



Lost Girls

Ann Kelley

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No parents. No rules. No way home.

Fourteen-year-old Bonnie MacDonald couldn't be more excited for a camping trip on an island off the coast of Thailand. But when a strong current sweeps Bonnie and her friends past their appointed campsite, depositing them instead on what the boatman calls a "forbidden island," they're just happy to have reached dry land.

Overnight, things take a turn for the worse. Three torturous days pass, but the boatman doesn't return, and what once seemed like a vacation in paradise becomes a battle against the elements.

Peppered with short, frantic entries from Bonnie's journal as she struggles to survive, *Lost Girls* tells the page-turning, heart-pounding story of a group of teen girls fighting for their lives.

Lost Girls Details

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From Reader Review Lost Girls for online ebook

Ellie says

Koh Tabu was an amazing book that I would recommend to anyone who likes books of survival.

Jessica Turnpaugh says

Lost Girls is a fictional book about Bonnie MacDonald, a fourteen year old girl that lives in Thailand, on a camping trip with her fellow Amelia Earhart Cadets. The day is May 11, 1974 and Bonnie is eagerly packing for her voyage out to an island with her friends and cadet instructor, Layla Campbell. It's finally time! "The senior Cadets include, Jas, Hope, May and Arlene (the "Glossies"), and myself. While the juniors are, Jody, Natalie, Sandy, and Carly" Bonnie writes in her journal as all of them bounce with excitement as they load what little bags they have in the car. It's raining so hard as they are all traveling to the boat dock they can't even see where they are going. As they are heading to the island it starts to storm and the boat is forced to take a different path by the waves. Finally they get to an island all the girls jump off the boat as quickly as they can but the boatman wouldn't set foot on the island. He kept shouting "Yaksha! Yaksha! Koh Tabu!" and pointing back to the mainland. Instantly Bonnie felt scared, because of the storm they almost died and the boatman's attitude didn't help when they got to the island. Everyone start gathering their stuff and setting up camp as the sun goes down quickly. It's dark and the girls are in their group tents all sleeping in their sleeping bags when all of the sudden their tents are ripped away from them by excessive amounts of heavy winds. It's another storm but this time it's worse. Raindrops the size of golf balls, the wind feeling like a freight train pushing everyone over as they try to get to a cave for safety. Mrs. Campbell starts to count all of the girls once they get inside the cave to make sure she has everyone. Roll call begins. Everyones name is called and everyone answers except Sandy. Now the girls have nothing, because the hurricane destroyed their camp, and they are missing Sandy. If you want to find out if they make it back home safely, or are stranded on the island for the rest of their lives read this book!

This book kept me on the edge of my seat the entire time. I would highly recommend this book to someone who loves nail biting mysteries. Throughout the entire book you will have the constant uncertainty as to if the girls will get home or remain stranded. I love the way the author describes the plot and characters; she paints a very vivid picture in my mind. I would not recommend this book to someone who doesn't like, or can't comprehend the complexity of flashback narratives.

Maggie says

Whenever I hear a news story or watch a movie about people who end up in bad situations after ignoring the advice of locals, my reaction is something like this:

I don't think they deserve to DIE, but since a ton of resources are going to be spent on their rescue due to

their arrogance, they can deal with a little Running Man.

In the beginning of *Lost Girls*, a group of Amelia Earhart Cadets ranging in age from 9-14 find themselves blown off course while heading to an island for a camping trip. Their chaperone, a glamorous Scottish woman in her 20s named Layla Campbell, has the boatman drop them off on another island despite his protestations and refusal to step foot on the island. Layla Campbell, nicknamed the Duchess by the adoring girls, dismisses the boatman's warnings and has the girls start setting up their campsite. Get ready to do the Running Man.

The first day is picture perfect and the girls go to sleep thinking they're in paradise. Their idyll ends the first night when they're awoken by a storm that rips apart their campsite. One girl is fatally injured. They have two more days left before the boatman is scheduled to pick them up. The two days pass, but no one comes. Not only that, they see an explosion in the distance. Was the mainland attacked? Are their families in trouble, thus explaining why no one has come for them? Are people looking for them?

