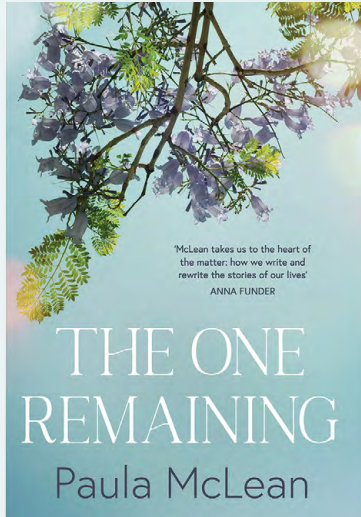


THE ONE REMAINING BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS



The One Remaining is an imaginary memoir of fictitious novelist Hilary Mason. The author embeds in the structure of the memoir Hilary's published works (five novels and one collection of short stories), and relates the themes of these publications to the memoir she writes, called Hilary's Story. As Hilary's own publications begin to form part of the narrative, *The One Remaining* becomes a book-within-books exploration.

1. Did you like the technique of beginning with a preface, *A Letter to My Readers*, to set up the story to come?
 - What does Hilary's letter tell us about her life and her circumstances before you turn the page to Chapter One?
 - Did you like the lyrical and writerly voice in the Letter?
 - The author gives us several images to consider in the preface – such as, a disembodied lucifer, a bird on her shoulder and owls on a branch, a meeting with Hemingway in Cuba, a treasured broken vase, and a weatherboard cottage with a rose garden. What role do these images tell us about Hilary and her personality?
2. Chapter One begins in the mid 1970s. In what ways could the small town of Spring Valley represent small towns anywhere?
3. Hilary feels abandoned by her family as a young teenager. What are examples of the ways her family and community were unable to support her after her sister Elaine disappears?
4. Why do you think Hilary chose not to tell anyone what she'd heard her sister say?
5. The character Jack is described in chilling language throughout the novel – for example, in prison stripes, as a sexual predator, and as a cunning perpetrator of domestic and family violence. How did he make you feel?
6. Female friendship is explored in various ways in the novel. What are examples of this?
7. In what ways do the writing residencies that Hilary goes on either help or hinder her writing?
8. How did you relate to Hilary's love relationships in the novel – Dan at university, John in London, the unnamed academic in Kings Cross and then the love of her life, Ricco?
9. The dark and the light of a woman's life over more than four decades is explored, experiences that many women everywhere can relate to. What are examples?
10. How did you respond to the ending of the novel?