

"A perfectly executed and quintessential romantic comedy."
—Christina Lauren, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Unhoneymooners*

One Night on the Island

A NOVEL



Josie Silver

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
OF *ONE DAY IN DECEMBER*

Book Club Kit

Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. *One Night on the Island* begins with Cleo in London and Mack in the United States deciding to take some time for themselves to think about their lives and where they want to go next, since life hasn't quite shaped up for either of them the way they thought it would. Have you ever been in a similar situation, where you wanted to take a step back and reevaluate? Did you find it was a good experience? Why or why not?
2. As Cleo and Mack realize that they'll be staying together in Otter Lodge for the foreseeable future, they (begrudgingly) decide to try and make the best of it by setting boundaries so that each can get some of the solitude they seek on Salvation Island. Were they successful in their approach?
3. Sometimes it can be easier for people to open up to strangers about difficult parts of their lives than to people close to them, as Mack and Cleo do throughout the novel. Why do you think they did? Have you ever had this experience?
4. Cleo's mission on Salvation Island is to "self-couple" and provide a fresh perspective for her dating column, and she sets about accomplishing this task by preparing a ceremony to "marry herself" at the end of her stay. What did you think of her personal journey while she was on the island? Was she successful in finding self-love and acceptance? Why or why not?
5. Mack, on the other hand, is on Salvation Island to give his estranged wife the space she needs while trying to come to terms with the state of their marriage himself. How did you feel about Mack's situation? Did he make the right choice in coming to the island? Why or why not?
6. While on Salvation Island, both Cleo and Mack are surprised to find themselves truly taken by the islanders and their way of life, especially because of the sharp contrast to their lives in large, bustling cities. Have you ever visited a place or met people that gave you a newfound appreciation for a way of living other than your own? What was that experience like? Did it change your perspective or priorities in any way?
7. As a result of their respective stays on the island, both Cleo and Mack decide to make rather large changes in their lives. What did you think of those big decisions they made? Would you have done the same in their positions? Why or why not?
8. What did you think of the novel's somewhat unconventional ending?

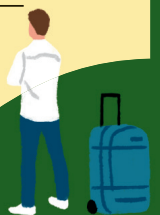


A Conversation with Josie Silver

**Q: Is Salvation Island based on a real place? From where did you draw inspiration for the island and its inhabitants?
What did your research process look like?**

A: First of all—no, unfortunately, Salvation is not a real place or based specifically on one! If it was, I'd be first in line to rent Otter Lodge. I knew from the outset that I wanted to create a fictional island to suit the needs of the story, to give Cleo and Mack the perfect backdrop. Removing the limitations imposed by reality allowed for complete freedom, but that definitely didn't mean I was off the hook for research. Covid restrictions prevented me from traveling to Ireland to get an on-the-ground feel, so I was very reliant on the internet, on books, and on chatting with people. I spent quite some time reading up on Ireland's islands, digging up documentaries, scouring YouTube footage—anything I could get my hands and eyes on, really, to bring the islands and their people to life as much as possible in my head. Then it was time to mentally pinpoint Salvation among the existing islands on the map, to decide its terrain and size, to paint the landscape in my head. It feels as if it is a real place to me; I've closed my eyes and walked its coastline countless times, and I've mentally tramped up and down Wailing Hill daily over the course of writing the book. I can feel the worn indent of the boulder at the top of the hill, and I would love to settle my bum up there and watch the sea for five minutes. I was shooting for complete escapism, for a faraway fantasy feel—my very favorite reads are the ones that whisk me away from my armchair for a few hours, and that's very much my hope for my readers with this book.

Belonging is one of the main themes of the book, and I wanted the islanders to form the bedrock of that. Cleo and Mack both arrive on Salvation Island feeling disconnected and lonely, with the sole intention of becoming even more so at Otter Lodge. Neither expect to discover a lodger in situ or a community that will gather them close, but the islanders see two people in need and do precisely that. In fact, I grew up in a tight-knit community (not on a remote island, sadly!) where everyone knew each other and family was central, so I tuned in to that when thinking about the inhabitants of Salvation. Every community needs its elders, its rebels, its matriarchs, its jokers, its caretakers, and its children, and Salvation Island is no different. Carmen, Delores, and Raff are very much the old guard, with Brianne, Delta, and Barney holding their hands out for the baton as the next generation. Salvation's young people are shaped by the traditions and remoteness of the island, but they are thoroughly modern, too—they're moving Salvation with the times, albeit at a gentle pace. My ultimate aim was to create the kind of community we all yearn to be part of—meaningful and supportive, and rich with laughter, loyalty, and love.



A Conversation with Josie Silver

Q: What was it like to write an American character? How did finding Mack's voice compare to writing Cleo's?

A: I'm a big fan of American TV, and there's an embarrassment of riches around these days thanks to the various streaming services—I tell myself my TV habit is research, and it makes me feel less guilty about opening Netflix when I should be working! It really is research, though, because it gives me such a gold mine of wonderful American men to draw my characters from. *This Is Us* is a perfect example (I'm OBSESSED!)—Jack's devotion as a husband and a father, Randall's dependability, Kevin's angst, Toby's humor. Going back a little further, Tom from *Desperate Housewives* was so self-assured, but so honest and vulnerable at the same time; he's long been my gold standard fictional husband. And, of course, the mighty, beloved *Schitt's Creek*. I am so in love with the entire Rose family! The transparent way they love; the underscore of decency; the wit, the heart, and the humor—I admire it all hugely. So I drink in all these shows, and all these male characters, and they fill me with inspiration when it comes to creating characters of my own.

