



## Last Seen

*Lucy Clarke*

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# Last Seen

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**Last Seen** Lucy Clarke

**In a small seaside community, there's always somebody watching...**

**Twisty, pacy, and superbly plotted, *Last Seen* is the perfect psychological page-turner for fans of Clare Mackintosh and Sabine Durrant.**

Seven years ago, two boys went missing at sea – and only one was brought to shore. The Sandbank, a remote stretch of coast dotted with beach huts, was scarred forever.

Sarah's son survived, but on the anniversary of the accident, he disappears without trace. As new secrets begin to surface, The Sandbank hums with tension and unanswered questions. Sarah's search grows more desperate and she starts to mistrust everyone she knows – and she's right to.

Someone saw everything on that fateful day seven years ago. And they'll do anything to keep the truth buried.

## Last Seen Details

Date : Published May 19th 2017 by Harper

ISBN :

Author : Lucy Clarke

Format : Kindle Edition 449 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Mystery, Suspense

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## **From Reader Review Last Seen for online ebook**

### **Louise Wilson says**

Seven years ago, two boys went missing at sea, but only one was brought to shore. The Sandbank, a remote area of coast, is dotted with beach huts, has been scarred forever. Sarah's son survived, but he disappears on the anniversary of the accident. With new secrets surfacing and tension growing with unanswered questions. Sarah's search grows more desperate as mistrusts everyone she knows. Is someone covering up what they saw seven years ago? Will they do everything they can to keep the truth buried?

I loved this novel. A story of secrets, lies, betrayal and hidden connections. The two women take turns at narrating the story. We also get flashbacks of their past. There are a lot of twist and turns to keep your attention. It's gripping, tense and has a well kept pace. I was kept guessing throughout this book and the ending was unexpected. This is the first book I have read by the author but it won't be my last.

I would like to thank NetGalley, HarperCollins UK, HarperFiction and the author Lucy Clarke for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Rae says**

A fantastic premise - two boys go missing, 7 years apart - beach huts, the coastline, friendship and jealousy, all make this the perfect summer read. Sarah and Isla have been friends for ever but when their young sons go swimming and only one returns, the ramifications of that awful day run deep. On the surface, Sarah and Isla's friendship continues but when disaster strikes for a second time, long hidden secrets and betrayals bubble upwards threatening all they've clung onto for so long. Just when I was beginning to feel in need of a break from reading psychological thrillers, Lucy Clarke's writing drew me back in. With plenty original twists to keep me reading 'just one more chapter' I also loved the depth of relationships Clarke creates for her characters. Find some sunshine, pour a glass of wine and enjoy 'Last Seen'!

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### **sue says**

This was and is a remarkable read, again, straight into my top 10 this year. Its going to be so hard to choose my top ten.

We have two close friends, they have children within days of each other, the unity between these two women are remarkable and close along with their growing children.

Sarah and Isla have been there for each other through thick and thin but will their friendship survive once their children go missing one day, but only one returns. Jacob.

They were only 10 years old.

7 years later on the anniversary of her sons death her friends son goes missing, Jacob.

Sarah starts a vigilance searching for her son, but hes nowhere to be found.

Someone somewhere knows.

Someone somewhere knows what happened all those years ago, someone somewhere knows what has happened since,.

Who do you trust when there is no one to trust.

This story kept me rigid in my chair, I couldn't move, I just needed to read from beginning to the very end which left me gasping.

My thanks to the author Lucy Clarke and to HarperCollins UK, HarperFiction via Net Galley for my copy. What an exciting read.

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### **Jules says**

I found the first half of this book a little slow and didn't really connect with the characters. The second half was much better as secrets were revealed, making it hard to put down.

I personally wouldn't describe *Last Seen* as an overly tense thriller, in that I didn't find myself holding my breath. It had more of a family saga feel to it, covering topics such as love, jealousy and grief. There were a lot of secrets and lies. Some things I worked out in advance, but there were also some surprises in there too.

