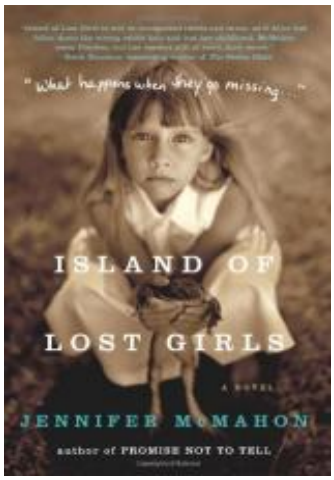
Island of Lost Girls

by Jennifer McMahon



About the Book

Rhonda, recently out of college and on her way to a job interview, is sitting in her blue Honda at a gas station when she sees someone in a rabbit suit kidnap a young girl out of car near by. The absurdity of the rabbit suit has her momentarily perplexed, keeping her from stopping the crime. The guilt she feels from her inaction propels her to help with the investigation. But as she gets closer and closer to finding out who the kidnapper is, she also gets closer to uncovering the truth behind the disappearance of, Lizzy, her childhood best friend who went missing when they were young girls. As she revisits her past and is in a race to find the kidnapper in the present, old romances are rekindled, people from her past turn out to be different that what they seemed, and redemtion is found for a long lost friend.

As she did in **Promise Not to Tell**, McMahon builds suspense by going back in forth in time and connecting the two horrible crimes. As the reader is pulled deeper into the story, it seems no one can be trusted and there is always more to people than what's on the surface. The creepy and shocking ending will have audiences eager for more from this great new author.

Discussion Guide

1. When the rabbit kidnaps Ernie, Rhonda finds herself unable to act because she's so completely caught off guard by what she sees. Have you ever been so surprised (or overcome with any emotion) you were paralyzed?

2. Island of Lost Girls moves back and forth through time, essentially following two interweaving storylines. Do you think this was an effective structure? How did it affect your reading of the book?

3. Rhonda has two love interests: Peter and Warren. How are they different? In what ways are they similar? And how does the Peter of Rhonda's youth compare to the man he is as an adult?

4. What are your observations about the different roles that fantasy, imagination, and make-believe play in the lives of both the children and adults? Do any of the characters really live in the here and now? Are these forms of escapism helpful or harmful?

5. Justine seems passive and removed, but later, Rhonda comes to believe that Justine didn't just see what was going on, but may have had a hand in hiding evidence to protect the children. Do you see her as weak or strong? A victim or a protector?

6. Daniel and Clem had been friends since boyhood. How did this affect Clem's vision of Daniel? Did it give him blind spots? And how does Rhonda's childhood friendship with Peter influence her judgment about his possible involvement in Ernie's kidnapping?

7. Ella Starkee says, "Sometimes, what a person needs most is to be forgiven." What did you think of how themes of forgiveness are played out in **Island of Lost Girls**? Are there unforgivable acts?

8. Some of the townspeople blame Trudy Florucci for Ernie's abduction, for being a "bad mother." Trudy blames Rhonda, and Rhonda blames herself. Ultimately, is there any one person at fault for what happens to Ernie? Why do you think people are so eager to find someone to take the blame?

Author Bio

Jennifer McMahon is the author of 13 novels, including the *New York Times* bestsellers THE CHILDREN ON THE HILL, PROMISE NOT TO TELL and THE WINTER PEOPLE. She lives in Florida with her partner, Drea.

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