

ALLEN & UNWIN'S

# *Book Group Guide*

## Conversation Starters



## CONTENTS

About the author	1
About the book	1
Conversation starters	1
Just for fun	3
If you enjoyed <i>You Had It Coming</i>	3

# About the author

B.M. Carroll was born in Blarney, a small village in Ireland. The third child of six, reading was her favourite pastime (and still is!). Ber moved to Sydney in 1995 and spent her early career working in finance. Her work colleagues were speechless when she revealed that she had written a novel that was soon to be published. Ber now writes full-time and is the author of ten novels, including *Who We Were*, published by Viper in 2019. Find her on Twitter @bmcarrollauthor.

# About the book

A tumultuous psychological suspense from the author of *Who We Were*, exploring revenge, shattered reputations, and the true nature of consent.

'A wonderful writer of addictive, authentic Australian stories' - LIANE MORIARTY

WOULD YOU SAVE THE MAN WHO DESTROYED YOUR LIFE?

When paramedic Megan Lowe is called to the scene of an attempted murder, all she can do is try to save the victim. But as the man is lifted onto a stretcher, she realises she knows him. She despises him. Why should she save his life when he destroyed hers?

Jess Foster is on her way home when she receives a text from Megan. Once best friends, the two women haven't been close for years, not since the night when they were just the teenage girls whom no-one believed; whose reputations were ruined. All Jess can think is, you had it coming.

Now Megan and Jess are at the centre of a murder investigation. But what secrets are they hiding? Can they trust one another? And who really is the victim?

Perfect for fans of C.L. Taylor, Lucy Foley and Lisa Hall, *You Had It Coming* is a thrilling tale of suspense and dark secrets.

# Conversation starters

- The fight or flight response is said to be an automatic physiological reaction to a stressful or frightening event. Megan and Jess had different responses to the trauma they suffered as teenagers. Later in the novel, Jess comes to the conclusion that she recovered better than Megan. Do you agree? In this situation, was fight better than flight?

- Teenage parties are fraught with problems. It's normal for teenagers to make mistakes, but how do we prevent them from making life-changing mistakes?

Discuss the advice you give your sons, daughters and others of this age when attending parties and other social events.

- Discuss the differences between Megan's family and Jess's family. Compare their responses to the trial, their reactions to the subsequent attack by the Maloufs, and the contrast between Roslyn and Margaret.
- In the closing chapter, Bridget decides that William Newson did not 'have it coming': he was simply doing his job. But William being good at his job meant that some offenders were walking free ... and going on to reoffend.  
How can this be acceptable?
- Is everyone entitled to the presumption of innocence? Even second-time offenders?
- In sexual assault cases, often only two people know what actually happened and their perceptions of reality can be very different.  
Should 'beyond reasonable doubt' be reviewed or adjusted for these cases so that more offenders are convicted for their crimes?
- *The downside of that kind of careless wealth was revealed to her during the trial. The danger that comes from not having to clean up after yourself, not having to worry about bills that need paying, from having the luxury to pursue something that is ultimately going to lose you a lot of money, just to make a point. It cultivates selfishness, a poor grasp of reality.*  
Discuss the above extract, including the pitfalls and benefits of wealth and the behaviour it cultivates.
- *Dylan had obviously reached the stage where words wouldn't suffice, the stage where he thought the world didn't need him or care for him, where he believed himself beyond help or redemption.*  
In truth, Dylan had tried to speak with both Megan and Jess, without success.  
Do you believe that an open conversation would have led to their forgiveness and a different outcome for Dylan?
- Megan's brother, Sebastian, took justice into his own hands without his family's knowledge. When Megan finds the AVO, she feels conflicted. On the one hand, she is glad that Dylan and Thomas were hurt too, but on the other she knows that violence doesn't solve anything.  
Is personal vengeance ever warranted?

- Bridget is equally concerned for her daughter and son. She wants Cara to wear whatever she wants and be free from unwanted sexual attention. But she fears that her daughter would not be confident to speak up if she found herself in a difficult situation; *Some girls get raped because they don't want to cause a scene.*

She is also concerned that Ethan is capable of misreading the signals. *He's withdrawn at the best of times; how will he find the words to navigate a sexual encounter with a girl? She suspects he would be mute, hoping that the girl was 'into it' but not brave enough to double check.*

Discuss in relation to teenagers you know.

## Just for fun

- Who would you cast in a screen adaptation of *You Had It Coming*?
- If you could have a chat with any character from the novel, who would it be and why? What three questions would you ask them?
- Pick out a passage that strikes you as particularly moving or interesting and read it to the group.

## If you enjoyed *You Had It Coming*...

May we recommend the following:



A gripping novel about the power of childhood cruelty, and how it makes us the adults we become.

IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS BUT ALL IS NOT FORGIVEN

Katy is not the shy schoolgirl she once was, and she's looking forward to showing her classmates who she's become.

Annabel was the queen bee. But her fall from grace changed her life forever.

Zach was cruel, but he thinks he's changed.

Robbie was a target. And he never stood a chance.

The reunion will bring together friends and enemies, many for the first time in decades. But someone is still holding a grudge...