

A person in silhouette stands on a grassy bank, looking out over a body of water. The scene is bathed in a soft, teal light, suggesting dusk or dawn. The person's shadow is cast on the ground in front of them.

**"Enthralling and emotional." —C.S. ROBERTSON**

**THE DAY SHE DIED WAS  
ONLY THE BEGINNING...**

**YOU  
NEVER  
SAID  
GOODBYE**

**A NOVEL**

**LUCA VESTE**

## READING GROUP GUIDE

1. The events of the book snowball from Parker Rogers's DUI. How do you think Anthony was keeping track of Laurie and her loved ones so he'd be sure to hear news that could reopen the search?
2. What initially attracted Laurie to Anthony? How did she deal with the red flags in the early days of their relationship?
3. How does Sam react when he first finds out Laurie might be alive? Would you drop everything to find someone if you only had the limited information Sam started with?
4. Describe the relationship between Sam Cooper and his father, David. Besides the accident, what factors drove them apart and kept them separated? Can you imagine a way for them to reconcile if David had survived?
5. Sam has barely any memories of the United States from his childhood. Was it strange to see the U.S. described from his outsider's perspective? What stood out to you?
6. Jackson's connection to the other factions is obscured for a long time. Who did you think he was allied with? How

did his childhood affect his loyalties? Why was his first attempt to talk to Sam also a kidnapping attempt?

7. Why did Anthony hang on to the idea of Laurie for his entire life? How did his motivation for finding her change over time?
8. Why did Tom save David and Sam from the river? Do you think he ever intended to reunite them with Laurie? What prevented him from doing so for more than twenty years?
9. What's next for Laurie, Sam, and Jackson? Do you think they'll be able to truly connect after so much time apart?

## A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR

**What was the inspiration for *You Never Said Goodbye*? How do you prefer to start a new project?**

The inspiration came from a very personal story. When I was eight years old, my mum (mom) left home. I was aware, on some level, that her and my dad were separating, but I didn't quite comprehend what that really meant. This was two days before Mother's Day, and she was supposed to come back on that day. Instead, I didn't see her for a long time. She eventually did come back into my life, but for a long time, I've wondered how I would have dealt with life if she never did. It has taken me until my eighth novel to tackle that question through fiction, but it is a story I've wanted to tell for a long time. A new project usually starts with the kernel of an idea—a what-if scenario—and *You Never Said Goodbye* was no different to this.

**Between Anthony's men, Tom, Quinn, and Jackson, Sam has to contend with a lot of unknown entities. How did you keep track of whose side was whose? Did anyone's loyalties surprise you as you wrote?**

Conflict is always at the heart of any novel, and Sam has to deal with a number of individuals with competing ideas—whether that's Anthony who wants to find his mother, or Tom who wants to keep a lie alive. From the outset, I knew Quinn

would emerge as the character to betray Sam, and Jackson would be an unknown quantity until the end, so I wasn't surprised by anything in that regard. I generally have a character's journey mapped out.

**After their first escape, Laurie and David expected Anthony to eventually stop searching for them. Why didn't he?**

For a man like Anthony, it becomes less about the desire he has for Laurie and more about the power he holds over her as a person. He wants to be able to decide when he discards her from his life. That's his gift to give, in his opinion. Something being taken from him is not a concept he can deal with at all. He never loses. Not in business, not in his personal life. He believes that he will always win in the end.

**Laurie was never able to move on from what she thought were the deaths of David and her sons. Why didn't Tom tell her the truth even after he realized he could never fill the void in her life?**

Once you've committed to a lie, it's incredibly difficult to walk back on it. At first, he probably believed that she would eventually turn to him for more than just friendship. While that doesn't happen, too much time passes for him to come clean about the reality of their situation.

**For one reason or another, Laurie hasn't had the agency to make her own decisions since she was eighteen. How did that change the way you wrote her later in the book? What do you think she'll want to do most with her newfound freedom?**

Once she realizes Sam is alive, that's the catalyst for her to be more proactive. It was perhaps always there within her but beaten down by a succession of men. Giving her the agency to

make her own choices, her own decisions, became wrapped up in the desire to be reunited with the son she thought was lost forever. As to what she does moving forward, that could take a long time for her to deal with psychologically. She has lost most of her life to other people's actions. I think she'll just want to try to claw back as much time as possible that has been lost to her.

**At the beginning of the book, Carson is terrifyingly effective, but as he comes face-to-face with Sam multiple times, he seems to be losing his edge. How does that reflect the overall character of Anthony's hunt for Laurie after so many years?**

Sometimes you can underestimate people and their tenacity to survive. He is used to carrying out work quickly and effectively. It's the classic unstoppable force meeting an unmovable object. He is so used to removing emotion from a situation that coming up against someone who is only working from that place has an effect on his ability to think his way through the problem of Sam.

**Sam and Jackson are very differently prepared for the events of the book. Do you think either of them really had a proper childhood? Who do you expect to be more successful at moving on after the events of the book?**

I think it's impossible to have a normal childhood with the kind of traumatic events that take place for both in their formative years. I believe they'll carry that for the rest of their lives, but like anything, it's always about how you deal with it, rather than getting over it. You don't get past those events, you just learn how to live with them. And that will be the task for all the characters who survive this story.