I'm also fortunate to have a brilliant US editor who diligently ironed the Britishness out of Mack's chapters, for which I am eternally grateful!

Q: Where did you find the inspiration for the self-coupling celebration Cleo has for herself?

A: Of all the elements of the book, Cleo's self-coupling ceremony felt like one of the most crucial parts to get right. I knew I didn't want it, or her, to feel gimmicky or foolish. I wanted it to cut to the heart of her anxieties around losing her father, and to demonstrate her sincerity and sense of self-worth. I was super-keen to include important stuff around the theme of self-acceptance behind the novelty of the "wedding for one!" headline.

I used the traditional wedding vows as a kickoff point, and then I tried to think more widely about the things we'd wish for the women in our lives to have—for our friends, for our sisters. Isn't it always so much easier to give advice and support to others than to turn that love inward for ourselves? I guess I wanted Cleo to feel strengthened and empowered and, above all, to feel whole.

A Conversation with Josie Silver

Q: What does your writing process look like? Has it been affected by lockdown?

A: I was really lucky to have had a backyard office installed six months before the pandemic hit—I honestly don't know what I'd have done without my bolt-hole! Like most other parents around the globe, I suddenly became a teacher and a full-time mom in addition to my usual workload, so having a space to escape to that was just mine was especially valuable. That said, I found being creative really tough in the early months of Covid—my anxiety and uncertainty seeped onto the page in the form of a half-written, angst-ridden book that was very difficult to write. In the end, I abandoned it and switched to something more upbeat to write *One Night on the Island*, and the relief of closing that document has stayed with me. There was definitely an element of pandemic escape involved with writing *One Night on the Island*. It was a tonic to head down to my office most afternoons and transport myself mentally to Salvation Island. I really hope that my escape becomes the readers' escape too.

In general, I'm not a plotter. I like to have a beginning and a probable end in my head and then start writing the story to see where it leads me. I really enjoy the process of getting to know the characters in that way. They say or do things to make me pause and think, "Oh, okay, so *that's* where we're going," or "Are you *sure* you should do that?" I love the element of surprise, although it's definitely a more stressful way of working than plotting everything out beforehand.

Q: What books have you been reading and loving lately?

A: I'm halfway through *The Ex Hex* by Erin Sterling—a really good witch story is always on my automatic buy list, and this one is fabulous! I recently finished and loved *The Confessions of Frannie Langton* by Sara Collins, and it's powerful and immersive. It's being adapted for TV soon, and I can't wait to see it. Like many others, I'm a *Bridgerton* devotee, and watching the series has led me to reading Julia Quinn's historical romance series—I'm a few books in and happily addicted.

A Beginner's Guide to Knitting



Step 1: Make a Slip Knot

Make a slip knot and leave a tail. The length of this tail varies depending on the number of stitches you will need to cast on. To figure out where to tie the slip knot, measure three and a half times the width the pattern calls for.

Step 2: Put Slip Knot on Needle

Put the needle through the slip knot and pull snug with the short tail end of the yarn closest to you.

Step 3: Make Sure the Slip Knot Is Facing the Right Way

The string that is attached to your ball of yarn should be in the back, and the string that is free should be in the front. Then hold the needle in your right hand with the two strings of yarn hanging down.

Step 4: Pinch Thumb and Index Finger Together

Make the okay sign with your left hand by pinching your thumb and index finger together.

Step 5: Push Fingers between the Two Yarn Strands

Put these two fingers between the two strands of yarn, making sure the short tail end of the yarn is in front of your thumb and the long working yarn is behind your index finger.

Step 6: Grab the Yarn

With your free middle, ring, and pinky fingers on your left hand, grab around the two dangling strands of yarn, like you are making a fist, and hold the strands out of the way.

Step 7: Push Yarn Apart

Separate your thumb and index finger, like you are making a slingshot with your fingers. This will push the strands of yarn apart.

Step 8: Notice the Two Loops

Look at your hand that is holding the yarn. Notice the loops around your thumb and index fingers.

Step 9: Put Needle Through First Loop

Insert your needle behind the strand of yarn closest to you on your thumb.

Step 10: Put Needle Through Second Loop

Insert your needle behind the strand of yarn closest to you on the loop around your index finger.

Step 11: Pull Yarn from Loop Two Through Loop One

Pull your needle back through the loop on your thumb.

Step 12: Take Thumb Out of Loop One

Release your thumb from the loop.

Step 13: Pull Tail of Yarn With Thumb, Creating a New Loop

Pull the tail end of the yarn with your thumb, tightening the stitch you just made and creating another loop on your thumb. (You should have two stitches on your needle now—your slip knot counts as one of these stitches.)

Step 14: Repeat

Repeat steps 9–13 until you have the desired number of stitches cast on. This type of cast-on is called the Long Tail Cast On.