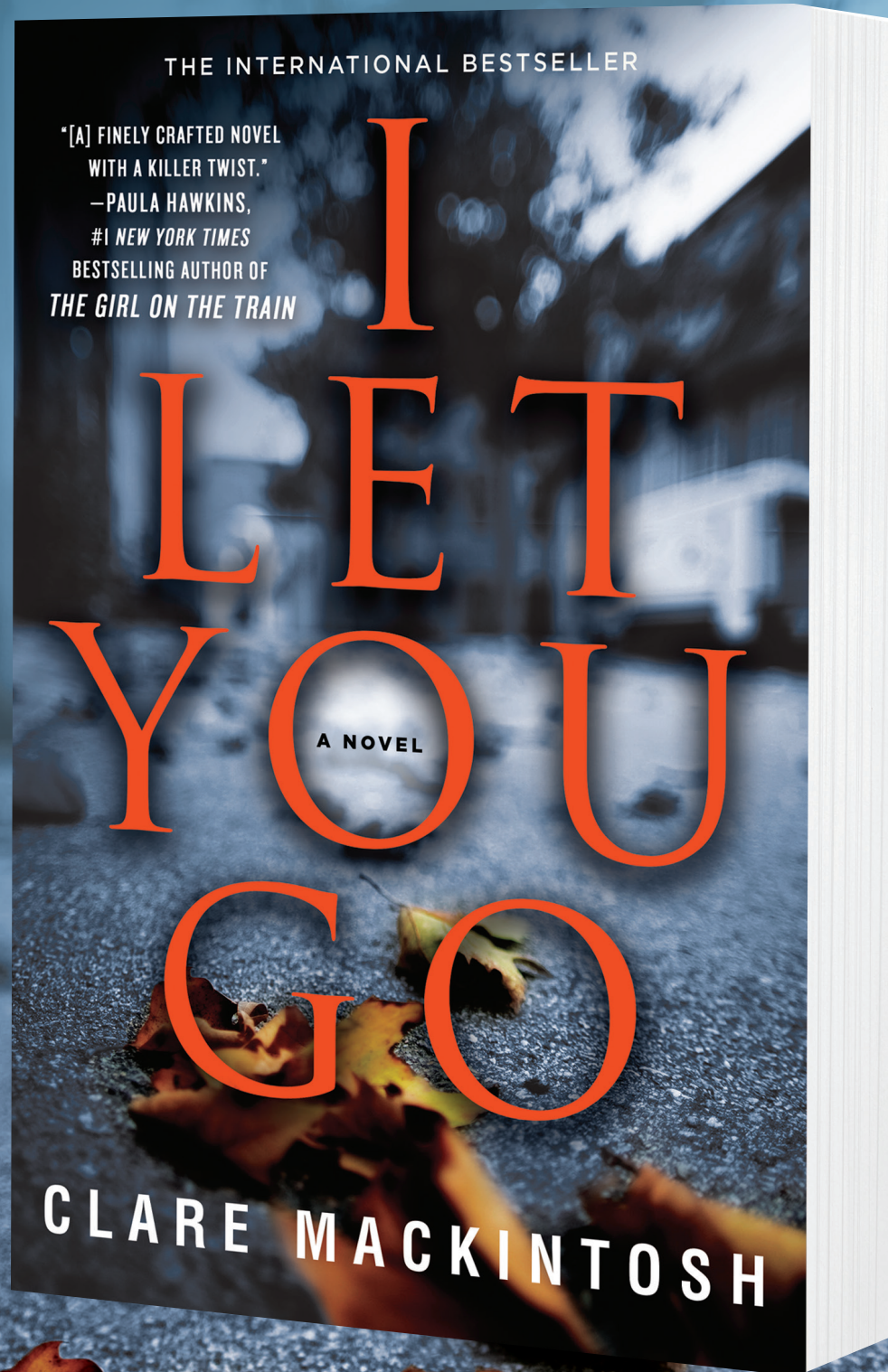


# BOOK CLUB KIT



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How does the title, *I Let You Go*, link to the themes in the novel?
- 2 The author of *I Let You Go* is a former police officer. Do you think this is evident in the storytelling?
- 3 How does the author pull the wool over the reader's eyes in preparation for the first major twist? How did you feel when you reached it?
- 4 Discuss the relationship between Ray and Kate.
- 5 Some of the scenes in *I Let You Go* present a high level of violence. Are these sections hard to read? Are they necessary for the story? Why did the author include them?
- 6 The ending is intentionally ambiguous: what do you think happened at the end of the story, and do you think it was the right ending? How would you have resolved the story?
- 7 What does the future hold for Jenna?



# EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT *I LET YOU GO*

**"Chilling, compelling, and compassionate."**

—PAULA HAWKINS, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Girl on the Train*

**"Astonishingly good."**

—LEE CHILD, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Night School*

**"Genuinely shocking . . . [A] cunning psychological thriller."**

—MARILYN STASIO, *The New York Times Book Review*

**"On the level of the movie *The Sixth Sense* for its cleverness . . .**

This kind of sharp, cunning writing makes one eagerly look forward to Mackintosh's next novel."

—Shelf Awareness

**"An intense psychological thriller . . .**

[that] revels in surprises and twists . . . Outstanding."

—Associated Press

**"You'll be shocked** by the twist in the middle of *I Let You Go*—just don't spoil it for everyone else!"

—PopSugar

**"Thrilling . . . a tense psychological thriller."**—*Real Simple*

**"Jaw-dropping . . . the kind of book that sticks** in the reader's mind well after the final sentence."

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

**"A wonderfully layered thriller** that skillfully builds from that one tragic event. It makes a good match for fans of Sophie Hannah and Erin Kelly."

—*Library Journal* (starred review)

**"Mind-bending."**—*Booklist*

**"Addictive . . . one thrill after another."**

—SAMANTHA HAYES, author of *What You Left Behind*

# AN INTERVIEW WITH CLARE MACKINTOSH

Already an international bestseller, Clare Mackintosh's *I Let You Go* hit bookstores this week. This psychological thriller stuns with a deeply moving story of a mother whose entire world shatters when her 5-year-old son dies in a hit-and-run accident.

We experience the perspective of a woman whose life is left in tatters, as well as of a detective determined to find the person responsible. Suspense mounts as the story unwinds in their distinct perspectives, building up to a twist so unexpected that the entirety of what you've read morphs into something new, exciting and scary.

Thriller readers will relish every bit of it, from the secrets and suspense, to the emotional impact the story so artfully delivers.

*I'm excited to share my interview with Clare!*

**VILMA GONZALES:** Wow—*I Let You Go* is such a powerful, suspenseful story. There were so many facets to it—loss, love, courage, fear, guilt, truths . . . TWISTS! I know you talk about your inspiration for the story at the end of the novel, but for those who have yet to read it, can you share how the book came to be?

**CLARE:** Thank you so much! I'm thrilled you enjoyed it. The inspiration for *I Let You Go* came from a real-life hit-and-run in Oxford, England. I had just joined the police service when a 9-year-old boy was killed by a driver who didn't stop and never came forward. I kept thinking about this driver, wondering how they could live with themselves, and about the mother, and the grief she must be feeling. Years later I lost a child myself, in very different circumstances, and I realized the impact such a trauma has on one's life. I began writing about a woman running away from a sad past, and the result was *I Let You Go*.

**VILMA:** Once it was time to put pen to paper, how did the story come together? With such a tangled plot, did you follow an outline or did you identify major milestones first, such as accident/twist/after? The plot was so well-thought-out, clever, sharp. Even the pacing felt perfect (which is so hard to get right in psychological thrillers).

**CLARE:** I plotted the story roughly, wrote a first draft, then tore it apart and plotted in intricate detail before writing it again. And again. And again! There were eight drafts of *I Let You Go*—it was tough to get right because the twists are so important and needed to work in a particular way. I'm very envious of those writers who can write without planning—it must be very liberating!

**VILMA:** Although multiple themes are explored, I found much of the story centered around the consequences of choices, the outcomes of moments—even those that happen in the blink of an eye. We see that in moments such as Jacob's mom letting go of his hand to wipe the hair from her eyes, the driver choosing to flee after the accident, when Jenna made choices to leave and to stay, when Kate followed a gut feeling . . . there's many of those instances in the book. Was it a conscious effort to explore those outcomes or did that theme arise accidentally?

