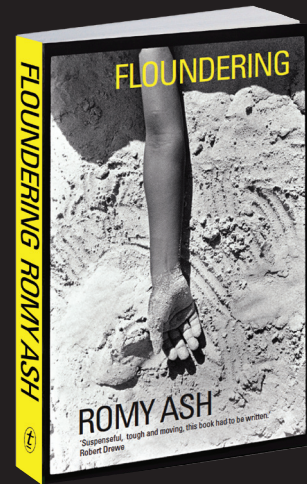


# Floundering

Romy Ash

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Fiction, Paperback



## Praise for *Floundering*

'Suspenseful, tough and moving, this book had to be written. I can see the film already.' *Robert Drewe*

'Ash writes with a child's voice that is utterly convincing, cast adrift in a world you will sorrowfully recognise at once as the one we all share. These boys are so real, you will lie awake worrying about them, hoping that somehow they will find their way through it.' *Cate Kennedy*

## About Romy Ash

Romy Ash is a Melbourne-based writer. She has written for *GriffithREVIEW*, the *Big Issue* and *Frankie* magazine. She has a regular cooking column in *Yen* magazine and writes for the blog *Trotsky & Ash*. The forthcoming *Voracious: New Australian Food Writing* features one of her essays. *Floundering* is her first novel.

## A reader's introduction to *Floundering*

Tom and Jordy have been living with their gran since the day their mother, Loretta, left them on her doorstep and disappeared.

Now Loretta's returned, and she wants her boys back. Tom and Jordy hit the road with Loretta in her beat-up car. The family of three journeys across the country, squabbling, bonding, searching and reconnecting.

But Loretta isn't mother material. She's broke, unreliable, lost. And there's something else that's not quite right with this reunion.

They reach the west coast and take refuge in a beachside caravan park. Their neighbour, a surly old man, warns the kids to stay away. But when Loretta disappears again the boys have no choice but to ask the old man for help, and now they face new threats and new fears.

This beautifully written and gripping debut is as moving as it is frightening, and as heartbreaking as it is tender.

## Questions for Discussion

1. Romy Ash only tells a small part of the boys' backstory and their life with their grandparents, yet the security of their previous existence is never in doubt. How does she use the voice of Tom to establish this?
2. Despite only being one-and-a-half years apart in age, Jordy has an understanding of and wariness about the world that Tom hasn't yet developed. How is this shown?
3. Write a paragraph detailing what you imagine Loretta has been up to during the last year since she dropped her boys off at their grandmother's house.
4. There is some foreshadowing of the threat Ned poses to the boys. Is this effective?
5. Many novels and movies centre on road trips. How does a 'journey' and a destination allow character to develop, and tension to build?
6. A caravan park by the sea is usually seen as a joyful place, yet there are many dangers (other than Nev) for the boys to encounter because of Loretta's parenting. What sources of danger can you identify?
7. Catching and relocating the shark becomes a task the boys are physically and emotionally committed to. What is the significance of moving the shark back to the sea, and why do the boys keep the body for so long?
8. What do you imagine happens following the end of the novel? Can Tom and, in particular, Jordy, recover from their experiences?