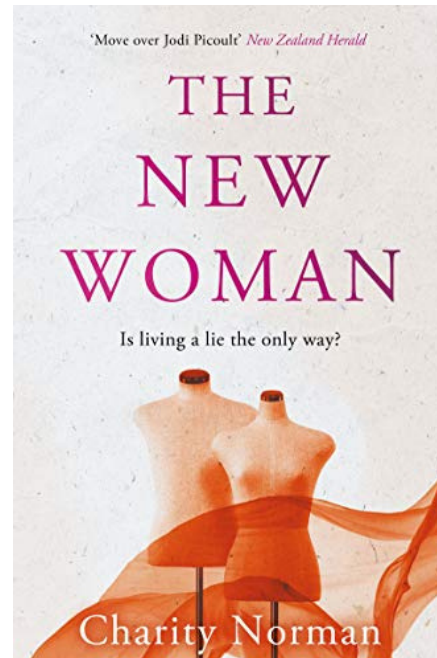


Reading Notes

The New Woman/The Secret Life of Luke Livingstone - Charity Norman

1. Luke/Lucia has hidden their gender identity from Eilish throughout their marriage. Is this best understood as deception, self-preservation, or both?
2. How sympathetic were you towards Eilish? What does she lose when Luke/Lucia begins to live openly as the woman she knows herself to be? Is Eilish's grief about losing a husband, losing the future she imagined, or something else?
3. What do you think the book is trying to suggest about makes someone essentially themselves? Do you agree/disagree?
4. Luke/Lucia reached a point where continuing to hide themselves had become unbearable. Do you think there was a genuine choice? What alternatives were there, if any?
5. Luke/Lucia's decision to transition potentially comes at the cost of a long and happy marriage, family relationships, friendships and social standing. Does the novel suggest that authenticity is worth such a price? Do you agree?
6. Would the novel have been more or less effective if it had been told entirely from Luke/Lucia's perspective, without hearing so much from Eilish and the rest of the family?
7. Simon's reaction is particularly strong. How understandable did you find his desire to protect his children? At what point, if any, does his reaction become unfair to Luke?
8. Which characters need forgiveness, and for what? Luke for keeping their secret? Eilish or Simon for their initial reactions? Other characters for failing to understand?



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