I enjoyed this a lot more than I expected. The story is told from 14-year-old Bonnie's point of view through her journal entries. This reminded me of Ellie in *Tomorrow When the War Began*, one of my favorite series. The situation also called to mind another favorite book, *Lord of the Flies*. Bonnie addresses this similarity, but says girls wouldn't act that way. I love this because I remember thinking the same thing while reading *Lord of the Flies*. There is one obvious biological difference between boys and girls that is addressed -- oh, the joys of menstruation -- but a lack of testosterone doesn't stop girls from behaving badly either.

I really liked Bonnie. She's the responsible, bossy one who isn't popular with the girls who wear makeup, and she's prone to make judgements about people, but I found her to be relatable. She goes from being glad her mother didn't come so she can spend time with a "cool" adult like the Duchess, to wishing more than anything that her mother was there. She brought along her mother's copy of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and as the Duchess keeps failing her, Bonnie turns to that book as a survival guide.

I love books like *Tomorrow* and *Lost Girls* because I always wonder what I'd do in extreme survival situations (I'd die), and I take notes on all the things I should learn to do just in case. Pro tip #1: Learn to make a fire without matches. (Actually, tip #1 is always: If a local starts yelling and flailing when you say you're going somewhere, DON'T GO THERE.) The author doesn't skimp on details of the smell, the bugs, and the filth, and I hope to God to never encounter a chigger as long as I live.

Lost Girls is set in 1974 during the Vietnam War, but aside from references to the Duchess's petticoat and a lack of references to cell phones, this story could be set in the present. There are a few references to the war and whether it's right or wrong through Bonnie's flashbacks to fights with her soldier father, but substitute Iraq for Vietnam and this is a modern discussion. This book isn't middle grade, but it does skew toward the younger end of the YA spectrum. I would've loved reading this book in 8th grade. Despite being far beyond 8th grade, I still really enjoyed this book.

This review appears on Young Adult Anonymous.

Giselle says

Do you remember *Lost*? During the first season when it was ~~good~~ all about surviving. Remove the bizarro smoke monsters and you've got something reminiscent of *Lost Girls*. When a gang of 9 kids with one adult chaperone get dropped off on the wrong island, they soon realize it's not the paradise that they first perceived.

Off to a great start with the first 30 pages already involving a dead kid and a major storm that left them with next to nothing, *Lost Girls* is exciting from start to finish. Set in 1970's Thailand during the Vietnam War, this is a story about surviving in the wild. Expect a lot of disagreements, flaring tempers, and desperation. We've got a good handful of characters to admire and endure in this novel. Some you will applaud, others you will want to maim. Our protagonist Bonnie is amazingly valuable to the group, even though they don't seem to notice, let alone care. Besides being extremely resourceful and smart, her strength and determination is something worthy of praise. I loved how I could count on her; no matter how emotionally or physically strained she becomes, she keeps on trucking and that makes her positively easy to like, even easier to care if she makes it. It's not hard to lose track of who's who when you have over half a dozen characters that all seem to blend together, this is not the case in *Lost Girls*. I was pleased by how much the survivors all stand out from each other with distinguishable personalities and behaviours. I can't say that I was especially attached to the supporting roles. I didn't weep from certain deaths or become gripped by their individual predicaments, but I was kept completely engrossed by their overall circumstances.

It's actually quite fascinating to learn all these facts and tricks about surviving in the wilderness. Being on a tropical island, we encounter exotic animals and insects that bring about all kinds of dangers they have to face. Infection, hunger, and dehydration are constant threats. I can't say I was profoundly *devoted* to the story, though. Of course the deaths are tragic and their situations mentally taxing, but I found myself more *mesmerized* by their struggle to survive, more curious of the outcome, than emotionally tuned to their state of mind. For this reason I don't look at it as a highly emotional story, but rather a tense adventure - though I can see that some may experience it differently. The journal entries that we get sporadically throughout the book make sure it's not an emotionally passive story either. Bonnie uses her journal to write her thoughts and feelings about what's happening on the island, letting us into her exhausted mind. This helps us get a feel of how a situation like this affects a person's chain of thought; grief and misery makes us desperate, can even turn us into someone we don't recognize. If anything, it helps us appreciate what we have. Imagine living on only one or two food items for days, weeks.

Realistic and filled with unthinkable circumstances, *Lost Girls* is an inspiring story where survival is at the mercy of nature and skills. What would you do if you were stranded on a deserted island? Would you survive?