This book left me with a sickening and haunting feeling that some things can't be undone no matter how hard you try ignore them or wish them away, and can shape you and your whole future.

Definitely one I recommend if you like the sound of the blurb.

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### **Nicki says**

Wow,reading this book is like riding a roller coaster whilst wearing a blindfold.It's packed full of twists and turns,you have absolutely no idea what is going to happen next but you definitely know you don't want to get off until the ride is over and are very disappointed when you get to the end.

Sarah and Isla have been best friends for many years and have been there for each other through everything that life has thrown their way including giving birth to their sons Jacob and Marley within weeks of each other.

Every year the two women spend the summer months relaxing and having fun at their adjoining beach huts on the south coast.

But on the year of Jacob and Harley`s 10th birthdays the boys go missing at sea and only Sarah`s son Jacob is brought back to the shore.

Seven years later on the anniversary of the accident Jacob disappears without trace.As Sarah begins a

desperate search for her son she slowly begins to mistrust everyone - and she is right to

Someone knows what really happened on the day of the accident and will do anything to keep the truth buried.

This book is packed full of twists, lies, unreliable, untrustworthy characters and loads more lies, you cannot trust a word that anyone says. You think you know the truth about what happened on the day of the accident and why Jacob has disappeared then another twist is thrown into the mix and all your theories go out the window. The story is narrated by the alternating perspectives of Sarah and Isla and flips back and forth between the past and the present. I can't honestly say that any of the characters were very likeable but it was hard not to feel a tiny bit of sympathy for Isla, losing a child is every parent's worst nightmare.

It's a totally gripping story that kept me guessing from the first page right to the shocking and totally unexpected ending.

Many thanks to Harper Collins UK, Harper Fiction for a arc of this book via netgalley in exchange for a honest review

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### **Mandy says**

This book was just excellent. I have read other books by this author and have always found them to be wonderful, entertaining, thought-provoking reads, and this book was no exception.

This is the story of two women, Isla and Sarah, very close friends for years. They have remained close, and each own a beach hut located next door to each other, where they spend every summer, with their families. A tragedy happened on the beach seven years ago, but they still meet up every summer.

This book tells the story of one summer, when everything unravels for the women, but it is about so much more than that. It's about the choices that they make and the sacrifices and guilt that come with being a mother.

I loved this book. It is easily one of my favourite books of the year. I received this to read through Netgalley but will definitely be buying a copy as I will most certainly be reading this again.

My emotions were all over the place whilst reading. At first, I sympathised with both women but with Sarah in particular as she is desperate for news of her son. Then as the story unfolds, I liked and sympathised with Isla more and more. The ending, and the twist, floored me. I am a mother, and it was so easy to imagine the desperation of both women, and the actions that they took.

Wonderful, riveting read that I would certainly recommend.

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### **Bookread2day says**

#### **PAPERBACK EDITION**

Review on Twitter@favouritenovels

Seven years ago two boys went missing. Is anybody watching? Day One 6.15 AM Jacob hasn't come home from a party. Maybe he has a hangover and staying out with his friends. Or maybe Jacob had to help Caz back to her hut. Was she so drunk that he didn't want to leave her? By Day One, Midday Jacob's mother is in complete panic and has to ask Caz if her son is with her. Caz explained that Jacob didn't stay with her and that she has no idea where he is, but she did see Jacob at the party, and they both walked back along the

beach together. They stopped by the rocks near his hut to talk for a bit. Then Caz went to her hut. But the question is where exactly has Jacob gone? I highly recommend all of Lucy Clarke's books.

I would like to thank the publisher for sending me the paperback to review and for inviting me to do the blog tour.

