# *The Lying Game* by Ruth Ware

## Synopsis

On a cool June morning, a woman is walking her dog in the idyllic coastal village of Salten along a tidal estuary known as the Reach. Before she can stop him, the dog charges into the water to retrieve what first appears to be a wayward stick, but to her horror, turns out to be something much more sinister...

The next morning, three women in and around London --- Fatima, Thea and Isabel ---receive the text they had always hoped would NEVER come, from the fourth in their formerly inseparable clique, Kate, that says only, “I need you.”

The four girls were best friends at Salten, a second-rate boarding school set near the cliffs of the English Channel. Each different in their own way, the four became inseparable and were notorious for playing the Lying Game, telling lies at every turn to both fellow boarders and faculty, with varying states of serious and flippant nature that were disturbing enough to ensure that everyone steered clear of them. The myriad and complicated rules of the game are strict: no lying to each other --- ever. Bail on the lie when it becomes clear it is about to be found out. But their little game had consequences, and the girls were all expelled in their final year of school under mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of the school’s eccentric art teacher, Ambrose (who also happens to be Kate’s father).

## Discussion questions

1. Were you surprised by how quickly Isa, Fatima, and Thea rushed down to Salten upon receiving Kate’s text? Why do they rush to her aid so quickly? Do you have any friends whom you would do the same for?
2. Describe the Tide Mill. What role has it played in the adolescence of the girls in the clique, and why is it so important to Kate, in particular?
3. Isa says, “I once tried to describe Ambrose to an old boyfriend...but I found it almost impossible” (p. 73). How would you describe Ambrose? What kind of a teacher and parent was he?
4. Isa’s housemistress tells her, “I’m very glad you’ve found friends. But remember, part of being a well-rounded young woman is having a wide *variety* of friends” (p. 99). Do you agree?
5. Rick praises Kate for staying in Salten, telling her, “Your dad was a good man, no matter what others in this place say, and you done well to stick it out here with the gossips” (p. 23). Do you think that Kate is brave for staying in Salten?
6. Isa says that she and her friends “have spent seventeen years running and hiding, in our different ways” (p. 93). What are they hiding from? Describe the ways that each of the women has attempted to run from their shared past. Have any of their attempts been successful? Why or why not?
7. What were your initial impressions of Luc? Did you trust him? Why or why not? Describe his relationship with Ambrose and Kate. Were you surprised by his anger as an adult?

*Synopsis/Discussion questions from https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-lying-game-0/guide*