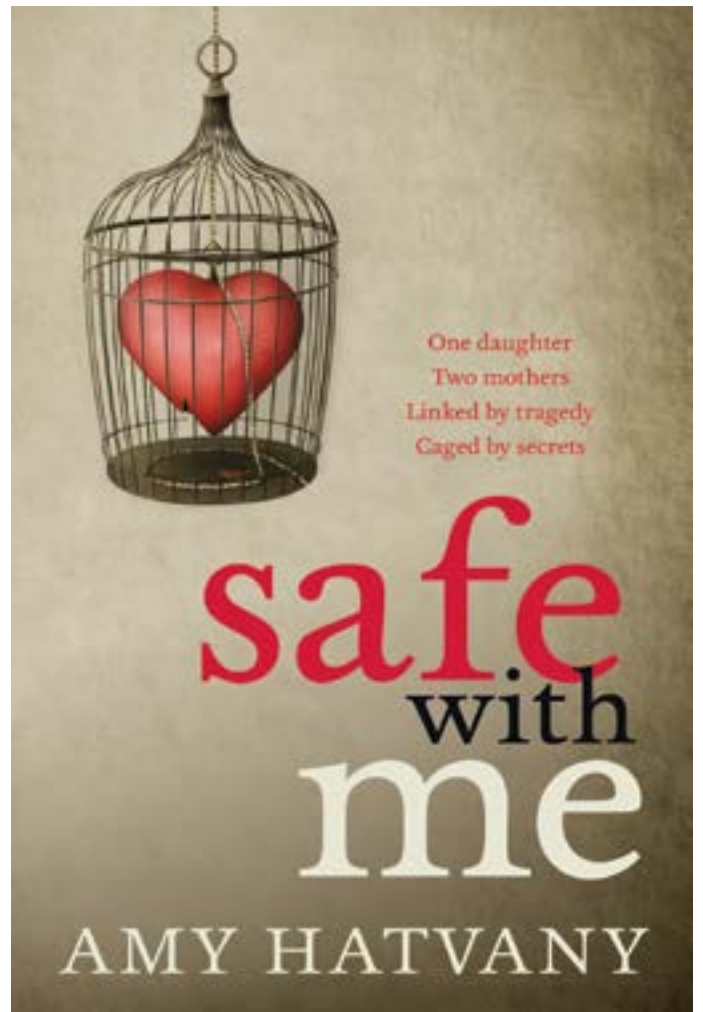


ALLEN & UNWIN



READING GROUP NOTES

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About the book

With the horrific screech of tyres, Hannah Scott's world as she knew it is brought to a devastating end.

One year after the accident, Hannah is still discouraging all attempts by family and friends to help her resume her normal life. But when her path crosses with Olivia Bell and her daughter Maddie who is finally on the way to recovery after a serious illness, Hannah develops a surprisingly close friendship with Olivia in a short time.

The Bells, however, have problems of their own. Many times on the verge of leaving her wealthy but abusive husband, Olivia now finds herself bound to him as never before in the wake of Maddie's illness.

Meanwhile Maddie, tired of the limits her poor health puts upon her and fearful of her father's increasing rage, regularly escapes into the one place where she can be anyone she wants: the internet. But when she is finally healthy enough to live her life in the way she's longed to do, the real world proves to be just as complicated as the isolated bubble she had been so eager to escape.

A masterful narrative, shaped by finely drawn characters whose fragile bonds are on a collision course with the truth, *Safe with Me* is a triumph.

About the author

Amy was born in Seattle, the youngest of three children. She graduated from Western Washington University with a degree in sociology only to discover most sociologists are unemployed. Soon followed a variety of jobs - some of which she loved, like decorating wedding cakes; others which she merely tolerated, like receptionist.

In 1998, Amy finally decided to sell her car, quit her job, and take a chance on her passion: writing books. She is the author of *Best Kept Secret*, *Outside the Lines*, *The Language of Sisters* and, most recently, *Heart Like Mine*.

For more about Amy and her books, please visit www.amyhatvany.com.

Reviews and Quotations

"A deftly crafted story... Hatvany compels readers to examine a diverse number of issues--death, organ donation, single parenthood, abuse, self-respect--and handles each topic with sensitivity and compassion." – *Kirkus*

"A stirring portrait of two moms, linked by tragedy, who rescue each other in more ways than one." – *Good Housekeeping*

"Hatvany does a marvelous job of not letting the plot get too maudlin or 'ripped from the headlines,' and her characters have warmth and depth. Readers will find themselves cheering for these women. A good pick for women's-fiction fans, particularly those who enjoy the realistic stories of Emily Giffin and Kristina Riggall." – *Booklist*

"In Amy Hatvany's capable hands, richly drawn characters explore everything that is complex, difficult, powerful and poignant about being a mother, a daughter, a friend. *Safe With Me* is an extraordinary look behind the curtain into the very private pains of women, and the hope that endures when you survive the unthinkable. It will remind you that the human spirit can triumph over all, and you will wish you could reach directly into these pages and hug the heroines." – Stacey Ballis, author of *Off the Menu*

"Amy Hatvany is a strong new voice in contemporary women's fiction. *Safe With Me* is a compelling, thought-provoking novel about three women learning from each other as they navigate through a terrain filled with both tragedy and opportunity." – Kristin Hannah, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author

"Beautiful and deeply moving, Amy Hatvany writes about the tangled web of family in a way that makes you laugh, cry, cheer and ache. This book has so much heart." – Sarah Jio, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Blackberry Winter*

"Equally heartbreaking and heart-pounding, Amy Hatvany's *Safe With Me* puts her in the very fine company of Jodi Picoult as an author who takes tender real-life moments and compels the reader to care until the very last page. A book that will stick with you for days." – Allison Winn Scotch, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Time of My Life*

"The novel explores myriad themes sure to appeal to fans of women's fiction: love and loss, parenthood, grief, friendship, and complex family dynamics. Hatvany's compassion for each female character is evident throughout, and readers will find their hearts, at times, breaking in three." – *Booklist*

For discussion

- ☞ The nature of safety is an obvious theme in this novel, particularly beginning with the title. Thinking of both physical and emotional safety, who is keeping whom safe in this book?
- ☞ If you had been in Hannah's position, do you think you could have donated your child's organs?
- ☞ Did Olivia and James's relationship change how you viewed domestic abuse?
- ☞ A writer chooses an epigraph with great care. Consider the Chinese proverb that Amy Hatvany chose for this book and discuss what the concept of destiny, or fate, means to you?
- ☞ Dishonesty is another theme throughout the novel. Do you think that there are degrees of dishonesty? For example, is there a difference between fabricating a story and obscuring the truth? What qualifies as lying? And is dishonesty that has good intentions more excusable?
- ☞ Maddie's experience at the mall with Hailey and her friends highlights the perils of being a teenage girl. Do you think the challenges of being an adolescent girl have inherently changed since you experienced it?
- ☞ Discuss the role that technology plays in this narrative. In what ways does it have an empowering, connective impact? In what ways does it have a distancing effect?

Suggested further reading

Son-in-Law by Charity Norman

Sisters of Mercy by Caroline Overinton

The Husband's Secret by Liane Moriarty

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

Change of Heart by Jodi Picoult