

### **Book Club Discussion Questions**

1. ONLY EVER YOU explores the emotional toll that losing a child can take on a marriage. How do you think that having children impacts a marriage? Is that impact more positive than negative?
2. Jill and David's marriage implodes under the strain of the public scrutiny and police investigation. Do you think it's possible for a couple to fully recover from such enormous stress?
3. Sophia is a strong-willed little girl whose desire for independence frequently tests Jill's patience. Is she a likable character? Is Jill? Are we uncomfortable with depictions of mothers and children who are less than perfect?
4. Jill volunteers as a bereavement photographer, a service that is respected by some and reviled by others. What do you think about the practice of taking keepsake photos of deceased loved ones?
5. How do you think Sophia's age effects the investigation into her disappearance? Do you think if she'd been older that the police and the public would have so quickly suspected her parents of killing her?
6. After Sophia's abduction, Jill is convinced that her daughter is alive because she'd "know" if something had happened to her child. Do you believe in parental intuition?
7. One of the underlying themes of ONLY EVER YOU is the power of grief to transform our lives. How does Jill's grief over the death of her son, impact her relationship with Sophia?
8. Bea is driven to abduct Sophia by a desire to find her daughter's child, and by anger over the circumstances surrounding Annie a.k.a. Lyn's death. Do you think Bea's feelings of guilt at not being able to protect her daughter also motivated her desire for revenge?
9. Jill becomes a suspect in the eyes of the public because she can't cry in front of the news cameras. Do you think that we're quick to judge people who aren't having typical or expected emotional responses to personal tragedies?
10. Sophia's was a closed adoption, meaning that court records are sealed and there is no contact between biological and adoptive families. What are the advantages of closed versus open adoptions?

11. Andrew is a successful lawyer who cheats on his wife with impunity. Do you think there's a correlation between powerful men and adultery? Is it the same for powerful women?

12. At the end of *ONLY EVER YOU*, Jill is living again with David, although they're "moving tentatively around each other, like guests in each other's lives." Why do you think she chose to remain with David despite his affair? Do you agree with her decision? Do you think their marriage will survive?

13. The final twist in the novel is the revelation that Paige knew all along about her husband's numerous affairs. Is her decision to stay with Andrew different than Jill's decision to stay with David?

14. Another underlying theme of this novel is the unbreakable bond between mothers and their children. Do you think this bond is the same for fathers? What about the bond between parents and adopted children?

15. In the epilogue, Jill reflects on having believed that careful planning and hard work would guarantee her "the family that she'd wanted complete with a matching set of perfect photos" only to realize that life was about "what happened outside of the frame, on the margins." Do you agree with Jill? Were you satisfied by the ending? Have you ever written a letter like hers to Ethan?