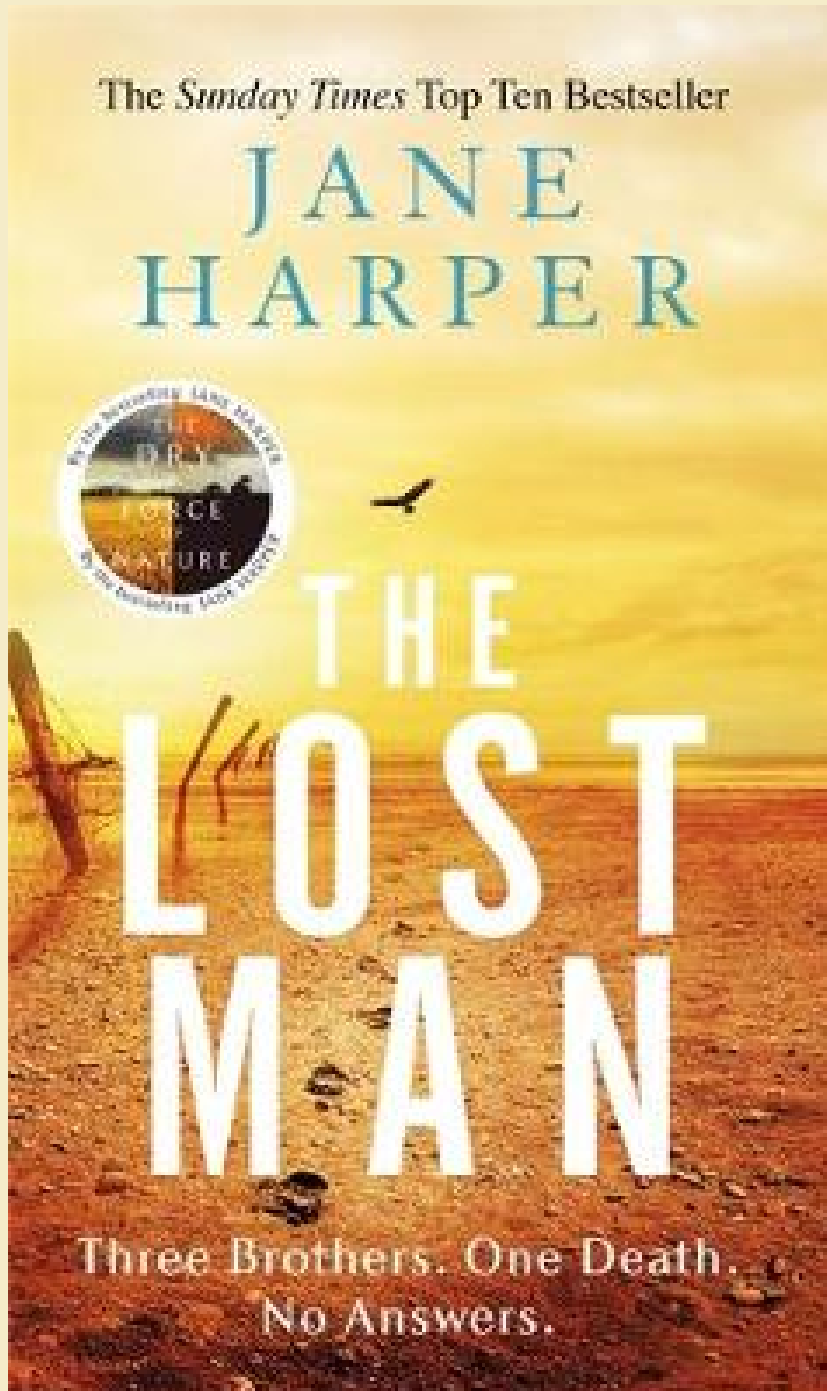




Meath County Council Library Service Book Club Kit



www.meath.ie/council/council-services/libraries/book-club-kits





Notes To Readers

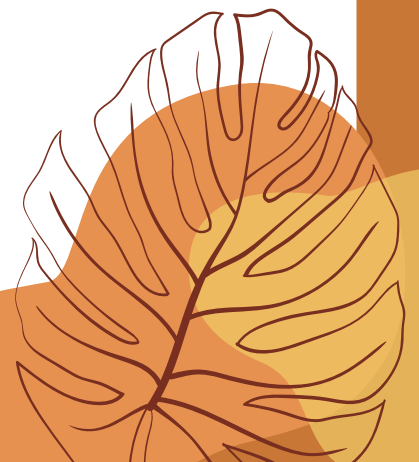


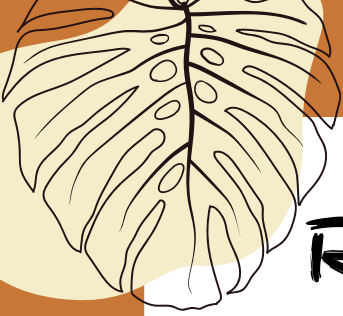
Spoiler warnings

This kit was created for book clubs to use in their discussions of *The Lost Man* and contains spoilers

Contents Warnings

Please be aware that *The Lost Man* contains content that may be triggering including sexual assault, physical and psychological abuse, death by suicide, and abortion.