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### **Bill Kupersmith says**

When the author of our best book of its year releases a new offering, we greet it with overwhelming enthusiasm, & equal disappointment when we miss the old thrill. I loved *The Blue*, & whilst I'd not say I exactly hated *Last Seen*, just compare a fifty-foot offshore sailing yacht with a beach hut. We go from a book seriously comparable to Joseph Conrad's to the world of . . . well, beach-reads. Not that this one is lacking in the qualities sought by beach readers: adultery, betrayal, teen pregnancy, who's your dad stuff, BF's who are worst frenemies, a 1st person narrator who loves to jerk you around by letting it slip that she's got a secret she's saving for the denouement (how do 1st-person narrators know they are characters in a story book whose job is to keep readers in suspense by withholding the truth?). I'd also award a prize for the most unlikely boys' names: Jacob & Marley. Apparently nobody in this book had read Dickens or seen the movie about a cute dog. Tho' as Marley is supposed to have perished seven years ago in a swimming accident (I've never enjoyed swimming as a recreation - as opposed to being a way of saving your life should you fall in the water), his ghost indeed haunts his mother Isla (I am not making this name up) & her supposed BF Sarah (shouldn't it be Rebecca?), mother of Jacob, his boyhood friend. I found Jacob a thoroughly nasty piece of work long before the secrets come out - his treatment of his girlfriend & of his mother was abominable - but remembering he is but 17 must make allowances. How often when we think back on our own childhoods and teen years do most of us not feel an immense sense of guilt - with just a little more bad luck we could have done serious harm. Often I ask myself, "Could I have done something as sleazy as that?" Yes, actually.) Like Sharon Bolton's *Little Black Lies*, this book is a superb study of the destructive effects of nourishing chronic grief & also about lying. If these characters had told the truth in the 1st place, they'd have faced some very embarrassing situations, but perhaps emerged as morally better people. Unfortunately, beach combing brings out the inner slacker in all of us (these characters spend most of their free time - they don't have anything else to do - smoking both funny and regular cigarettes and drinking). Whereas sailing an offshore yacht brings out our better selves, every relationship is a threesome because it includes a very high maintenance relationship with the boat.)

Tho' very disappointed, I found as a suspense novel the final chapters of this one to be un-put-downable & as a animadversion of what not to do in your relationships, *Last Seen* morally admirable. So I'm not sorry I read it. But please, Lucy Clarke, get off the beach & back on the boat!

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### **Blair says**

Lucy Clarke writes the kind of books I simply *have* to finish in a day. *Last Seen* is another hit, a suspenseful and beguiling tale of secrets and lies set on an English sandbank where two lifelong friends, Sarah and Isla, have neighbouring beach huts. As the story begins, Sarah's 17-year-old son Jacob has gone missing – on the exact day that Isla's son Marley drowned seven years earlier. As the days go by, a tangled knot of hidden connections and betrayals begins to unravel, leading all the way back to the early days of Sarah and Isla's friendship. The two women take turns as narrators, with frequent flashbacks illuminating their pasts.

Last time I reviewed one of Clarke's novels (2015's *The Blue*), I mentioned that I felt her three books formed a kind of loose trilogy. Now there are four, I'd say that still stands, as *Last Seen* feels a little different – more mature and grounded, and correspondingly more domestic. At the same time, it nods to the author's evident love of travel and flair for an evocative setting: the sandbank may not qualify as exotic, and the characters might be fortysomething parents rather than carefree backpackers, but there's still an irresistible charm to it all.

As I raced through *Last Seen*, my imagination was consumed by life on the sandbank. The intimacy of the setting is absorbing and authentic; the characters are convincing; the plot has an effortless natural momentum. As a cross between a suspenseful thriller and a feelgood wish-you-were-here read, I can't fault it. My only regret is that I didn't save it for my holidays.

(Apropos of nothing... I couldn't help but smile at the children being named Jacob and Marley. Is this a deliberate reference to *A Christmas Carol*, or something that wasn't flagged as sounding a bit odd in edits? If *Last Seen* is a retelling, it's a very, very subtle one.)

