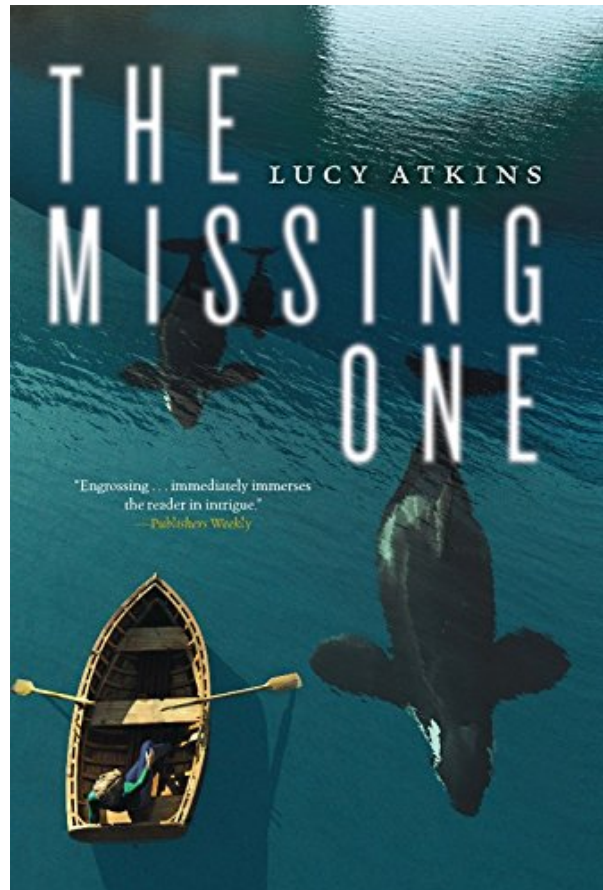
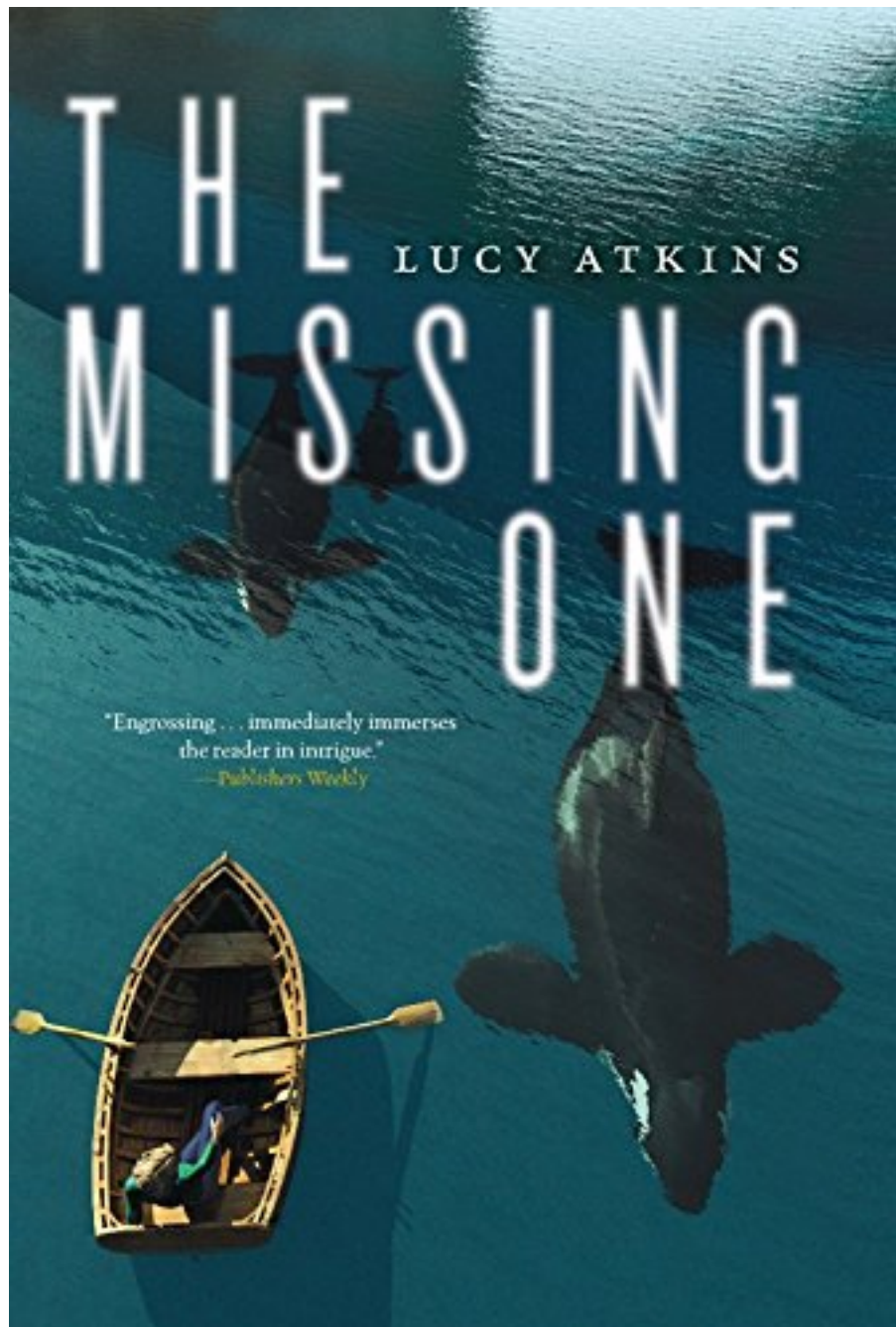


