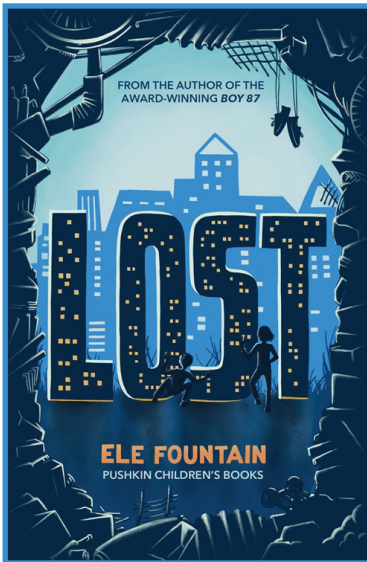


AN EXPLORATION OF THE NOVEL



LOST



ELE FOUNTAIN

THE STORY

Lost follows the story of siblings Lola and Amit. One day their father goes away from the city they live in for business and does not return. The children are able to fend for themselves in their flat for a while but it soon becomes impossible for them to stay there and they have to go out on to the streets like many other children in their city. It is a novel about the way in which children are often the helpless victims of larger society but also about friendship and family and the importance of hope.

'Lost is a breathless, thrilling adventure, a story to make your heart beat faster. Lola is a wonderful girl, resourceful, brave and loyal, and I desperately wanted her to find her way home'

Award-winning author Elizabeth Laird

'A gripping tale of a young girl lost in a concrete jungle. It shows how hope, determination and friendship can win through, even in the most challenging environment'

Malcolm Duffy, author of *Me Mam. Me Dad. Me.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ele Fountain is a writer and former editor in children's publishing. Her debut novel, *Boy 87*, won three awards and was nominated for nine more, including the Waterstones Children's Book Prize. *Lost*, a novel about child homelessness, is forthcoming from Pushkin Children's in 2020. Ele lives in Hampshire with her husband and two daughters and works full-time as a novelist.





Themes

HOME

FAMILY

POVERTY

FRIENDSHIP

HOPE

Family

The family in LOST is quite small - just Lola, Amit and their father. We find out in the book why this is the case. When Lola and Amit are separated in the book Lola feels very alone at first. When she meets Rafi he is not very friendly, but soon they are working together. Is he her new 'family'?

Activity: As a class discuss what family means. Does it matter whether your family is big or small? What do you think we should do to be a good family member? What is the difference between family and friendship?

Title

One-word titles for novels can be risky because that one word must describe a whole book. They must be chosen with great care. LOST describes how Lola feels when she finds herself alone, without her home. How many other reasons can you think of for the book being called LOST?

Activity: Choose a book you have read recently and think of an alternative 'one-word' title to describe it (it doesn't matter how many words the original title has)

Writing style

The story is about Lola and Amit, but it is told from Lola's point of view. As the older sibling Lola feels that she has to look after her brother and protect him. Do you think that the first-person point of view helps us get an idea of Lola's sense of responsibility? Do you think that seeing the world through Lola's eyes helps the reader to understand more about the issues and problems she is facing?

Activity: Choose a scene from the story and rewrite it from Amit's point of view, or from Rafi's point of view. Try to focus on how they might be feeling.

Setting

Ele Fountain has written LOST with a very strong sense of place. We get a real impression of the busy city, all the people rushing to-and-fro, the shops and food-sellers and the many children who are living on the street. The city in LOST is almost a character in the novel but the author does not name the city. Why do you think that is?

Activity: Descriptive writing – choose a place that is special to you. Without naming what or where it is, write a couple of paragraphs to describe spending five minutes in this place. How would you feel? What would you see? Share your writing with the class and see if they can guess where your piece is set.

LOST



Friendship

Lola thinks Bella is her best-friend and she loves to spend time with her having sleep-overs and trying out new clothes and make-up styles. When Lola and Amit become homeless they are not able to stay in touch with Bella. Why do you think that is?

Activity: As a class discuss what friendship means to you. Talk about the way in which friends are kind to one another and help each other. Talk about how a good friend makes you feel.

Home

When the book begins and we first meet Lola and Amit in their flat, we see how comfortable their lives are. As the story unfolds, They find themselves living amongst the street children that they had only seen from a car window before. Lola talks about how her old house doesn't feel like home anymore, but she needs somewhere that she can call home, even if it's not her comfortable apartment.

Activity: As a class, discuss what you need to make a 'home'. Is it more about what you have, or about how it makes you feel?

Poverty

At the start of the book, Lola has a comfortable life, but she has friends who have even more than she does. Lola wants some of the things her friends have. Later in the story, after Lola has spent some time living on the streets, do you think her feelings about what she wants have changed?

Activity: write a list of ten things in your house which are most precious to you. Now look at your list again and choose the one thing which is most precious of all. Why did you choose this item? Are any of the items on your list things that you really need, or just things that you really want?

Further activities

Read newspapers and watch the news to find out about the issue of homelessness where you live. Many young people in the UK are homeless. Can you find out what this means? Are the children living on the street or are they housed in hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation?

Hope

One of the important themes in the book is the way in which the characters never give up hope. All the children in the book hope that one day their situation will be better. Sometimes some quite difficult things happen to the characters but they do not despair. What do you think the author believes about hope? Think about the things that Lola hopes for in the book and see the way in which those things change as the book develops.

Activity: As a class talk about hope. Think about the way in which having hope helps us overcome trouble and difficult situations. Talk about why hope is important to people. Write a list of the five most important things that you hope for.