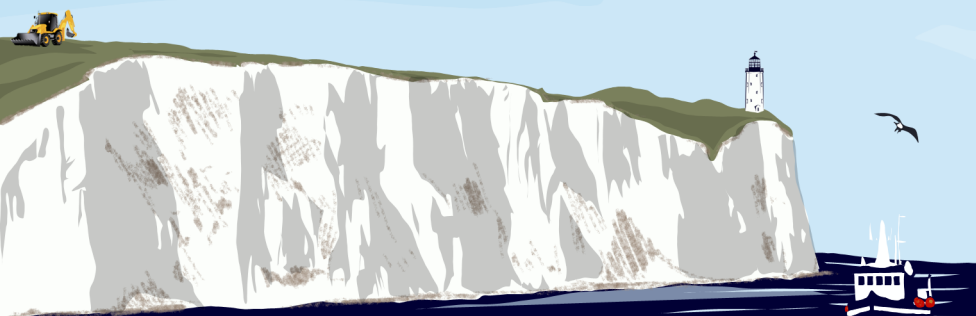


FROM THE INTERNATIONALLY BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
BESIDE MYSELF AND READING THE WORLD

CROSSING OVER



ANN
MORGAN

Crossing Over

Book Group Questions

Crossing Over brings together two very different stories about journeys across the English Channel: the ‘Little Ships’ Dunkirk rescue in the Second World War and the recent small-boat crossings. How are these journeys portrayed in the book and how does this compare to the way they are often discussed in the national media?

Another title for *Crossing Over* might have been *In the Same Boat*. On the face of it, Edie and Jonah’s lives are very different, but might they share more than meets the eye? In what ways do their stories cross over?

Both Edie and Jonah’s stories are shaped by personal experiences and international events. Which has more power in their lives?

‘Nothing is too much trouble when family is in the case,’ Aunt Dudu tells Jonah. Does this prove true over the course of the novel?

Irish writer George Bernard Shaw once claimed: ‘England and America are two countries divided by a common language.’ Could the same be true of England and Malawi? How many different Englishes

are at work in *Crossing Over* and what role do they play in building or obscuring understanding?

Both Jonah and Edie are going through challenges that affect their perspective; Edie because of vascular dementia and Jonah because of the trauma he carries from his previous experiences. How do these issues affect the way they see the world? Is their impact wholly negative or do they gain something from their altered perspective? How far can we trust their interpretations of events?

Edie regards the attempts of her neighbours to help her as 'being kind to be cruel'. How is caring portrayed in the novel and what does the book say about approaches to helping those in need?

'These were less enlightened times.' So claims Wilfred Jameson in his letter to Edie about the fate of army deserter Neville Brown back in the 1940s. Is he right?

Some of Edie's neighbours imply that they would be more sympathetic to Jonah if he were a refugee rather than an economic migrant. How does the novel portray the distinction between the two categories?

At the end of the novel, Jonah's brother, Daniel, calls to say that he is also going to travel to the UK. Should he make the trip?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ann Morgan is an author, speaker and editor based in Folkestone. Ann's writing has been published widely, including in the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Financial Times*, and by the BBC. In 2012, she set herself the challenge of reading a book from every country in a year – a project that led to a TED talk and to the non-fiction book *Reading the World: How I Read a Book from Every Country*. Her debut novel, *Beside Myself*, has been translated into eight languages. *Crossing Over*, her latest novel, draws on her experience living just a few minutes from where many of the small boats crossing the Channel land. She is Literary Explorer in Residence of the Cheltenham Literature Festival for 2022 and 2023.

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