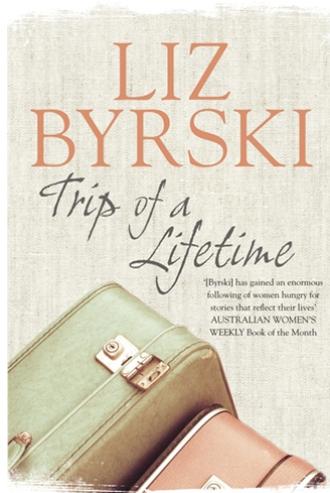


## BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION POINTS

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**Thank you for choosing *Trip of a Lifetime* for your book club. Here are some discussion points you may like to use.**

I had two themes in mind when I wrote this book.

First was the situation of a single, high profile woman, who suddenly becomes the victim of a violent crime. While the fear will obviously always be a horrifying factor for anyone in this situation, I wanted to explore how that might feel for a woman who had no partner, and whether she might easily fall into a relationship over which, in other circumstances, she might have been more cautious. I also wanted to create a female character who might not be instantly likeable. Did you like Heather at first? If not did you grow to like her? Were you exasperated with her for not seeing through Ellis sooner?

The second theme was to do with the secrets we keep from the people we love, sometimes big secrets but more often the small things we keep to ourselves in order to protect others or ourselves. Heather's shooting is the catalyst that puts the other characters under pressure and forces them to consider their own lives.

Here are some other questions that came up for me in writing *Trip of a Lifetime*.

How do we treat female parliamentarians in Australia? Is the media harder on them than it is on the men?

Would you encourage your daughter to take up a political career?

What does it take to make a relationship work the second time around?

Are older parents more confident and tolerant than younger ones?

Is there a sense of power in having control over domestic life in the family?

Do men actually see dust? (No! I thought not!)

What do you think of the role reversal when men take on the housework and childcare?

## BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION POINTS

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Adam was deeply affected by his late father's ideas of what it means to be a man. What can be done to prepare boys for manhood in gentler and more forgiving ways?

Adam feels very alone in his religious faith. Are we reluctant to talk about what we believe?

The relationship between Barbara and George is not taken seriously by George's family, because they are not married: How tolerant of and open are we to loving relationships between elderly people?

Why is physical affection between older people so confronting to young people?

**I do hope you enjoy your discussion.**