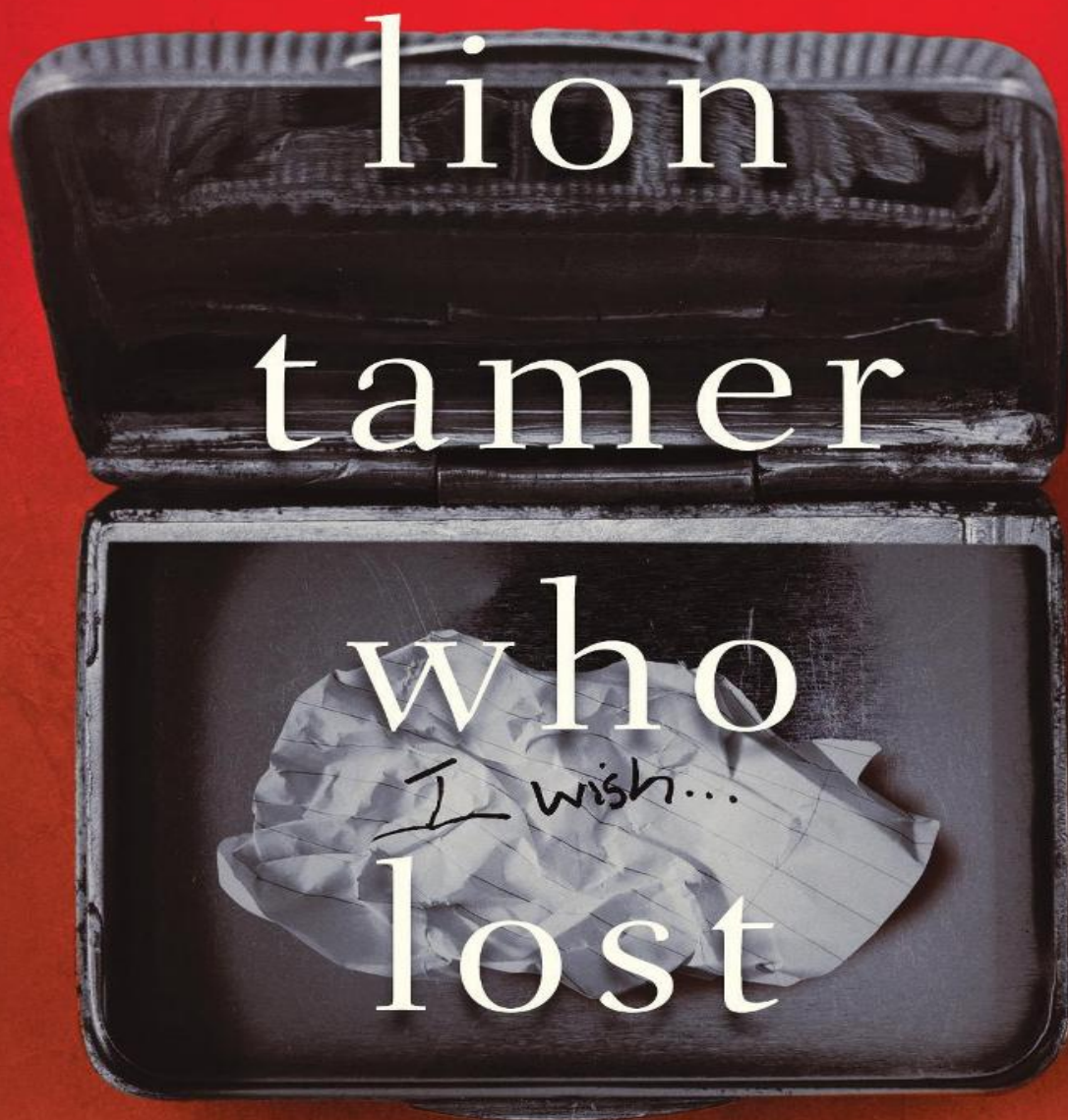


'A devastating, tender and powerful love story, beautifully and bravely told. You will lose your heart to this book. I adored it' Miranda Dickinson

Be careful what  
you wish for...

the

Be careful  
who you love...



