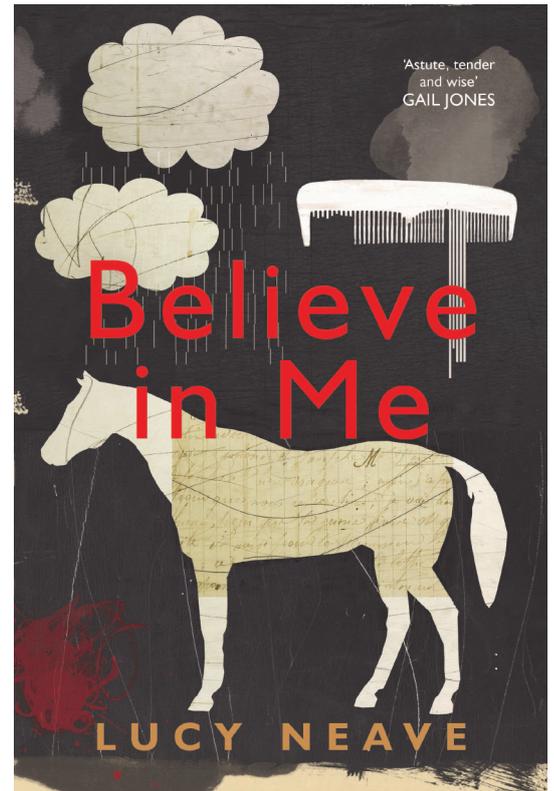


An unforgettable and profound novel about three generations of one family and the healing power of understanding where you've come from.

As a teenager in the 1970s, Sarah is forced to leave her home in upstate New York to accompany a missionary to Idaho. When she falls pregnant, she is dispatched to relatives in Sydney, who place her in a home for unmarried mothers. Years later her daughter, Bet, pieces together her mother's life story, hoping to understand her better. As she learns more about Sarah's past, Bet struggles to come to terms with her own history and identity, yet is determined to make peace with Sarah's choices before it's too late.

Lucy Neave's moving and deeply personal novel follows three generations of one family and questions what we can ever truly know of our parents' early lives, even as their experiences weave invisibly into our identities and destinies.



BOOK DETAILS

C-format paperback | 978 0 7022 6336 1
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Questions

1. To what extent does the setting of the 1970s affect Sarah's choices and decisions in *Believe in Me*?
2. Why does Sarah stay in Australia? Why doesn't she fight harder to return home, and what are the risks and benefits for her of staying in Adelaide and her time in Sydney?
3. To what extent do the locations in the novel – Idaho, Adelaide and Sydney – affect the characters' lives and choices, and the ways these are represented?
4. Do you think Bet will return to the US?
5. How do you judge Isaiah's actions and responses?
6. Did you think that Sarah accepts Bet's decision in relation to her gender and sexuality by the end of the novel, or not? Why/Why not?
7. Why do you think Bet feels compelled to compose Sarah's story?

8. What aspects of Sarah’s story do you think Bet obscures? What aspects of Bet’s own story does Bet hide?
9. How do you interpret Bet’s gender and sexuality? Do you agree with Bet’s own assessment, that Bet would prefer not to be pigeonholed, and how do you feel about this?
10. How do you view the future of Bet and Jack’s relationship?
11. Does Bet’s attitude towards gender and sexuality change and evolve, or is Bet always sure of Bet’s own orientation and gender?
12. How do you view Sarah’s choices towards the end of the novel?
13. Bet imagines Sarah’s life. Does this act of imagination, on the part of Bet, feel authentic? To what extent do you think the novel is also about how to represent characters who are different to a book’s author?
14. A lot of animals make appearances in the novel: foxes, dogs, horses. How do you think these animals function in the story?

‘In this powerful novel the narrator honours her lost mother by tracing her journey from beguiled girl to confident activist, in the process arriving at an understanding of her own place in the world. I was spellbound.’

Brenda Walker

‘Astute, tender and wise: a novel of damage, recovery and the tangle of the mother–daughter knot.’

Gail Jones

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Amanda Lohrey

‘A powerful story of mothers and daughters, of love and longing; a heart-breaking exploration of the disconnections and persistence, the revelations and redemptions of both liberty and life.’

Ashley Hay

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lucy Neave grew up in Australia, Toronto, London and Kathmandu, and has spent several years living in the United States: first as a Fulbright scholar completing a Master of Fine Arts in writing, then teaching English in universities, and in 2019 as a visiting scholar in the English department at New York University. Lucy’s first novel, *Who We Were*, was shortlisted for the ACT Book of the Year. Her short fiction has been published in a range of Australian and American literary journals and in *Best Australian Stories*, and she was awarded a *Griffith Review* novella prize in 2018. She teaches creative writing at the Australian National University, where she is Associate Dean, Student Experience. She is the mother of two children.



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