



THE END OF LONGING

by Ian Reid

Some topics to consider while reading *The End of Longing*:

- Vengeance
- Confidence trickery
- Human nature
- Desire and longing
- Nineteenth-century prisons/legal systems
- Religion, and travel.

Frances, a young New Zealand woman, is laid to rest in an unmarked grave in Jamaica in 1894. Her enigmatic husband, the Rev. William Hammond, cannot be found. Reports are later sent to her brothers with allegations of cunning, fraud and, perhaps, murder. After all, Frances is not Hammond's first wife and his past seems murky.

Hammond has always been a traveller. But when Frances joins him, the allure of exotic journeys is soon overshadowed by a sense of foreboding. Does he really want her or is she in the way?

About Ian Reid



Although this is his first novel, Ian Reid is a widely published non-fiction writer with several literary and historical titles to his name. His work has been translated into many languages and he was awarded the inaugural Antipodes prize in the US for poetry. Originally from New Zealand, he now lives in Perth where he is Winthrop Professor at UWA and an Emeritus Professor at Curtin University.

Discussion questions

- 1 William Hammond is constructed as the villain in the opening chapters of the novel. How did this shape your initial impressions of Hammond, and did your impressions change as the novel progressed?
- 2 Discuss the novel's division into parts and its various settings. How do the novel's structure and settings assist in developing the characters of William and Frances?
- 3 As both a knowledgeable evangelist minister and a convincing physician, Hammond is initially highly respected by members of society. In general, does society still hold religious leaders and medical practitioners in such high esteem?
- 4 Consider Frances' and William's love of poetry. What does this reveal about their characters?
- 5 Is Frances really in love with Hammond or is she more in love with the prospect of exotic travel and the exciting life that she thinks he can provide?
- 6 In Hammond's words, 'Retribution by proxy can be better than none.' Do Hammond's past experiences of injustice defend his future exploitations of the people he encounters?
- 7 Consider the significance of the novel's title. What is the end of longing?
- 8 'Every writer or merit...takes his own society as his main subject matter. Exotic settings tend to produce trivial literature.' Do you agree/disagree with this statement?
- 9 Discuss the novel's ending.