lion  
tamer  
who  
lost

**LOUISE BEECH**

'Reminiscent of the early work of Maggie O'Farrell' *Irish Times*

'A poignant, surprising and all-consuming read' Katie Marsh

## **PRAISE FOR LOUISE BEECH**

'I cannot remember when I was last so touched by a story. *Tin Man meets Brokeback Mountain* - it really is that good. This isn't a book you just read, it's something you absorb. An incredible, poignant piece of work. Louise Beech had cemented her place as one of Britain's finest modern storytellers' John Marrs

'A beautiful, honest and tender love story that I won't forget for a long time. With wishes, promises, betrayals, heartbreak and joy - Ben and Andrew's story spans time and distance. Their love had me trapped in its spell, their tragic moments had me sobbing like a baby. The scenes in Zimbabwe had me right there, inhaling the heady scents and listening to the lions roar. This is Louise Beech at her very best. A triumph' Fionnuala Kearney

'Beech sets up the love story quietly and convincingly. And then - bang - something astonishing and completely unexpected happens to Ben and Andrew. This is where the narrative really gathers pace. I had read patiently until that point then I raced my way to the end. The book digs deep emotionally, but is funny and feel-good too' Fiona Mitchell

'Storytelling at its finest. Louise Beech is a beguiling wordsmith. Prepare to be hooked' Amanda Prowse

'The whole novel is skilfully woven together, with complex, utterly convincing characters and an impossible moral dilemma at the core. It's a compelling read through to the emotional final pages. I love the poetry, the wisdom, and the insights into life at a lion sanctuary, so

vivid that the reader can hear and smell as well as visualise them. It's a stunning and very brave book' Gill Paul

'Louise Beech does it again. The setting alone makes this book worth a read, the lightly handled metaphor of a place where damaged beings go to recover provides a sumptuous backdrop that does its work on the reader's subconscious while they enjoy the action of the story. Love, complicated families and the hurtful things people say and do to one another out of fear, love and ignorance feature here, as well as messy relationships and the mistakes flawed human beings make while trying so hard not to. A moving read' S.E. Lynes

'Heartfelt and wry, this will transport you into a keenly observed world; secrets are hidden, people are flawed, but humanity endures' Ruth Dugdall

'Louise Beech is a natural-born storyteller with an elegance about her writing that never fails to move me' Michael J. Malone

'This is real life, bruised, torn and coffee-stained, refusing to give up ... simply stunning' Su Bristow

'There are times when you finish reading a book and know that part of it will stay with you always. This will be one of those books' Claire Allen

'It put me in mind of John Irving. It's that feeling of being in the hands of a master storyteller and just trusting him or her so completely' Laura Pearson

'Nothing about this story disappoints. The African setting, the excellent writing, and above all, the immaculate storytelling. It's a cleverly constructed book

too. I loved the chapter headings which give us a glimpse of the story within the story. Another triumph. A beautifully crafted book' Carole Lovekin

'Again, Louise Beech has totally blown me away with her storytelling ability. I loved this beautiful but painful love story; which is also about coincidences, loss and difficult relationships. This is a story about the strength of love and what sometimes needs to be sacrificed for it' Madeleine Black

'Adored this beautiful and inspiring book' Kate Furnivall

'Already one of my favourites of 2018' Liz Robinson, LoveReadingUK

'There are books I love and books I will treasure forever and *The Lion Tamer Who Lost* by the superbly talented Louise Beech is the latter. She is the "queen" of storytelling. This novel was such a compelling and emotive read, and so beautifully written I'm not convinced anything I write will convey how truly wonderful this book was' The Book Review Café

'It was about the strength of love and the selfless sacrifices that people make at a time of crisis, and also having the maturity and courage to deal with life's setbacks if things don't go as planned ... I knew this book would be a tearjerker as soon as I immersed myself in Louise Beech's story, with her poetic words leaping off the page like little sparks of light. Each one of her books is unique - nothing like her previous ones, but just as compelling and passionate' Off-the-Shelf Books

'A very emotional read. Louise Beech, what are you doing to me? Your writing is lovely and evocative and you made

me care for what happened to Andrew and Ben. Did not see the ending at all!' The Book Trail

'I've loved all of her novels. However, I think this one might be my favorite yet! I love Louise's books because I can't help but become completely captivated by the way she tells her stories and the beauty of her characters. Her books are always beautiful, poignant, and magical' The Misstery

'*The Lion Tamer Who Lost* is beautiful from the first page right to the very last page!' Have Books Will Read

