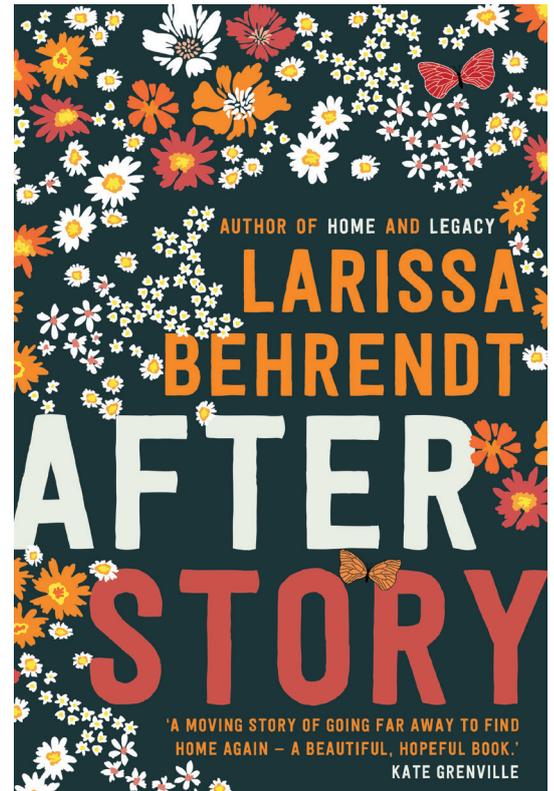


When a mother and daughter take the overseas trip of a lifetime, they discover that the past is never quite behind them.

After Story tells of the brave, unflinching journey of an Indigenous mother and daughter who embark on a ten-day literary tour of England, and in the process uncover many truths from back home. At times it is dark and tragic but there is also hope in the way mother and daughter deal with issues of pain, loss and abuse. Their journeys are enriched, and at times disrupted, by their fellow travellers, each with their own life story and needs. Behrendt skilfully weaves the multiple threads of this absorbing narrative to contrast the lives and history of classic English literary heroes with First Nations storytelling. This is a moving, grand and intelligent book.



BOOK DETAILS

C-format paperback | 978 0 7022 6331 6
\$32.99

Questions

1. This is a fiercely Australian story, particularly in its portrayal of Indigenous characters, culture and history, yet it is set thousands of kilometres away in England. What did you take away from this comparison of cultures and history?
2. The opening pages, with their chilling depiction of a missing child, give us the setting for the secrets and pain that Della has carried all her life. Did this opening draw you in to the novel?
3. The structure of the book uses the alternating voices of Della and Jasmine, mother and daughter, to describe the events of each day – the literary sites visited, the tour guide’s commentary, the meals eaten, the chatter among the group. How did this dual narrative shape your understanding of both mother and daughter?
4. Of the two leading protagonists – Della and Jasmine – whose voice, whose experience, whose viewpoint resonated with you more strongly?
5. What did you think of the link between the literary and life insights of Dickens, Woolf, Austen, Carroll and the Brontë sisters – all white writers steeped in Anglo-colonialism – and Della’s quiet wisdom from her rich and ancient culture?
6. Discuss Aunty Elaine’s ongoing cultural and storytelling influence.

7. Both Della and Jasmine are living with crippling guilt. Della because she feels she failed to protect Brittany, and Jasmine because she left home and family as soon as she could and has hardly looked back. How does each character live with this guilt and how does each address it?
8. Compare the sibling relationships between Della and Kiki, and Jasmine and Leigh-Anne. How do they differ and what similarities are there?
9. Two missing girls, Brittany and Shona, shape this book. Both stories are tragic beyond words. How do these storylines shape the novel?
10. Butterflies make a regular appearance in the novel, particularly the Ulysses butterfly. What do you think is the significance of this motif?
11. Which of the literary sites most interested you and why?
12. 'The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead, there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark.' Do Virginia Woolf's words, towards the end of the book, reflect the tone of *After Story*?
13. How did you find the ending of the novel? Why does Della decide to write the letters?

'A moving story of going far away to find home again – a beautiful, hopeful book.'

Kate Grenville

'*After Story* is a work of great originality. It is a tale of discovery and understanding, envisioned through the shared experiences of Della and Jasmine on a journey to "the old country", a place that is not theirs.

Through Della and Jasmine we come to understand the depths of familial love, with poignancy, humour and true storytelling.'

Tony Birch

'A literary tour that speaks to the imagination, *After Story* connects the canon of English literature to the lives of a mother and daughter whose own stories have remained untold. Larissa Behrendt weaves an exquisite tapestry that talks to our common humanity and lives within the stories we collect, treasure and share.'

Rachel Griffiths

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larissa Behrendt is the author of three novels: *Home*, which won the 2002 David Unaipon Award and the regional Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book; *Legacy*, which won the 2010 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Indigenous Writing; and *After Story*. She has published numerous books on Indigenous legal issues; her most recent non-fiction book is *Finding Eliza: Power and Colonial Storytelling*. She was awarded the 2009 NAIDOC Person of the Year award and 2011 NSW Australian of the Year. She is the host of *Speaking Out* on ABC radio and is Distinguished Professor at the Jumbunna Institute at the University of Technology Sydney.



FURTHER READING