*I received an advance review copy of Last Seen from the publisher through NetGalley.*

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## **Liz Barnsley says**

I loved this novel – it is an extremely clever, emotionally resonant psychological family drama in which Lucy Clarke explores many levels of relationships and what can happen when something goes horribly wrong.

Two best friends. Two sons. One is lost, one is not. That moment in time ripples both outwards and inwards during “Last Seen” as both families come to terms (or not) with a genuinely horrible loss. Too many people are keeping too many secrets but it is still utterly authentic and completely believable from the first moment to the last.

I love it when a novel in this genre gives you divisive and sympathetic characters, Lucy Clarke brings a huge amount of reality both to Sarah and to Isla. I will confess that I actually ended up detesting one of them (no spoilers!) but the road to that was rocky and incredibly addictive and the oceans (yes I did that) of depth in the storytelling, well, simply brilliant.

I genuinely did not see where this one was going, that of course is a big tick for me as so much is so predictable (not necessarily making it bad but just taking something away) – Last Seen really DID keep me guessing as to what really happened the day two little boys ended up in the sea, on the way to that knowledge was a twisted and intelligently drawn plot that kept me immersed throughout.

In the end there was a bit of a tear in my eye. For what was lost and what was gained and for the child that didn't make it out to grow up, but there was such a wonderful sense of closure to it all eventually that it was a genuinely satisfying read.

Yep. Highly Recommended.

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## **Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says**

**Shortlisted for my Top 17 Reads of 2017. Winners announced on January 1st 2018.**

An absolutely stunning, emotional and fascinating read! This book had me well and truly riveted. I dove into the pages of this and only came up for air at the very end. I could not put it down.

This is a book that has a strong and steady pace, don't expect it to hit peaks and lows. It moves along smoothly and kept my attention at all times. Lucy Clarke has done a brilliant job on her characters in this novel and it is very character driven. Each character is created so I felt I really knew them, even peripheral characters were very intriguing.

Many of the lead characters are damaged and flawed and I love that in a novel. It's got quite a powerful and also emotional undercurrent all through the book that truly ramps up for the amazing ending.

The book had me questioning motives and loyalties between friends and families. I did my fair bit of guessing throughout my reading time but that ending!

### **It blew me away...**

A fantastic reveal, I started to see it coming but still it left me breathless with very tumbled emotions about the outcome. I was thrilled to bits reading this well-written, perfectly formed and deeply moving novel. It's got a lot going for it and will appeal to a huge range of different readers. Definitely get this book on your to-read list or better yet, go and grab it!

If you like books that keep you guessing, character driven fiction and stories that really pull you into the heart of the matter then you'll love this. I was really impressed with this great book. 5 stars from me!

I'd love to connect with you on social media! You can find me on Facebook here:

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and on Twitter here:

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## **Joanne Robertson says**

I adore Lucy Clarke's books and, due to their recurring themes of water and the sea, I usually try to save her latest and take it on my Summer holiday with me! Every book so far has been the ultimate beach read but Last Seen has a definite edge for me due to the wonderfully described beach hut setting that conjured up picture perfect, warm and sunny days by the sea. I don't think I've ever read a book where the main characters lived in a beach hut before so I loved the whole "living the simple life" ethos. Having been born and raised in Norfolk, I have always had a fascination for those brightly coloured little huts that can only be compared to The Tardis.... "it's bigger on the inside!" Where I lived there were very strict rules about not



sleeping in them but everywhere is different and if I had one of the gorgeous but expensive huts in somewhere like Southwold then I would definitely want to spend every second of every single day and night there!

The plot here is a heart wrenching one for any parent to face, let alone one living right on the waters edge. When Sarah's son goes missing, she firstly thinks that it is due to a row between them on his birthday. But as the days pass by, things come to light that may mean all is not as it first seemed. There are secrets galore to uncover but will any of them lead to the answer of what has happened to Jacob?