'Louise Beech is able to find the extraordinary in the ordinary; to take a story that could easily happen anywhere and weave it into a magical story of love, life and heartfelt emotion that is nothing less than epic. Moving, honest, and heartbreakingly tender, *The Lion Tamer Who Lost* had me in tears more than once. A beautiful, poignant, stand-out book of 2018. I urge you to read it' Live and Deadly

'This book is a love story, a tale of secrets, guilt, confusion, bigotry and shame, beautifully woven together through the narration of Ben and Andrew. I was transported to the lion sanctuary in Africa through the author's stunning poetic and descriptive writing style' Compulsive Readers

'Louise's greatest skill is in her attention to detail. Her descriptions of the Zimbabwean savanna are quite beautiful. She is a writer of great perception and acuity. She writes with sensitivity, with a sharp ear for dialogue and for creating depth of character. *The Lion Tamer Who Lost* is a beautiful, thought-provoking and simply wonderful book. At its heart it is a tragic love story, but

dig deeper and it is so much more than that. It is a look at the issues surrounding sexuality, acceptance, deception and the emotional fall-out from dealing with an earth-shattering tragedy' *The Beardy Book Blogger*

'Louise Beech's writing is exquisite. I'm not ashamed to say I cried. More than once. I cried at the relationship between Ben and Andrew a few times and I also cried over Will, the man who knew he had made mistakes and regretted them. An absolutely brilliant novel, told as always from the heart' *Steph's Book Blog*

'The writing is exquisite - every word carefully chosen, capturing the open skies of Africa with the same ease and beauty as those small moments within an intense relationship. This book was total perfection, beautiful, breathtaking, heartbreaking, and one of the very best books I've read this - or any other - year' *Being Anne*

'Beautifully and thoughtfully written' *Trip Fiction*

'I'm finding it difficult to convey how fabulous the writing is - as Louise Beech has left me, to quote her, "speechless, full of silent words" and not a few tears. A book that will stay with readers, and listeners, for a very long time' *Linda's Book Bag*

'A stirring novel, beautifully written, reminiscent of the early work of Maggie O'Farrell' *Irish Times*

'Quirky, darkly comic, heartfelt and original' *Sunday Mirror*

'This achingly sad story has wonderful characters' *Sunday People*

'A beautiful and compassionate read' *Prima*

'Fans of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* will love it'  
*Red*

'With lilting, rhythmic prose that never falters, *How To Be Brave* held me from its opening lines ... Wonderful'  
Amanda Jennings

'Two family stories of loss and redemption intertwine in a painfully beautiful narrative. This book grabbed me right around my heart and didn't let go' Cassandra Parkin

'An amazing story of hope and survival ... a love letter to the power of books and stories' Nick Quantrill

'Louise Beech is a natural born storyteller and this is a wonderful story' Russ Litten

'*How To Be Brave* reminds us of the frailty of the human condition and champions that inner strength we all have when faced with adversity. Beautifully written and emotionally resonant, this will stay with you long after you turn the final page' Liz Loves Books

'Ms Beech has written an amazing story ... of unconditional love, the best cure for every pain and disease' Chick Cat Library Cat

'An exquisite novel. Darkly compelling emotionally charged. And I LOVED it!' Jane Isaac

'*The Mountain in My Shoe* is cleverly laced with a chilling and gripping storyline about a controlling, possibly psychotic husband. I couldn't put it down. Louise Beech is an author who writes with her heart on her sleeve'  
Fleur Smithwick

'Louise Beech proves with this incredibly moving story that the success of her debut, *How To Be Brave* - a 2015 Guardian Reader's Pick - was no flash in the pan ... A fabulous, exquisitely written novel that will stay with you for a long time after you turn the final page' David Young

'This gripping story is the kind of book to put your life on hold for ... I was in flood of tears by the end and know that the characters will stay with me for a very long time. A worthy successor to the brilliant *How To Be Brave*' Katie Marsh

'It is a brilliantly creative work of fiction, and a beautiful thank-you letter to the magic of stories and storytelling' We Love This Book

'This book will make you feel a plethora of emotions. It's funny, sad, dark, warm, chilling, moving, but above all, it is beautifully written. This will stay with me for ages. Pure class' Michael Wood

'Beautiful, poignant, funny, heart-rending, dark ... this book will stay with me for a very long time' Claire Douglas

