

Book Club Notes for *Happily Ever After?* by Benison Anne O'Reilly

Summary

Ellie Cooper is a smart blonde with a successful career and a finely tuned eye for human weakness. But that doesn't stop her from falling for the worst of romantic clichés - a fairytale wedding to her very own prince charming.

Unfortunately those old fairytales provide no instruction for married life and Ellie's marriage - and new husband, Tony - prove to be a lot more complicated than she bargained for. Can Ellie and Tony survive their troubles, or should Ellie cut her losses and look elsewhere for love? Only our heroine can make that choice.... But will it be the right one?

About the author

Benison Anne O'Reilly has university degrees in pharmacy and commerce and works as a medical writer. She is co-author of the best-selling *Australian Autism Handbook*. Benison lives in Sydney with her husband, three sons and a menagerie of small animals. *Happily Ever After?* is her first novel.

Reading group questions

- Ellie and Tony responded to the loss of William in very different ways. Do you think that either of them will ever fully recover from their loss? How did Ellie deal with her grief? Why was Ellie able to find strength? Do you think there were other forms of support she may have found useful?
- What are Tony's flaws? What could he have done to address them? Do you think that he has truly learnt his lesson? Will he find happiness?
- What factors did Ellie consider before choosing to stay with Tony after he had told her about his affair? Did she make the right decision? Do you think there are particular industries where people may be more likely to have an affair? Do you think that Tony would have continued having the affair in Hong Kong?
- Who behaved immorally – Ellie or Tony? Do you think it is more socially acceptable for a male or a female to have an affair? Does it make a difference if the people having the affair are already married, or if they have children?
- Ellie thought that some mothers would think badly of her for leaving Issy in childcare whilst she went to work. What issues do working women face? What do you consider is a good balance between pursuing a career and being a mother? Is there a difference between the role of a parent and that of a mother?
- How did Ellie recover her self-esteem and confidence? How much does money and image mean for Ellie? What are her values?
- Why was Ellie attracted to Alex? When Ellie started seeing Alex do you think she was on the rebound? What do you think are the foundations for successful relationships?
- Do you believe in fairytales and 'happily ever after'?