**CLARE:** That's very perceptive. There are lots of themes in the book. The obvious ones are grief and trauma, and the way we learn to let go of our past, but you're right that split-second decisions are also explored. I'm fascinated by what I think of as *Sliding Doors* moments (after the film), where life could have been very different if you'd taken a different path.



AN INTERVIEW WITH  
**CLARE MACKINTOSH**

**VILMA:** Up until the very end, you surprise us with some more plot twists and truths, and although the story closed, you left us with a possible thread of exploration . . . any plans to continue the story in the future?

**CLARE:** No, I feel very strongly that Jenna's story is finished; at least, the part that we need to see. I can't talk more about the ending of *I Let You Go* without spoiling it for people who haven't read it yet, but I regularly receive e-mails from readers about it! I have a very clear view about what the ending means (obviously—I did write it, after all . . .) and I'm always happy to discuss it over e-mail!

**VILMA:** Your next novel, *I See You*, will be out in July in the U.K. What can you tell us about it?

**CLARE:** *I See You* will be out in the U.K. in July and in the U.S. sometime next year. It begins with a woman who finds a photograph of herself in an advert, hidden in the classifieds at the back of a free London newspaper, and sets out to find out why it's there. It's very dark and very chilling, and I hope readers like it as much as they enjoy *I Let You Go*.

**VILMA:** You've set the bar quite high with the twist in *I Let You Go*. Is that an aspect you're hoping to continue in your other novels? And of course, pretty much all psychological thrillers have twists . . . but there are twists, and there are TWISTS!

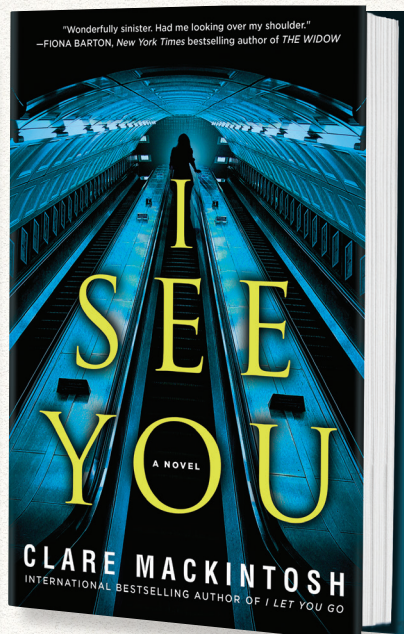
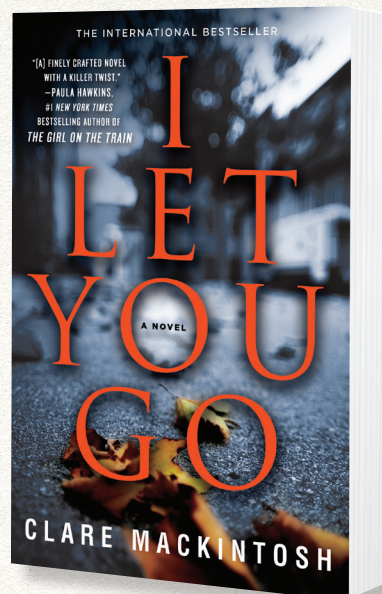
**CLARE:** Firstly, I think there's a difference between twists and reveals. All crime and thriller novels should have reveals—they are mystery stories, essential—but not every crime and thriller novel has to have a twist. For me, a twist is something that shifts the reader's perspective entirely. It's *The Sixth Sense* or *Gone Girl*. There are a limited number of these types of twists, and if I were to put one in every book, it would become very predictable for the reader. I plan to write books that keep readers on their toes; that mean they're never quite sure where the story is going, or who to trust. Will there be a big twist in *I See You*? You'll have to wait and see.

**VILMA:** Lastly, I hear you're a big reader and here at HEA, we love recommendations. Any great books you've read and loved recently?

**CLARE:** I read voraciously, and across all genres. Recently I've loved *Find Her* by Lisa Gardner and *Pretty Girls* by Karin Slaughter. I'm also a huge fan of Jojo Moyes.

**VILMA:** I absolutely loved *Find Her* and *Pretty Girls*, too, Clare. Great thrillers! And of course, also love Jojo Moyes and can't wait to see *Me Before You* on screen.

Thank you so much for talking with me, hope to do it again soon!



This interview between Vilma Gonzalez and Clare Mackintosh originally appeared on the USA Today Happy Ever After blog.