'Captivating and haunting' Louisa Treger

'A story of pain and love ... moving and real' Vanessa Lafaye

'A dark, wonderful novel of self-discovery, of the things we hide inside ourselves and the bravery it takes to face them' Melissa Bailey

'Louise Beech effortlessly captures the grind of real life and infuses it with flourishes of subtle poetry to create a wonderful story' Matt Wesolowski

'Reading a book by Louise Beech is like a visit to the wrong side of the tracks with a friend to hold your hand. As you pick your way through an unfamiliar and unnerving landscape, she is forever saying "Look - here is beauty; look, there is goodness"' Richard Littledale

'*Maria in the Moon* is part psychological thriller, part love story and fans of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* will love it' *Red Magazine* - recommended as one of September's best pulse-quickenning page-turners

'Some books seem to fly under the radar and catch you completely by surprise, which is exactly what Louise Beech's *Maria in the Moon* did. Brilliantly written and incredibly moving, Beech captures the nature of memory and truth with an honest poignancy' *Culture Fly*

'Catherine has a gap in her memory. It's a mystery until she loses her home in a flood and a horrifying memory emerges' *Daily Express* - *Maria in the Moon* is recommended as a must read

'This is not a book to be rushed, but rather one to be savoured. Each word is important and I didn't want to miss a thing. Sometimes I went back and reread a sentence or paragraph. I needed to absorb it all. Louise Beech has such a lovely way with words. It's hard to describe how beautifully she puts across her characters' thoughts, fears and feelings. Her writing is insightful ... It's a wonderful read and I absolutely loved it' *Nudge Magazine*

'Beech's exploration of the effects of childhood trauma keeps the reader intrigued until the end' *Booklist*

'Her writing is raw, beautiful and alive with emotions, and also full of fun. The finely balanced feelings of

despair, hope, optimism and community spirit set up a rich background for the analysis of how to manage forgiveness and ways of coping with a painful, overwhelming past. This is not a typical crime-fiction story as it's quite possible to work out what terrible trauma has shaped Catherine's life, and how it has affected those around her, but nevertheless, the personal journey of the too prickly, angry, not-always-likeable but genuine character is worth following' Crime Review

'This is superb writing; a story that will stay with me for a long time and is extraordinarily written and presented. There are moments of unexpected beauty from richly complicated characters. It really is quite spellbinding' Random Things through My Letterbox

'*Maria In The Moon* is an emotional charged read and I defy anyone not to feel a tug of the heartstrings as Catherine's story reaches its climax. I cried as the book came to a close. But don't be mistaken, among all the emotion and angst of Catherine's life and those she listens to on the phone, there's suspense, but that's all I'm going to say #nospoilers. The book has been labelled as "Dark Drama" and it is definitely dark and dramatic' Crime Book Junkie

'The writing style is almost lyrical and you find yourself completely carried away with her words ... *Maria In The Moon* made me cry, made my stomach knot, and made me realise the power and strength of the human spirit. An unbelievable read' Books of All Kinds

'*Maria in the Moon* is lyrical, magical, beautifully painful and filled with hope. It is emotions wrapped in paper, feelings trapped in the ink, life seen through the clearest

eyes. Open the book and fall in love with a voice and a masterpiece' Chocolate 'n' Waffles

'Louise Beech has an instinctive understanding of her characters and delivers a story that will haunt you for weeks, maybe months after you finish it. Told with remarkable sensitivity and though difficult to read in places, needs to be read, if we are have any hope of understanding the frail hold Catherine and others like her, have on the reality of events long since buried ... If you have not read her novels, then I recommend you do. Dark, poignant and moving, this new release will without doubt garner her many more fans and well deserved that will be' Books are my Cwtches

'This book portrays the power that memories can have, the good and the bad. Although quite dark in nature, there is always an underlying thread of hope ... The author has a natural storytelling ability' Reflections of a Reader

'I loved this novel, its uniqueness and how it captivated me with a whirlwind of emotions ... When I read the final sentence of the novel, I did so with a smile on my face. An incredible story, beautifully constructed. 5\* genius' Anne Bonny Book Reviews

'Incredibly moving and quite literally breathtaking, this is a book that stirs all types of emotion in the reader and leaves you with a sort of wispy feeling of magical realism, one that makes you wonder if you dreamed the entire story or really did just read it. Excellent writing and highly, HIGHLY recommended if you're looking for a book that is many things all at once, as no single genre can confine this novel' The Suspense Is Thrilling Me