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karen says

okay, a book in which a group of girls get stranded on a "forbidden" island in the thai archipelago with no real supplies or survival know-how and must fend for themselves and deal with the stresses of conflicting personalities and heat, wildlife, lack of food and other perils? *lord of the flies* with lady-parts??

oh, sign me up right now.

and yet... this one didn't do it for me. not as much as i had hoped. before i read *beauty queens*, i thought that was what that book would be like, it turned out to be a completely different kind of book, and i loved the life out of it, and this one is more along the lines of what i was hoping for from b.q., and yet i am still unsatisfied.

there are some good things. i am always grateful when a book like this aimed at a younger audience doesn't shy away from the horrific realities that would actually confront young girls stranded on an island: injuries,

death, chiggers, odor, the necessity of latrines, menstruation.

it was good to see that those details were not overlooked or prettified. and there were some characters with know-how, so there were kind of a lot of facts dropped, sometimes clumsily, into conversation about jungle survival and how to test for edible plants (although any edibility test that ends with *step nine* wait five hours without eating anything else, and if you aren't sick or dying, it's edible. worries me. i do not like that "if." i thought the first 8 very cautious and sensible steps would prevent me from dying??? no??)

their ostensible "adult" is a scottish woman they all admire because she is so gorgeous and glamorous, but gorgeous and glamorous do not go very far in the wilderness, especially when g&g is working through her own personal problems and finds it easier to take solace in smuggled whiskey and hallucinogenic plants. so the girls are on their own.

and they are mostly no good at survival.

two of them band together with g&g, and spend their time putting on makeup and doing their hair and getting wasted. one girl is dead, one is injured, one has lost her glasses (pppiigggyyyy!), one of them just can't stop with the science facts, one is super-strong but meek, and our narrator can't seem to rally everyone together and comes across as bossy and ineffectual to the other girls. then there are the younger girls. okay, i know this takes place during the vietnam war, so it is a different time and maybe i am just more accustomed to reading about modern-day kids, but there is a ten-year-old girl in this with an imaginary friend, who clings to her teddy bear, and is unaware that (view spoiler) isn't real. now, the teddy bear i get - in a crisis situation, you cling to whatever you have that is familiar, and a bunch of the younger girls have teddies with them. but the imaginary friend thing predates the trauma, and i don't know - do ten-year-old girls still have imaginary friends? i feel like that is the social crutch of a much younger girl.

for me, this did have enough of the physical danger to hold my interest, but not nearly enough of the psychological. it wasn't as tense and immediate as i think it could have been. some characters got lazy, some got bitchy, some got dead, but it lacks what is truly great about L.O.T.F., where we see the characters falling under the influence of their freedom and their new reality, replacing their civilized moral code with one older and wilder. but this isn't that kind of story.

it's fine, it's just not great. it is based on a true story, so with that what you will, and it is an ARC. so maybe the little inconsistencies will work themselves out or maybe the story will somehow get tighter, but for now, it is just a little three-star book from which i had anticipated a five.

Jen says

[every one dies. (hide spoiler)]

Katie (Kitkatscanread) says

DNF at page 102.

What the freak was this book?

I just couldn't get into it.

I bought this book for 2 reasons:

1. It was in a sale for £1
2. It had a premise about people being trapped on an island, which is what I find pleasure in. Kinda sadistic in a way, but who cares?

I think my problem was the writing style.

I couldn't get into it.

I didn't really like any of the characters, especially Mrs Campbell. She annoyed me.

Such a shame. I don't like DNFing books. I normally read 100 pages until I decide to be fair to the book, but even after 100 pages I just couldn't get into it. And because of that I won't give it a rating as I didn't complete the book.

But just because this book wasn't for me doesn't mean it can't be for you :)

Hazel Thomet says

Lost Girls was a great book, yes, but all their fails to be saved kind of got old.

Eleanor Tyrrell says

Amazing! One of the best books i have ever read.

Nicole Schnell says

Lost girls is a classic survival story of a girl scout named Bonnie and her peers with a cheerless counselor becomes stranded in a "forbidden island off the coast of Thailand. when set foot on the island it almost feels like paradise but when night fall comes a tropical storm slams the island and wrecks all their supplies and kills one girl, despite the storm, throughout the story they are forced to work with others and overcome all troubles they face.

mostly the story was page turning but I didn't really like all the perils throughout the story and how they are stranded for weeks with that little amount of supplies. I was also upset at the counselor weighing on some girls with her bad decisions to take drugs. But i also learned some tips and facts on surviving on an island, and of course to always be prepared and to have enough items to sustain a whole trip on an island.