Reading Group Discussion Questions

Did you like the pacing of this book? Too fast, too slow, or just right?

Life in the Australian Outback can be pretty harsh – drought, dangerous animals, floods, isolation, fire, etc. Did you learn anything new about Australia from this book? What? Would you want to live in the Outback?

Sheer distance and isolation impacts the way crimes are responded to and investigated in the Outback. What effect did the lack of police and medical support have on the outcomes for Cameron Bright? Jenna Moore? The Bright children/family, in general?

Nathan, Cameron and Bub all suffered from their father's domestic violence, but they have dealt with that abuse in very different ways. What effect has that abuse had on each of the brothers? What are some of their different coping mechanisms?

Which of them do you think has been the most successful at dealing with this traumatic childhood, and why?

Nathan was basically shunned for the crime of not stopping for Keith, his ex-father-in-law, when he was on the side of the road. Why did the community do that? Was the punishment worth the crime?

Why do you think Cameron would not give Bub part of his inheritance so that Bub could leave and become a roo/dingo shooter like he wanted?





In spite of the family's persistently low expectations of Bub, he is the most perceptive about Cameron. In what other ways is Bub underestimated in the novel?

Did your feelings for Cameron change throughout the book? If so, why and how?

In spite of the influence Cameron had on those around him, all the characters in the novel benefit in some way from his death. In what ways are they now better off? Do you think this justifies Cameron's death in any way?

Harper has said she is interested in communities where people have known each other—for better or for worse—their entire lives. How does this affect personal relationships? What are the positives and negatives of a small community?

What purpose did all the different iterations of the Stockman's Grave tale have to the plot of the book?

Who was the villain of the book? Why?

What do you think about Nathan's decision not to tell anyone what he has discovered?

Did everyone "get what they deserved" by the end of the book? Was the ending satisfactory?

Harper has written a couple of other books. Will you read them?





About Jane Harper




Jane was born in Manchester in the UK, and moved to Australia with her family at age eight. She spent six years in Boronia, Victoria, and during that time gained Australian citizenship. Returning to the UK with her family as a teenager, she lived in Hampshire before studying English and History at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

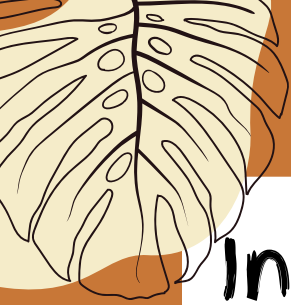
On graduating, she completed a journalism entry qualification and got her first reporting job as a trainee on the Darlington & Stockton Times in County Durham.

Jane worked for several years as a senior news journalist for the Hull Daily Mail, before moving back to Australia in 2008.

She worked first on the Geelong Advertiser, and in 2011 took up a business reporting role in Melbourne. In 2014, Jane submitted a short story which was one of 12 chosen for the Big Issue's annual Fiction Edition. That inspired her to pursue creative writing more seriously, breaking through with *The Dry* at the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards in 2015.

Jane lives in bayside Melbourne with her husband and their two children.





Interview with Jane Harper

Give me a recap of your journey. How did you get to where you are now?

I'd been working as a full-time newspaper journalist for 13 years when I started writing my first novel, *The Dry*. I had wanted to write a novel ever since I was a kid, but it seemed such a huge undertaking that I'd really never known where to even start. In 2014, I enrolled in a 12-week online writing course and that gave me the motivation to get the first few chapters down on paper. As a journalist I work well to deadlines, so I then continued working on my novel with the aim of finishing it in time to enter an unpublished manuscript competition held in my state every year. I was just hoping I might get some feedback from the judges about whether it was worth continuing work on the manuscript, but instead I actually won the competition. I still remember that as such an exciting moment. I immediately had people from across the industry contacting me and asking to read my novel, and from there I got my agent and then publishers.

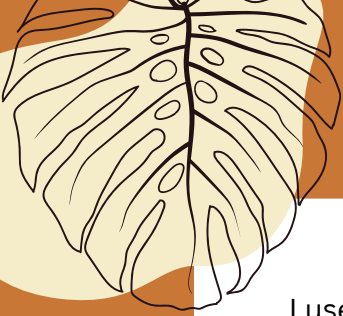
Do you write every day?

