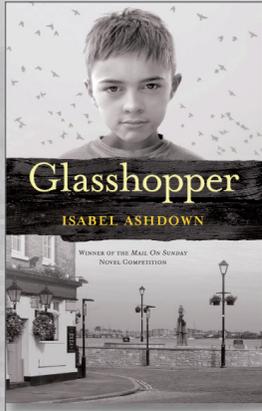


Reading Group Guide



Isabel Ashdown's first novel, *Glasshopper*, was published to critical acclaim in 2009 and an extract from the novel won the *Mail on Sunday* Novel Competition.

For further details please visit the Myriad Editions website below.

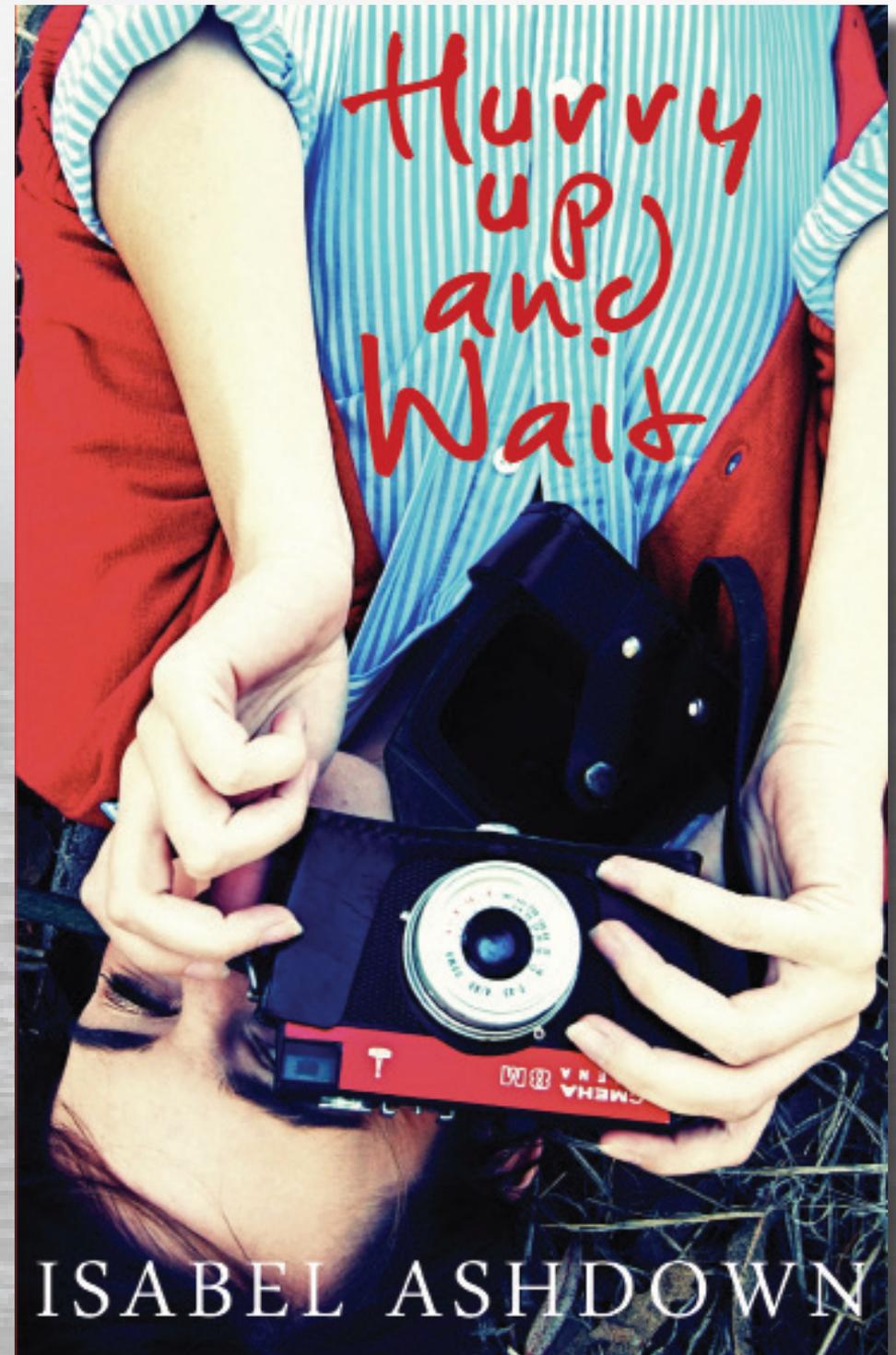
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In her eagerly anticipated second novel *Mail on Sunday* Novel Competition winner Isabel Ashdown explores the treacherous territory of adolescent friendships, and traces across the decades the repercussions of a dangerous relationship.

It's more than twenty years since Sarah Ribbons last set foot inside her old high school, a crumbling Victorian-built comprehensive on the south coast of England. Now, as she prepares for her school reunion, 39-year-old Sarah has to face up to the truth of what really happened back in the summer of 1986.

August 1985: Sarah celebrates her fifteenth birthday in the back garden of the suburban seaside house she shares with her ageing father. As she embarks on her fifth and final year at Selton High School for Girls Sarah's main focus is on her erratic friendships with Tina and Kate; her closest allies one moment, her fiercest opponents the next as they compete for the attention of the new boy, Dante. When her father is unexpectedly taken ill, Sarah is sent to stay with Kate's family in nearby Amber Chalks. Kate's youthful parents welcome her into the comfort of their liberal family home, where the girls can eat off trays and watch TV in Kate's bedroom. They've never been closer – until a few days into her stay, events take a sinister turn, and Sarah knows that nothing will ever be the same again.



For Discussion

1. Who do you identify with most strongly in the novel?
2. Do you feel any sympathy for Kate? Tina? Jason? Patty?
3. In what ways are Sarah's experiences familiar to us all?
4. How do Sarah's school days compare with your own?
5. Who, apart from Sarah, do you feel has been most hurt or wronged in the book?
6. Does the ending deliver a sense of justice?
7. What does the book tell us about the perils of growing up?
8. How good a parent is Sarah's dad?
9. What role do teachers play in the novel?
10. What does the novel say about female friendships?
11. How does Sarah feel the absence of her mother?
12. Is Tina a victim? Is Kate a victim?
13. By the reunion, had the characters become the adults you expected them to?
14. Does the novel seem to offer any explanations for, or judgement of, the behaviour of the main characters?
15. What did you find most affecting or moving in the book?
16. How important is Sarah's relationship with John, both as a teenager and as an adult?
17. Did the book deliver a satisfying ending?
18. Would you go to your own school reunion?
19. What were you doing in 1985/86?
20. Would you recommend *Hurry Up and Wait* to other readers?