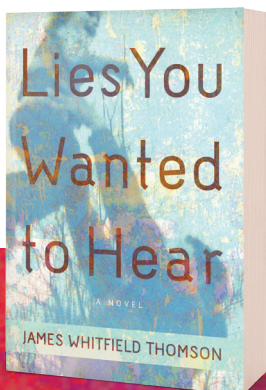


Lies You Wanted to Hear

READING GROUP GUIDE

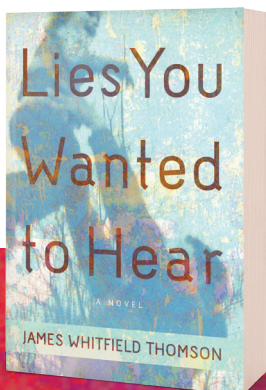
1. Lying is a key element of this novel. Who lies more, Matt or Lucy? What is the worst lie each of them tells? Do you think there is a difference between lying to someone and betraying them?
2. Was Matt justified in kidnapping his children? What do you think drove him over the edge? Does his essential character change once he has taken the kids?
3. Do you agree with Matt when he says that what he did was his “fate” and he had no other choice?
4. Lucy feels as if she can’t quite figure out how to be a good mother, yet she is unable to broach the subject even with her best friend, Jill. Do you think this a common feeling among women? Why do you think that a mother might find this topic difficult to talk about?
5. Is *Lies You Wanted to Hear* a tragedy? Why or why not?
6. Do the alternating first-person chapters from Matt and Lucy work in terms of storytelling? Do you think Matt’s voice is different from Lucy’s?
7. Lucy has a lot of failings both as a mother and a wife. What are the differences between how Matt sees her and how she sees herself? Is one character’s view more truthful or more insightful than the other?
8. After the confrontation in the bedroom with Lucy and Griffin, Matt says to Lucy, “I never had a chance, did I?” Did Lucy ever really try to make the marriage work? Does Matt bear responsibility for their breakup?
9. Why does Lucy keep going back to Griffin? Do you think Lucy belongs with Griffin? With Matt?
10. Did your feelings about Matt and Lucy shift during the novel? If yes, was there a particular moment that caused that shift?
11. Is it possible to compare one person’s grief to another’s? Do you think that most people measure and compare their losses to those of others?
12. Lucy’s lawyer suggests that it is inappropriate for Matt to take a shower with Sarah, who is almost five years old. Also, Matt often lets Sarah crawl into bed with him in the middle of the night. Is this cause for alarm? If this behavior is acceptable now, at what point should it change?



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13. Why does Sara remain so fiercely loyal to her father when she learns the truth about her mother? What pulls Elliot in the opposite direction? Have you ever encountered a startling revelation in your own life or in that of someone you know that causes you to rethink your entire world?
14. Lucy quotes her mother as saying, “Any fool can be happy. The hard part is feeling like you matter.” What do you think about this statement?
15. How does Lucy’s journal-keeping influence her life?
16. How do Lucy’s relationships with other women define who she is and how we think about her?
17. Is there any validity in Matt’s contention that the court system is biased toward a mother? When adjudicating domestic disputes, does the legal system today give fair consideration to the rights of both parents?
18. Matt and Lucy were brought up in very different family situations. Did their upbringing lead them into making the choices they made?
19. The last thing Lucy says to Matt is, “I feel better now. I don’t have to hate you anymore.” But she doesn’t offer him forgiveness. Are there some acts that are simply unforgivable?
20. Did Lucy give up too quickly in trying to find her children? The children’s disappearance takes place before the age of the Internet. Would Lucy’s search be different today?
21. From the first date on, it is clear that Matt is more taken with Lucy than she is with him. Is it the norm in most romantic relationships that one person falls more deeply in love than the other?
22. Can you think of times when you would rather have heard a lie than the truth? Are there lies you have told because you believed that was what someone wanted to hear?
23. After he takes the kids, Matt never forms a successful long-term relationship with a woman and doesn’t really seem to have any close male friends. Is this something that is an outgrowth of his need for secrecy, or is it more an outgrowth of his basic character? Would you say he is a man who understands himself and knows what he truly believes?
24. In the end, would you say Matt has been a good father or a bad one?



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- 25.** Did Lucy get what she deserved?
- 26.** When talking about the difference between movies and films, Matt says, “Movies were entertainment, stories that made you laugh or cry and kept you on the edge of your seat. Films had meanings and subtitles, slow, tortuous stories with bleak endings or no ending at all.” He likes movies; Lucy likes films. Is this a common distinction between men and women? If *Lies You Wanted to Hear* were made into a motion picture, would it be a movie or a film?
- 27.** Years after her children have been gone, Lucy says, “People say, *Don’t lose hope, miracles happen*, as if hoping might have some bearing on the outcome. But hope can be such a cruel companion. Hope never lets you grieve and be done with it. Hope is the abuser you keep hoping will change.” Have you ever felt this way?

