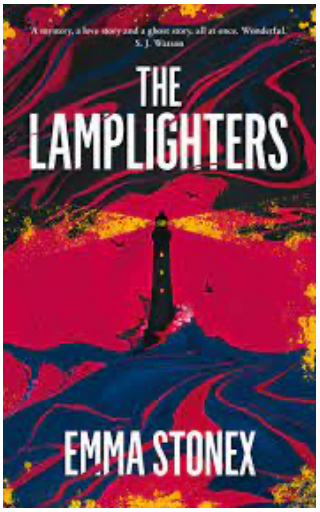
Prison Reading Groups

# The Lamplighters

**By Emma Stonex**




*In all my years I've realized there are two kinds of people. The ones who hear a creak in a dark, lonely house, and shut the windows because it must have been the wind. And the ones who hear a creak in a dark, lonely house, light a candle, and go to take a look.*

On New Years Eve 1972, a boat arrives at the Maiden Rock Lighthouse to relieve the keepers from a two-month tour of duty. But Arthur Black, Bill Walker and Vincent Bourne have all disappeared without trace, leaving the door barred, the table laid, and the clocks stopped at a quarter to nine. Moving between the men's stories and the families they left behind long-held secrets surface and truths twist into lies as an author pieces together what happened, why and who to believe. Inspired by a true story from the 1900s, Emma StoneX plays with the ideas of light versus dark, of reality and illusion and isolation and obsession in a riveting and suspenseful novel.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Throughout the novel several versions of what happened the night of the men's disappearance are presented; however all these versions have flaws and pieces that do not add up. What do you really think happened? Do you feel there is a clear answer?

2. *The way I look at it is there's light and dark in the world and that's what the whole world revolves around. There has to be light in order for there to be dark.* There are many forms of grief and loss throughout the novel, what do you think the author is trying to say about how we understand and cope with loss?

3. Do you think all the characters in the novel were real or were some elements of the characters imagination?

4. There is a very evident divide between the males' perspectives (captured from 1972) and the women's perspectives (captured in the modern times). Do you think the author has tried to make a statement by presenting them in this way?

5. Did you particularly relate to any of the characters relationships within the book? Who's marriage/relationship did you feel was the most relatable and understandable?

6. Throughout the novel there is evident stigma shown towards particular members of the community, how do you think the author helped you to understand those characters particular back stories.

*Thank you to our volunteer Becca for choosing this title and creating the resource.*