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THE MISSING ONE BY LUCY ATKINS PDF

In her gripping debut novel, Lucy Atkins takes us on one woman's journey to the beautiful and rugged Pacific Northwest to discover the dark secrets of her family's past so that she can understand and accept herself. Kal McKenzie was never close to her mother Elena, whose coldness towards her spoiled any chance of a good relationship. When Elena dies of cancer, Kal feels forlorn: how do you mourn a mother who, inexplicably, just didn't seem to love you?

While clearing out Elena's art studio, Kal finds a drawer packed with postcards, each bearing an identical one-line message from a Canadian gallery owner named Susannah Gillespie: "Thinking of you." Who is this woman and might she hold the key to her ruined relationship with her mother?

Conflicted by her grief and shaken up from recently seeing a covetous text from an old girlfriend on her husband's cell phone, Kal impulsively sets off with her toddler Finn to Susannah's home on a remote British Columbian island, a place of killer whales and storms.

Soon Kal quickly realizes she has made a big mistake. The striking and enigmatic Susannah will only share a few scraps of information about Elena. Kal discovers that her mother was a pioneering orca researcher-an activist trying to save the powerful and dangerous creatures.

- Sales Rank: #1213499 in Books
- Brand: Atkins, Lucy
- Published on: 2015-02-03
- Released on: 2015-02-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.38" w x 6.25" l, 1.25 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 416 pages

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

An intriguing mystery debut thriller of dark family secrets—bridging the gap from past to present!

By Judith D. Collins

A special thank you to Quercus and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

THE MISSING ONE, a gripping and emotional debut by Lucy Atkins, taking readers on a journey from California, England, to British Columbia with an intriguing mystery thriller of dark family secrets—bridging the gap from past to present.

Kali seeks to unravel her unknown past. Her mom's life is a mystery, having died of cancer, and her grandparents are deceased, as well. Her dad is not forthcoming with any information. Kali often felt her mother favored Alice, her sister. Kali wants to be a good mother and feels a strong desire to explore her past.

As she is clearing out her mom, Elena's art studio or storage, Kal discovers some postcards, from a Canadian gallery owner named Susannah. Always, "thinking of you." Did her mom have an affair? Who is Graham? She reads this letter which has her questioning if Alice knew about the affair? The postcards have Canadian stamps, though one is sent from Taos, NM, and another from Seattle and a few from further afield—Quito, Moscow, and Durban. The later postcards come from the Susannah Gillespie Gallery.

With her ten month toddler Finn, Kali impulsively flies to Vancouver to meet Susannah, (even though she has not notified her of her impending arrival), who has sent post cards to her mother, Elena for over thirty years. In addition, another impulse – she suspects her husband Doug is having an affair.

Of course, now that she is here in this remote area of Canada, there is bad weather, heavy storms, killer

whales, and she is fighting for her life as well as her son, Finn. Who is this woman Susannah? Is she dangerous? Does she have more family and if so where are they? What a chilling adventure!

Kali travels halfway across the world looking for her mother; putting Finn in terrible danger, and herself and possibly another life, but the truth has been staring at her all the time from the crease in the wedding photo. However, she could not see it because she was too busy running away, spinning stories, and pressing them into blanks.

It is easy to forget, when you are running away from something that you are always running toward something else. "Sometimes you need to run away in order to get somewhere."

A very intriguing tale, as have been reading quite a few novels about parent's withholding information about the past, allowing their children to go to great lengths, while they are trying to protect dark secrets and ultimately cause more problems, by doing so.

The Missing One offers vivid descriptions of the islands off the coast, nature, beauty, whales, orcas, and other elements of the sea, as the book switches from the present, one woman's quest for answers and a mother's mysterious past.