In total, I personally enjoyed the book and if you like compelling and interesting story go for it!
The characters were well built and the story line is amazing. I would definitely recommend it to my peers and people that enjoy survival story's!

Lisa Nocita says

1974, Thailand. A group of girls, whose families are stationed on the Thai coast during the Vietnam War,

venture off on a 3 day scouting camp out on a nearby island. The weather gets rough and the boatman is blown off course, landing them on an uninhabited island which he declares is cursed. The boatman refuses to stay and leaves the girls and their leader. This is the beginning of their survival ordeal which is gruesome and, mostly, realistic. The leader is completely ineffectual and abandons all responsibility, drinking and smoking herself into oblivion. The story is told by Bonnie, a 14 yr old, who keeps a journal. But the narrative is only partly advanced by the journal, the rest first person. So the reader may infer that eventually the girls will be rescued. The girls are on the island for nearly a month, relying on their resourcefulness and wits to survive.

I like survival stories. This should have been right up my alley but it was lacking something to make it truly compelling and page turning. There were many horrific elements that made it realistic but it lacked a sense of urgency. In the end, the rescue was anticlimactic and, frankly, the most unbelievable part of the story. It took several days before the parents realized something might be wrong despite a TROPICAL storm. Because a crash at the base had destroyed additional planes, none could be spared to look for the missing children. And their parents were denied leave to look for them themselves. This was too contrived as an excuse for leaving them on the island. Overall, pretty lackluster. I think middle schoolers would lose interest pretty quickly.

Abbie says

I did feel quite sorry for the characters in this because of the situation they were in, but I didn't connect to any of them enough to really like them.

This wasn't a bad read, but it didn't keep my interest very well. I got bored at points, and the story just didn't suck me in.

Overall, An okay read.

Heather says

3.5. Got so much better the further on it got but honestly I found it so hard to get past that the Scottish protagonist was called Bonnie MacDonald. Like, the most Scottish name in all of Scotland. Wow. Found some of the character's not hugely believable, but loved Layla - mainly because I spent 90% of the book hating her. Good to have someone with a bit of a backstory. Okay read for ages 15 and up imo.

Andrea says

I'll just come out and say it, I didn't like LOST GIRLS. So, to spare you and myself, I'll make this short.

I can't even give a definite reason to back that up, either, which makes me feel like a jerk. It's odd, really, since I typically love survival stories. LOST is maybe my favorite show ever, and I even loved Castaway. I think the reason I didn't like LOST GIRLS is the narrative. The entire story is told through the eyes of Bonnie, a teenage girl living in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. The story read as a "stream of consciousness" which is a hit-or-miss for me. Bonnie is by turns horrified, hysterical, numb, detached and angry. All of those reactions are understandable, but it made reading the story a chore for me. Oh, and there was a scene that was total "WTF"-ery for me. It was bizarre, surreal, and unexplained.

I will say this for LOST GIRLS, the author didn't sugar coat the story at all. The girls endured horrific circumstances, realistic dangers, and extreme brutality in their living conditions. So while this made for fairly gross scenarios, I appreciate the author made the story as realistic as possible.

LOST GIRLS just wasn't the book for me. If this had been a book that I happened to pick up, rather than received from the publisher, I wouldn't have finished it. I also kept reading because I wanted to know if the girls were rescued, and who survived. This was not due to an investment in the characters, but simple curiosity. I hate that I felt that way, since I'm usually an empathetic reader, but there you have it.

Tori says

I think that it was a great realistic fiction but just not my type of book. It was all about a group of girls survival and how they deal with death, life, and spirit. In this book, Bonnie finds she wasn't as good as a person as she thought she was because surviving changes you. Bonnie finds she has many emotions going on at once, guilt because of the death of 3 of her companions, the death of the boatman that was coming to get them. and when the their "leader" miss Lyla Campbell goes drunk and stops caring she finds herself feeling like she has to be responsible. This story is all about survival and doing the right thing, but also about how hard life really is and the hard choices you make.
