

## **DISTRESS SIGNALS by CATHERINE RYAN HOWARD**

### *Book Group Questions*

1. What expectations were set by the title and how do these compare to your experience of reading the novel? How does the title relate to the storyline?
2. Consider Adam and Sarah's relationship. We only experience it through Adam's eyes. Is he a reliable narrator? What are your impressions of Sarah?
3. One of the things Catherine wanted to explore in this novel was those first few hours and days when a person goes missing. What do you tell yourself? When do you panic? How long before you resume normal, everyday-life duties, like buying groceries? Discuss Adam's initial reaction to Sarah's disappearance and your feelings towards it. For example: how he used the internet to gather information, his interactions with the Gardaí, his interactions with Sarah's parents, what he told himself.
4. What did you think about the Gardaí's reaction to Sarah's disappearance?
5. Has *Distress Signals* changed how you feel about cruise ships and cruise travel? Did you know about the 'no country'/international waters aspect of maritime law before you read this novel? What did you find most surprising about cruise ships, as portrayed here? If you have been on a cruise, did you feel the portrayal was fair and accurate? If not, why not?
6. Before you reached the book's resolution, what connection did you think Romain and Corinne had to the main 'Adam' storyline? What connection *does* Romain have?
7. Is there a nature versus nurture argument to be made about Romain? Do you think his upbringing, relationship with his mother, etc. influenced his behaviour in later life or was he born 'evil'? What evidence is there in the novel for each argument?
8. Did your feelings towards Adam change over the course of the book? If so, how? And at what points? Have the events of the novel changed him? In what ways?
9. How did you feel about the ending? (Both the confrontation on the *Celebrate* and the epilogue.) Did it surprise you?
10. [For American readers] *Distress Signals* is largely set in Cork, features Irish characters and was written by an Irish author. How did this effect your reading experience? In what ways, based on your reading of this book, is being Irish and living in contemporary Ireland different to being American and living in the United States?

- Thank you so much for reading *Distress Signals* -