

# Reader Guide

## for *THE GIRL BEFORE*

- 1.** As you were reading, did you engage with the survey questions alongside Jane and Emma? How would your answers differ from theirs? Were there any questions in particular that stood out to you? Did you surprise yourself with any of your responses?
- 2.** Emma and Jane have a lot in common, but there are also striking differences between the two women. Compare and contrast these two characters, and discuss some of the ways in which their differences and similarities influenced their relationships.
- 3.** How does living at One Folgate Street impact each of the women? In what ways do our environments shape our experiences? If you could make one change to your current living environment that would have an impact on your behavior, what would it be?
- 4.** Describe your personal style when it comes to home décor and architecture. How does that style shape or reflect your personality? Would you want to live in a minimalist space like One Folgate Street?
- 5.** On page 235, Jane finds Edward's discarded sketch—the pentimento image with two overlaid versions of her face. What did you make of that moment? What do you think the image meant to Edward?
- 6.** Discuss Emma's relationship with Saul. What do you think really happened there?
- 7.** Could you forgive Jane's deceptiveness, as revealed at the end of the novel? Were you surprised by her confession?
- 8.** What do you think of Edward's dream to create a community of homes like One Folgate Street? Could such a project ever really work successfully? Why or why not?
- 9.** Which character did you relate to the most in this novel? Why?
- 10.** Describe Simon's relationship with each of the women.
- 11.** Emma inspires passion and obsession in many of the men who fall into her orbit. What quality or qualities make her so compelling? Have you ever known someone like Emma?
- 12.** Make a list of every possession you consider essential to your life.