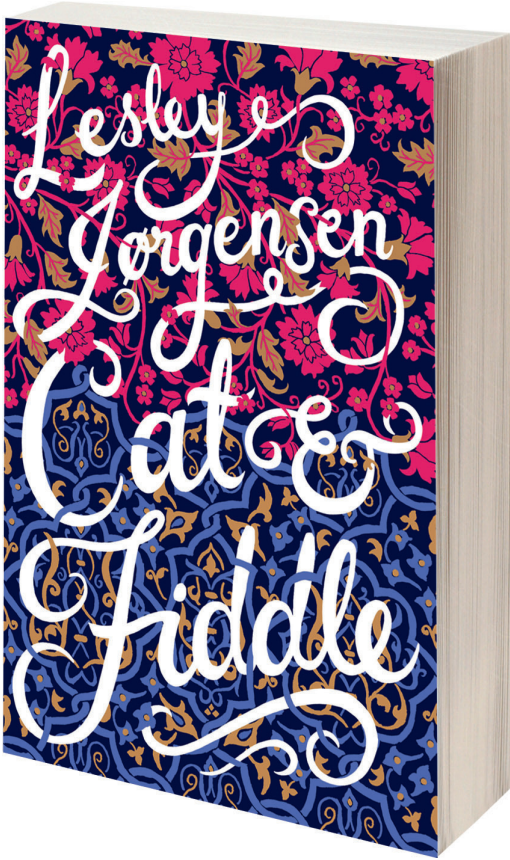


# Cat & Fiddle

LESLEY JØRGENSEN



*Cat & Fiddle* centres on two families, the Bournes and the Choudhurys, whose lives become entwined at the country estate of Bourne Abbey.

While Dr Choudhury is busy advising Henry Bourne on the restoration of the abbey to its former glory, his wife's main concern is marrying off their three children, whose chances of good matches are dwindling by the day.

Then there's the Bourne family. Henry's wife, Thea, is feeling lost, now that she's got the lifestyle she's always longed for. His elder brother, Richard, a successful London barrister, finds himself increasingly drawn to the family home — the inheritance that he's given up. Meanwhile, Henry just wants to keep the peace, but that's proving to be tricky ...

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Many of the characters have role models who seem to be very important to them. Why do you think this is?
2. How possible is it to reconcile two different sets of cultural expectations and world views as second-generation migrants so often have to do? Does this differ from the struggles we all have in trying to reconcile the beliefs and attitudes of our parents with what we see around us, and what we see and feel in ourselves? If yes, in what ways?
3. How do each of the Choudhury children respond to this dilemma? Who do you think is most successful at reconciling these differences?
4. What effect do you think the three Choudhury children's relative positions in their family have had upon their growth and development?
5. Given the Choudhurys no longer need the Desi community in England to provide mutual financial support and self-protection, what role does the community still play for them?

### BOOK DETAILS

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### AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Lesley Jørgensen trained as a registered nurse while also completing simultaneous arts and law degrees, and has worked as a medical-negligence lawyer in Australia and England. While in England, she married into a Muslim Anglo-Bangladeshi family. She now lives in Adelaide with her two children. *Cat & Fiddle* is her first novel.

REVIEWS

‘Occasionally you love a book so much that it’s difficult to close the door on its world. *Cat & Fiddle* by Lesley Jørgensen – with its warm, evocative and hysterically funny story – is such a book.’ FIVE STARS

— *Good Reading*

‘*Cat & Fiddle* is a big-hearted, clamorous comedy of East-meets-West ... a free-spirited feast of a book’

— *Sunday Age*

‘Jørgensen steps so adroitly in and out of the heads of these wonderful characters that it’s as if she’s at your shoulder, the perfect travelling companion on the novel’s journey: chatty, warm, compassionate and funny. An exuberant debut, bubbling with energy and insight.’

— CATE KENNEDY

‘This charming story of love and family and class and religion is not just for Austen fans – it’s utterly irresistible.’

— TONI JORDAN

6. Are there any differences between Tariq’s attraction to Islamic fundamentalism and the drift of other individuals into other right-wing religious groups such as Scientology and evangelical Christianity? What are some of the factors that contribute to how these different religions are perceived?
7. *Cat & Fiddle* has been described as being, in part, a homage to Jane Austen, particularly to *Pride and Prejudice*. If you are familiar with both books, what differences and similarities are there between Mrs Bennet and Mrs Begum? How justified are each of them in applying the pressure to their children that they do?
8. What important differences are there between Shunduri and Lydia Bennet, and Wickham and Kareem?
9. What effect do you think the experience of performing the religious pilgrimage of Haj is likely to have upon each of the three characters (Doctor Choudhury, Tariq and Kareem) who are planning to go at the end of *Cat & Fiddle*?
10. *Cat & Fiddle* explores the issue of drug addiction: Simon Reid and Kareem Guri have ongoing drug habits; and we hear about Mrs Begum’s cousin in Dhaka, and his disastrous heroin addiction. In what ways (if any) do the differing personalities, class status and cultural backgrounds of the three individuals feed into how they manage their addictions?



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