I don't, but there are long stretches when I will write daily. It depends where I am in the process, but even when I'm actively working on a novel, I think it's so important to have thinking and planning days. Those days are always time well spent because it makes the actual writing so much smoother.

When you are working, do you aim for a daily word count? Or maybe you aim for a certain amount of time? How do you know when your work day is done?

I'm a big planner, so I always have a detailed plan drawn up before I start actually writing the novel. It means I know what's ahead work-wise in the coming weeks or months and I can break it up into manageable chunks – it doesn't have to be a whole chapter, it could just be a single scene or conversation if necessary. I have an idea at the start of the week what I'd like to get through each day and where I'd like to be by the end of that week.





What are the tools of your trade?

I use my phone to make notes during my thinking and planning time – it's very handy for those middle-of-the-night lightning strikes. I transfer all those notes to my desktop computer in my office, and that's where I do all the actual writing. Having worked for so many years in a newsroom, I'm pretty comfortable typing thousands of words into a desktop computer, so I've never really considered doing it another way.

When do you write?

I have two children, aged three and six, so my writing days are largely dictated by their schedules. My husband does a lot of the childcare in our household so I have the time to write, but it's still a juggling act. I usually get about six hours of writing time during the day when they are both at school or day-care. I try to make those hours really count.

Do you outline your novels? Just dive straight in? Or do some combination of the two?

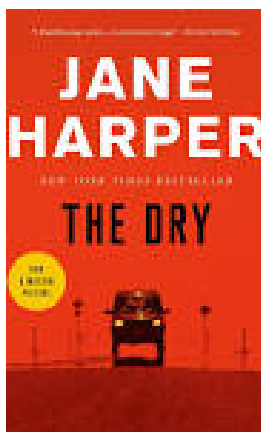
I know planning isn't for everyone, but I personally swear by it. I spend more time thinking and planning a novel than I do actually writing it, and my plans for a 100k-word novel generally run to about 40k. When I start to think about a new book, my thoughts are centred around the ending, rather than the start. What appears to have happened in this novel, and what has really happened? I build out the idea from there, working out the setting and which characters I need to tell the story. I start with a skeleton outline of the beginning, middle and end and then continue building on that until eventually I have a chapter-by-chapter plan. I can understand some authors feel that limits their creativity, but I find it allows me to be more creative because I get to try out different ideas without committing to writing thousands of words to test them out.

What does your revision process look like?

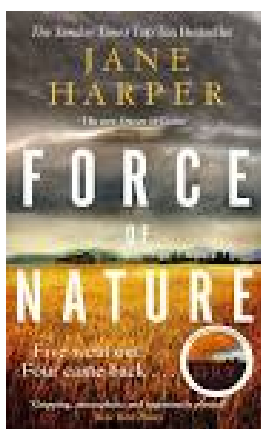
I tend to revise and fix a lot of the problems during the planning stages, so by the time I'm writing a full scene into a draft, I'm pretty sure it's the right scene and it's going to end up in the finished novel. I find it easier to work alone, so I don't discuss the book with anyone or share chapters while I'm writing. About a month before the manuscript is due to be sent to my editors for their first look, I print out the whole thing and make corrections on paper. It feels fresher that way and I can see things I tend to miss on screen.



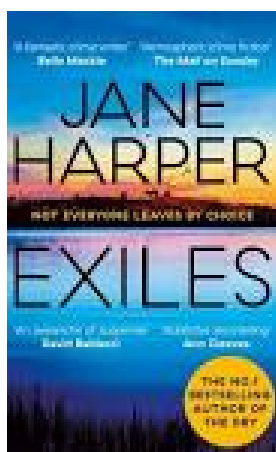
More from Jane Harper



Federal Police agent Aaron Falk returns to the struggling farming community of Kiewarra for the funeral of his childhood best friend, Luke Hadler. Severe drought has put the town under extreme pressure and the community is shocked but not surprised when the Hadler family is found dead in their farmhouse.



Federal Police Agent Aaron Falk has a keen interest in the whereabouts of the missing hiker. In an investigation that takes him deep into isolated forest, Falk discovers secrets lurking in the mountains, and a tangled web of personal and professional friendship, suspicion, and betrayal among the hikers.



At a busy festival site on a warm spring night, a baby lies alone in her pram, her mother vanishing into the crowds. A year on, Kim Gillespie's absence casts a long shadow as her friends and loved ones gather deep in the heart of South Australian wine country to welcome a new addition to the family

 **Borrow
Box.**