Dr Shriver asks Charlie '*Let's talk about the future then, Charlie, instead of the past. What do you want?*' What did you think of Charlie's response? Discuss her three things.
- Throughout the book, Hannah takes on many roles. What do you see as her key role in *The Way Back*?
- What was your impression of Terry? Did that change after his emotional response to Charlie's return?
- When you first started reading *The Way Back*, what did you think was going to happen at the end of the novel? How did the actual ending compare to your prediction?

If you liked this book...

May we suggest the following:

[*The Dark Lake*](#) by Sarah Bailey

A hot summer. A shocking murder. A town of secrets, waiting to explode. A brooding and explosive debut that will grip you from the first page to the last.



[*Forgotten*](#) by Nicole Trope

In a single day, a simple mistake will have life-altering consequences for everyone involved. A haunting family drama shot through with emotion and suspense.



[*Where I Lost Her*](#) by T. Greenwood

How far would you go to save a child? *Where I Lost Her* follows one woman's journey through heartbreak and loss, as she searches for the truth about a missing little girl.

[*The Natural Way of Things*](#) by Charlotte Wood

Two women awaken from a drugged sleep to find themselves imprisoned in an abandoned property in the middle of a desert in a story of two friends, sisterly love and courage — a compelling, starkly imaginative exploration of contemporary misogyny and corporate control, and of what it means to hunt and be hunted.



The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

The Lovely Bones is a luminous and astonishing novel about life and death, forgiveness and vengeance, memory and forgetting – but, above all, about finding light in the darkest of places.