'This is such a beautifully written book, it's emotional, heartbreaking, tough reading in places but it also has some humour. I tried to slowly savour every word as I was reading but this is a story that had to be devoured. It's quite suspenseful and I just had to read on and on until I was satisfied. It was truly captivating. *Maria in the Moon* is definitely one of those books that will stay with me for a long, long time. It's haunting, captivating, raw, emotional and a book I will be highly recommending' It's All about the Books Blog

'This book deals with some very dark and difficult topics that are treated with great empathy and understanding. Louise Beech has a beautiful and lyrical writing style that really engages the reader, drawing them into the story and capturing their attention ... *Maria in the Moon* is a wonderful novel, it is poignant, heartfelt and utterly compelling. A real page-turner that will leave you with a book hangover, I highly recommend it' Book Literati

'It's an absorbing tale of loss and family, with the predominant theme being loss. Loss of your sanctuary, loss of your identity and loss of your innocence. I can see exactly why so many people adore Beech's novels' Damp Pebbles

'Filled with emotion and exquisite prose in Louise Beech's inimitable style, *Maria in the Moon* left me speechless and completely thunderstruck. Louise Beech hasn't just aimed for the stars, she's shot past them ... the very pinnacle of perfection' The Book Magnet

'I adored this novel; it is simply stunning and so powerful! I found I could really identify with Catherine. There are parts of her story that were really hard for me to read, coming a bit too close to my own experiences,

but the writing is so beautiful that I had to keep reading through my tears ... This is one of those very rare and very special novels that will make you feel all of the feelings, it will take hold of you and it won't let you go' Rather Too Fond Of Books

'*Maria in the Moon* is stunning and has so many qualities that any review I write will never fully convey the beauty within its pages. I could simply just say "read it, you won't regret it" but that wouldn't be enough ... take the time to read it slowly in order to fully appreciate its exquisiteness and for the emotions to take hold but, when all is said and done, just make sure you read it' Bloomin Brilliant Books

'This is such a sumptuous, beautifully written book packed full of emotion and one that tugged at my heart strings as soon as I realised where the story was heading ... I loved being taken out of my comfort zone by such an extraordinary young woman. A breathtakingly beautiful story that deserves to be praised far and wide so that everyone can experience it' My Chestnut Tree Reading

'As *Maria in the Moon* progresses it becomes increasingly difficult to put the book down. While the reasoning behind the missing year may become apparent it is without doubt the skill of Louise's prose that makes this a riveting experience. I think this is a book that will take a little while to finally sink into my subconscious so I can wholly appreciate its beauty. I will probably read it again to fully savour every word because it's one that needs to be absorbed slowly' Ali - The Dragon Slayer

'This novel is a rollercoaster of emotions and hard to categorise or sum up neatly. It made me smile, laugh, cry and think. I was caught up in the storyline, the

characters, the relationships and the backdrop of a real event but I was also mesmerised by the writing style and the powerful prose ... This book is actually very complex and multilayered in a way that is not obvious but the fact that the prose is so absorbing and captivating shows that this author has a real gift for language' Bibliomaniac

'It was emotional in the sense where you end up emotionally exhausted, heartbroken, powerless; all without shedding a tear. Raw, poignant and beautifully delivered, *Maria in the Moon* will emotionally destroy you in a way that you never thought possible. Allow yourself to feel the storyline. Allow yourself time to digest the emotion. It deserves patience and love, just like Catherine-Maria' The Writing Garnet

'I was moved to tears by the beautiful and sensitive writing. *Maria In The Moon* is a book about fear, love, hope and redemption. Louise Beech made me cry on my wedding anniversary and I love her for it; this is a very special book, insightful, empathetic, moving and so very real' Hair Past a Freckle

'Louise Beech writes with an emotional honesty and bravery that elevates her work from the crowd ... Very highly recommended' Mumbling About

'A novel that will test your senses through the very last page. A dark psychological thriller with complex and damaged characters. So beautifully written, this is a novel that will linger long after you have finished reading' The Last Word Review

# The Lion Tamer Who Lost

**Louise Beech**



This is dedicated to my husband, my friend, my  
one and only Joe.

And to my dear friend Michael Mann, who said  
when I went to him for research help that I  
should change nothing because 'love is love, no  
matter who it's between'.

