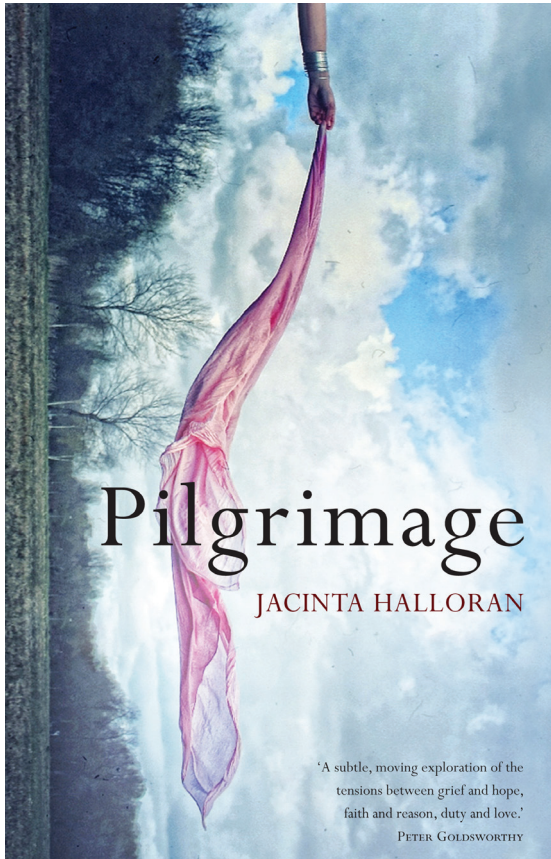


# Pilgrimage

JACINTA HALLORAN



## BOOK DETAILS

Format: Paperback

ISBN: 9781921844904

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## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jacinta Halloran lives in Melbourne, where she works as a GP. She has written on medical science for *The Sunday Age*, and her short stories have been published in *New Australian Stories 2* and *The Pen and the Stethoscope*. Her first novel, *Dissection*, was published in 2008.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. *Pilgrimage* is largely set in Romania. What is the effect of this setting on the events of the novel? Could this novel have equally been set in Australia?
2. To what extent has Celeste shaken off the effects of her Catholic upbringing?
3. Celeste is sometimes weighed down by what she sees as the responsibilities of the eldest child. Do you think that birth order among siblings has a significant bearing on their roles within the family? What's your experience of this?
4. On p. 309, Patricia says to Celeste, "*I sometimes wonder if you'd have fought with your father too, had he been alive when you were a teenager. Was it Lionel, do you think? Or was it you with your teenage moods?*" What do you think?
5. What do you imagine might have happened to Patricia at Nicula? What do you wish would happen? Why do you think the book ends before Patricia reaches her destination?
6. Stefan calls himself a tour guide, but what other purpose does his character serve in the novel?
7. How, if at all, do your perceptions of Nathalie change during the course of the novel?
8. With which character or characters do your sympathies mainly lie, and why? Do your allegiances change during the novel?
9. What does *Pilgrimage* say about family relationships? What do the relationships in the novel have in common with your own?

## REVIEWS

‘A subtle, moving exploration of the tensions between grief and hope, faith and reason, duty and love.’

— PETER GOLDSWORTHY

‘Explores the intertwining strands of faith, hope and mortality with careful devotion and an empathetic eye.’

— THUY ON, *The Australian*

‘*Pilgrimage* is a heart-rending exploration of the great paradoxes of what it means to be human — issues of faith and motherhood, memory, purpose and yearning all refract brilliantly on an unusual journey to find healing in a faraway place. Propulsive, prismatic and lyrical.’

— DAVID FRANCIS

‘*Pilgrimage* [is] one of the best Australian novels I’ve read all year. I read it in one sitting and much of it has stayed with me since. Contemporary, elegant and serious, Halloran does a near-perfect job of capturing the nuance of what it means to be a daughter and a mother and a wife – to be stirred with both rage and empathy, and to long for life’s answers as deeply as happiness itself.’

READINGS BOOK OF THE WEEK

— JESSICA AU, *Readings Monthly*

- I. Do you think that Tom and Celeste will stay together? Why or why not?
- II. What role does religious belief play in your own life? Do you have other non-religious belief systems from which you’ve drawn comfort or strength in difficult times?



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