

# The Telling Error

## Reading Group Questions

1. Is Nicki a sympathetic character? Is it her own fault that she's the way she is, or someone else's? Does the novel have an attitude to character and behaviour that goes beyond that sort of moral judgement?
2. Whose behaviour is more reprehensible: Nicki's or Melissa's? Why?
3. Who bears most responsibility for the murder of Damon Blundy? His killer, or another character in the book?
4. Is Nicki in control of the path her life is taking and able to make choices, or is she out of control?
5. Would you describe Nicki as a love/sex addict? Do you believe that's a real condition, or psychobabble?
6. Does the novel see our ability to live some of our lives online – via chatrooms and social media – as freeing or oppressive? Do you agree?
7. What is the novel saying about online cruelty? Why, for example, does Bryn Gilligan go on Twitter and read and respond to people's insulting comments all day long? Why do we care when strangers insult and abuse us online, given that we don't know them and could ignore them?
8. Is Damon Blundy a goodie or a baddy, or is that question too morally simplistic?
9. What is the novel saying about moral hypocrisy?
10. At one point, in one of his columns, Damon Blundy writes, 'If we want better apologies, we need to be more forgiving'. What might he have meant by this, and do you agree with him? Ought we to condemn the sin and not the sinner? Is this what Blundy is advocating in his attitude to Bryn Gilligan?
11. In the UK, the novel will be published as *Woman With a Secret* – which do you think is the better and more appropriate title?
12. Paula Riddiough, the former MP, has a very unusual attitude to marriage and fidelity – do you have any sympathy with it? Is Paula's model of the ideal relationship more or less healthy than Nicki's, or than Melissa's?
13. What is the novel saying about secrets and lies? Are they the same thing? What's the

relationship between the two?

14. It is very important to Nicki to be able to tell Melissa the whole truth about her life. And yet, she's demonstrably a committed liar. So why does it matter so much to her to tell the truth to one person?

15. Can you understand why Nicki was so upset when her best friend and her brother became a couple?

16. Are Simon and Charlie right to be suspicious of Liv and Gibbs? What might really be going on there, assuming Liv and Gibbs haven't broken up as they claim?