What an atmospheric slow burner this book was! I couldn't put it down until I had discovered what had happened to Jacob! There's a lot tightly packed into the plot and lots of teasers so that you think you know what's going on but ultimately, if you're like me, then Lucy Clarke will keep you in suspense right up until the very end. There are many themes twisting themselves throughout the narrative, friendship and loyalty, jealousy and suspicion and what it really means to be a mother. I felt for Sarah as she fought her feelings that something was seriously wrong when she realised Jacob was first missing. She did what many parents of teenagers do, tried to give her child the freedom to spread their wings but it's difficult when that goes against every protective bone in a mother's body! Both Sarah and Isla were clearly drawn characters and their relationships with their sons, and especially with each other, were cleverly constructed throughout. There were many eye opening surprises along the way to maintain the level of tension and the readers interest.

This is a brilliantly written book that will tug at your heartstrings. I almost felt like I was there on the beach with Sarah, looking out to sea, tasting the salty breeze as it swirled around my body and feeling the warm sunshine spreading itself over my skin. In fact, when I took my sandals off whilst reading it I half expected a little gritty pile of shimmering sand to fall out of them. So if you want to feel like you're on holiday but you're only in your back garden then this evocative book is the one for you.

I feel like I have been waiting forever for Last Seen to be published and I'm now incredibly sad that it's all over. The final few pages had the hairs on the back of my neck standing to attention as I felt the summer slowly fade away. It was an emotional farewell, both to the characters that I'd come to love and the questions in my head that had finally been answered. Highly recommended by me!

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## **Whispering Stories says**

Sarah and Isla were best friends, they grew up together and always dreamed of owning beach huts next to one another. They did everything together, even having their sons in the same year.

Seven years ago tragedy struck when Jacob, Sarah's son, and Marley, Isla son, were ten years old. The two went swimming, but only one of them returned.

Now on the anniversary of Marley's death, Jacob has gone missing. Sarah is trying to stay strong and positive, but something isn't right, and someone knows where her son is, but who is that person?

Last Seen is a psychological thriller. It starts off with the drowning of Marley, (though you don't know this at the time). Once we get into the main story it begins quite slowly, and I must admit I almost gave up. I found Sarah boring and rather old headed for her age.

Then the book reached a turning point, the pace quickened and the intense plot took over. The cast and

situation are very believable, plus with the very descriptive scenery, it felt like I could of been reading a news article about a real event.

It is written from two viewpoints, Sarah and Isla's, both past and present. I'm not a great lover of multiple viewpoint books, especially when I personally feel that the story would of worked just as well being written in the third person, but I stuck with it, and did enjoy it.

There are a lot of twists, and just when you think you might have the answer, Ms. Clarke throws in a curve ball, and you are back to square one. Everyone was a suspect, and I found it hard to decipher who was telling the truth, and who had something to hide.

I was gripped to the pages with the need to know where Jacob was, and what had happened to him. The book is quite dark in places, and it certainly kept me guessing right up until the end.

One moment in time shattered the lives of the two best friends, a friendship that never managed to repair itself. Something lurking in the past was holding the key to the present, but what did happen on that fateful night seven years ago, and how was it connected to the present?

Reviewed by Stacey on [www.whisperingstories.com](http://www.whisperingstories.com)

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### **Trish at Between My Lines says**

Holy moly! I feel like I stuck my finger in an electric socket and got shock, after shock, after shock.

#### Highlights

- An idyllic beach hut setting
- best friends with dark secrets between them
- not one, not two but three unreliable narrators
- and all the plot twists

I need more books by this author ASAP.

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### **Aishling Murphy says**

It's a total 5star book for me. A super read that's keeps you hooked right to the last page. A book of great friendship, loss and sadness. About two best friends Sarah and Isla and how they spend their summers, and as they both fall pregnant around the same time , and both have boys Jacob and Marley how they enjoy the time and fun with them till one day, everything changes. A few good twists as well. Well worth a read ?

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