Even though I was frustrated at Kal's behavior at times, the beauty of the novel, lies in the narrative—almost poetic, the vivid descriptions, the setting, the wildlife and connection to human nature.

As Kali discovers her mother was a pioneering orca researcher—an activist and scientist in the 70s— the storylines intersect, and secrets are unraveled as the tension builds. Like the whales, her mother lives in two world: breathing in one, then diving beneath.

An ideal selection for book clubs and discussions, with an array of viewpoints and motives; from those trying to protect one another, by withholding the truth.

"The captive orca was trying so hard to stop her baby from hurting itself on the sides of the tank that she forgot to feed it. The instinct to protect trumped the instinct to nurture." -- Perhaps Kali reacted as well and learns motherhood is triumphant, an extraordinary force not to be messed with.

A mix of women's fiction, strong female friendships, relationships, suspense, thriller, family drama, animal rights, activist, and feminist—for an engrossing and emotional page-turner thriller. An ongoing main theme of parental love; a strong and powerful tale of motherhood, a parents' love for their child, and the lengths they will go to save their them; with parallels of the orcas protecting their own as they stray--similar to human dynamics. An author to watch...look forward to more.

On a side note: With similar subject matter, I am strongly reminded of one of my favorite US authors, Mary Alice Monroe. Having read many of her books, she is known for her intimate portrayals of women's lives, and an active environmentalist; she draws themes for her novels from nature and the parallels with human nature—drawing attention to various endangered species and the human connection to the natural world.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Real depth of character wrapped in a gripping tale. Couldn't put it down.

By Kazzese

This is a great read. It has that rare combination of a gripping plot and a soulful internal journey. Atkins skillfully alternates the story between a daughter's present quest to unravel long-hidden secrets from her

mother's past, and the telling of that story from the mother's point of view. Ultimately, it is a beautiful story about the unbreakable connections between mother and child, a theme eloquently evoked through Atkins' gorgeous descriptions of the intense familial bonds of killer whales and one woman's quest to bring a voice to those misunderstood giants of the sea. If you enjoy unique premise + great writing + immersion in another world (think "State of Wonder" by Anne Patchett, or "Euphoria" by Lilly King) you will enjoy this book, the kind you look forward to diving back into at the end of each day.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Brilliant debut.

By Liz Barnsley

Thank you to the author and publisher for the review copy via Netgalley (UK)

Kal McKenzie always had a tricky relationship with her mother, Elena, but when Elena dies of breast cancer, Kal is bereft: how do you mourn a mother whose love you could never count on?

So, I found myself reading two equally compelling but very different books about how the choices of a parent can affect their children – this one and the recently reviewed “This Child of Mine” so I’m surprised I’m still standing – phew, talk about emotional responses to books, “The Missing One” had me tied up in all kinds of heartache in the best way possible.

Kal is a complete mess when we meet her in the opening stages of this story – having just suffered the loss of a mother she never really understood, she is also tackling the very real possibility that her husband is having an affair – this leads her to an impulsive move and one that may cost her more than she imagines.

Determined to unravel her mother's past in order to come to terms with her own sense of self, Kal travels to a remote location to unlock the secrets of her childhood. Taking young son Finn with her, she finds a mystery with its roots in the lives of a group of people she had never even heard of – including in a very real sense, her own mother.

We hear the story of Kal's journey alongside snippets of her mother Elena's earlier life, and as the tale progresses, long held and deeply buried secrets start coming to life -and this is compelling stuff.

Some amazing characters can be found here – Kal herself is a nightmare in a wonderful way, I often wanted to slap her, so naive is she about the motives of others – and so seemingly determined to continue on this path despite circumstances screaming at her “NO GO BACK! ANYWHERE BUT HERE!”. To be fair to her though, her father is no help – he is annoyingly cryptic and if at any point in the whole dilemma he had actually just told the truth, so much heartache could be avoided – and therein lies the beauty of the storytelling here..our very real and heartfelt attempts to protect our children can often be the very thing that is doing them the most harm..

When Kal meets Susannah, an old friend of Elena's, things really begin to snowball – a wonderfully drawn complex character, Susannah holds the key to it all, but she is strangely reticent...and the very real sense of threat surrounding her is palpable in the pages she inhabits...cleverly done.

Descriptively speaking this is beautiful writing – the parts of the story that deal with the wonderful wildlife, specifically Killer Whales, is brilliant and I learnt a lot – I feel some research coming on, I want to know more about this subject. As a backdrop to Elena's life and the things that drive her, it is organic and totally believable...you can almost forgive her for what comes later.

All in all a wonderful tale, well told, one that may leave you slightly overwrought in the best way possible, and one that I would highly recommend for those who like family drama with a mystery and thriller element.

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