*'Destiny has two ways of crushing us - by refusing  
our wishes and by fulfilling them.'*

***Henri Frederic Amiel***

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Acknowledgments

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## **Bruises**

Make a wish  
on my latest bruise.  
Boys like us  
have nothing to lose.

Kiss them please,  
every last one.  
Will you still love me  
when they are gone?

I'm not religious,  
but if I were,  
I'd kneel at your feet  
and say a little prayer.

Here comes another,  
to add to all the rest.  
Count them please and choose  
the one that suits me best.

***Dean Wilson***

PART ONE

**BEN**

## ZIMBABWE

### Home Is Always Near

*Ben's Grandma said she had never forgotten Jenny, her best friend at school, even though she disowned her in favour of Linda Palmer. She said the friends who turned you away are often the most irreplaceable.*

Andrew Fitzgerald, *The Lion Tamer Who Lost*

Morning is Ben's favourite time in Zimbabwe.

He has been here five days. Each of the mornings so far, he wakes before the other volunteers and stands on his hut's wooden decking in shorts, surveying what he secretly calls his: his sunrise, his land, his refuge. With only the hum of his roommate Simon's snoring, and the buzz of insects, at this moment it *is* his. No one else rises this early to watch the colours come to life; no one else witnesses the sky turning from ash into flame, or the trees from shadow into textured browns, like a tray of different flavoured toffees.

Ben enjoys the solitude of dawn more than the merriment of evening, when the volunteers prepare food and discuss the day's events around a roaring campfire pit, eyes orange in the glow. He enjoys it more than the two walks he has done with the lions in the enclosures.

The lions here look nothing like those he has seen in the circus or watched on TV documentaries. The first time Ben saw one pacing the enclosure fence five days ago - when he was dropped off with other new volunteers in a rickety bus - he thought it must have been the sun that lit his orangey fur with fire, or that the deep shadows

had somehow inflated his size. But as he warily approached the high fence for the first time to look more closely, he realised that it was probably contentment that so increased him; being in a more natural environment than a circus ring gave him beauty.

Now Ben stretches, offers his skin to this new day, scaring a skittish split-lipped hare loitering by a thorny scrub. He laughs. The hare freezes for a second and then lollops off. Beyond them both, black against the dawn, tepee-shaped lodges zigzag like teeth. Behind it are the fenced grassy enclosures where cubs live before they are moved to the surrounding ten-thousand-acre park to learn how to hunt and return to the wild.

This is the Liberty Lion Rehabilitation Project. It is the kind of place Ben has wanted to visit since he was eleven. The kind of place about which he read endlessly before signing up. Just forty miles from Victoria Falls, the project site is parallel to the Zambezi River. The area was a hunting ground once, where warthogs and wildebeest were shot by cross-border trophy hunters. Now a national park, its riverbanks are a catwalk for elephant, buffalo herds, and lone antelope, which amble in the heat and dust, safe now from those guns.

This land is a temporary asylum for Ben.

He closes his eyes. The musky smell of hot animal fur drifts on the air. The muggy morning breeze seems to whisper something to him. He won't listen. He didn't come here to listen. Or to think. Or to remember. But the breeze tugs at his shorts, whispers in his ear. It sounds like *home, home, home*.

Suddenly the smells of England that have faded since he got here come alive in the air, merging with lion shit and heat. His father's cigarette smoke seems to rise from the parched ground. The stench of old beer has Ben opening his eyes again, sure there will be a pint sitting in front of him. He lets it in, just for a moment. He pictures

the tiny bedroom; he sees the kitchen sink where he and his dad often argued; where they occasionally stood looking at the garden quietly; where Ben once dried dishes and talked about a future.

*No. Shut it out.*

He came here for the now. For *this*. He surveys again the new and beautiful land. Every day, every moment, he tries so hard not to think about...

The door creaks and Ben turns.

Simon emerges from the hut. Sniffing the air, he says, 'I slept like a corpse,' just as he has every morning since their arrival, and then breaks wind heartily. A solicitor from Essex, he's on a break from his tricky divorce. He said on the first day that he would stay here until the mess was sorted out.

Ben's ownership of the dawn is over.

'How long you been up?' Simon asks.

'A while. It's so hot I just toss and turn.'

'I noticed.' Simon breaks wind again. 'You're bloody lucky I don't knock you out of your bed, all the noise you make.'

'What do you mean? Do I snore?' Ben never has before.

