

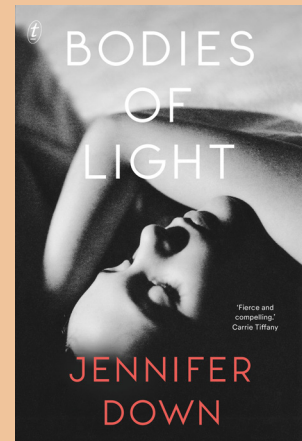
Bodies of Light



Jennifer Down

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FICTION, TRADE PAPERBACK

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PRAISE FOR *BODIES OF LIGHT*

'Brutal and beautiful—I couldn't stop reading it. Jennifer Down is a brilliant writer.'

Victoria Hannan

'Mesmerising, uncompromising and extraordinary. A whole life is in these pages.'

Robbie Arnott

'Fierce and compelling. Down's compassion for her character, her refusal to look away from intolerable suffering, is a lesson for us all. A novel with immense dignity and heart.'

Carrie Tiffany

ABOUT JENNIFER DOWN

Jennifer Down is a writer and editor who lives in Naarm/Melbourne. She was named a *Sydney Morning Herald* Young Novelist of the Year in both 2017 and 2018. Her previous works, *Our Magic Hour* and *Pulse Points*, have graced multiple shortlists and taken out literary awards.

ABOUT THE BOOK

A quiet, small-town existence. An unexpected Facebook message, jolting her back to the past. A history she's reluctant to revisit: dark memories and unspoken trauma, warning knocks on bedroom walls, unfathomable loss.

She became a new person a long time ago. What happens when buried stories are dragged into the light?

This epic novel is a masterwork of tragedy and heartbreak—the story of a life in full. *Bodies of Light* confirms Jennifer Down as one of the writers defining her generation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If the novel hadn't begun with the adult Maggie, do you think you would still be drawn into her the story the same way?
2. Jennifer Down deftly covers themes of grief, loss and mental health in this book. How did you feel during the reading experience? Is this simply a sad story or did you find moments of hope throughout?
3. Maggie and Damien have very different experiences of family growing up. How does this impact their reaction to their losses?
4. 'My leaving was selfish and cruel. I also think that most people would do the selfish thing if it meant surviving.' Put yourself in Maggie's shoes. Would you have left? Do you think leaving was a selfish act?
5. Do you think it's possible to walk away from one life and create another? What would pose the biggest challenge? Beyond self-protection, do you think Maggie had any further motivation for her departure?
6. What do you think present-day Maggie feels about the idea of motherhood?
7. What does Maggie's relationship with Judith tell us about the way we create family?
8. Tony contacts Maggie through Facebook to ask questions about her identity and past. What are the ethical ramifications of someone doing this? How would you feel if you were Maggie?
9. Some would say that *Bodies of Light* has an open ending. How do you feel about the way the book concludes?
10. If you've read Jennifer Down's previous work, how does this book compare with the others?