'No. You shout out all kinds of crap.'

'Do I?' Ben's heart feels tight. 'Like what?'

'Can't tell. Doesn't make any bloody sense.'

Ben exhales.

Simon narrows his eyes at him. 'Might be something about...' he whispers, '...bury the bodies ... hide the evidence...'

Ben tuts. 'Yeah, right.'

Simon laughs. 'I'm off for a shower.'

Ben is sure he has never cried out in his sleep before. Certainly no one has ever told him he does. Shit. Time to eat. Time to forget the dawn. Time to start the day.

By the time he arrives for breakfast in the communal lodge, the thermometer reads twenty-five degrees and

flies have begun their constant climb. Breakfast is cold meats, fruit, and muesli, and will precede the daily enclosure cleaning, the bottle-feeding of cubs, and lion walking. Volunteers groggily exchange pleasantries at long, bare tables and, as is now habit, bemoan the early hour.

Esther Snelling carries a plate of fruit and a mug of the thick coffee served from metal jugs and joins Ben where he sits alone at the far end of a table. A Newcastle NHS nurse who arrived two months earlier, she tells anyone who asks that she has come to care for animals instead of people, who swear at her and expect antibiotics for every ailment.

She nods at Ben and starts to eat her melon.

'Can't get used to this,' she says, hair unbrushed around her face, lips glossy with the juice, one hand fanning her face. 'They said December would be about twenty-five, but it's been thirty-five most days. A freak heatwave or something.'

'I can't imagine it *not* being hot now.' Ben stirs his muesli.

'To think I grumbled about the weather in England.'

'I bet you'll do the same again.'

'Maybe.' Esther pauses. 'I guess I'm a bit homesick today.'

'Understandable. You've been here...?'

'Twelve weeks.' Esther shrugs. 'Isn't it weird how quickly you forget home, though? I mean, when you first get here and it's all really mental and new, you just don't have room in your head for it. And then ... you have one of those days...'

'You do.'

It is as though, for the first few days, Ben has closed the door on England, but now it's open just a crack. He can see his dad's house today. And now - suddenly acutely vivid - the place he lived before he came here.

## Acknowledgments

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Caffeinated Mind, Book Literati, Jo Robertson, If Only I Could Read Faster, Ali the Dragon Slayer, The Writing Garnet, Anne Williams, Victoria Goldman, The Book Review Café, Blue Book Balloon, Portobello Book Blog, Liz Loves Books, Claire Knight, Noelle Holten, Short Book and Scribes, Books of all Kinds, Chocolate 'n' Waffles Blog, @WalesCrazy, Leah Moyse, Earl Grey and Cupcakes, Have Books Will Read, Karen at My Reading Corner, Susan Hampson, Beady Jan, Crime By The Book, Lisa Adamson, The Misstery, The Wrong Side of Forty, Rae Reads, Sue Featherstone, Emma Mitchell, Paige Turner, Trip Fiction, Hair Past a Freckle, Jen Med, Novel Gossip, Swirl and Thread, Follow the Hens, Joy Kliver, Ronnie Turner, Sharon Bairden, What Kathy Read Next, Novel Delights, The Quiet Knitter, Linda Hill, The Hazardous Hippo, Sarah Hardy, Mrs Bloggs' Books, Cheryl M-M's Book Blog, Over the Rainbow Book Blog, Janet Emson, Nat Marshall, and Tony Hill.

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Louise Beech is an exceptional literary talent, whose debut novel *How To Be Brave* was a Guardian Readers' Choice for 2015. The sequel, *The Mountain in My Shoe* was shortlisted for Not the Booker Prize. *Maria in the Moon* was compared to *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*, and widely reviewed. All three books have been number one on Kindle, Audible and Kobo in USA/UK/AU. She regularly writes travel pieces for the *Hull Daily Mail*, where she was a columnist for ten years. Her short fiction has won the Glass Woman Prize, the Eric Hoffer Award for Prose, and the Aesthetica Creative Works competition, as well as shortlisting for the Bridport Prize twice and being published in a variety of UK magazines. Louise lives with her husband and children on the outskirts of Hull and loves her job as a Front of House Usher at Hull Truck Theatre, where her first play was performed in 2012.

Follow Louise on Twitter @*LouiseWriter* and visit her website: [louisebeech.co.uk](http://louisebeech.co.uk).