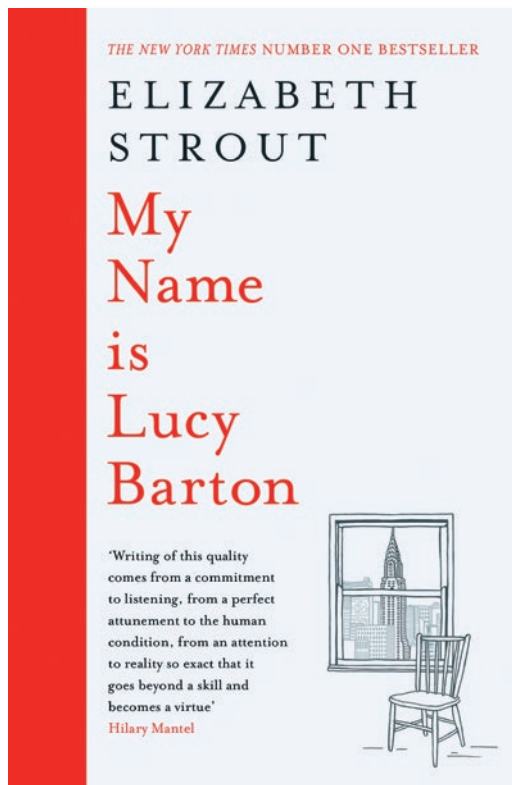


Reader's Guide



Other books by Elizabeth Strout

Amy and Isabelle (1998)

Olive Kitteridge (2008)

The Burgess Boys (2013)

My Name Is Lucy Barton Elizabeth Strout

Viking

www.themanbookerprize.com

#FinestFiction



About the author

Elizabeth Strout is the Pulitzer prize-winning author of *Olive Kitteridge*, as well as *The Burgess Boys*, a *New York Times* bestseller, *Abide With Me* and *Amy and Isabelle*, which won the *Los Angeles Times* Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction and the *Chicago Tribune* Heartland Prize. She has also been a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Orange Prize. She lives in New York City and Portland, Maine.

About the book

Lucy Barton is recovering slowly from what should have been a simple operation. Her mother, to whom she hasn't spoken for many years, comes to see her. Her unexpected visit forces Lucy to confront the tension and longing that have informed every aspect of her life: her impoverished childhood in Amgash, Illinois, her escape to New York and her desire to become a writer, her faltering marriage, her love for her two daughters.

In *My Name Is Lucy Barton*, Elizabeth Strout shows how a simple hospital visit illuminates the most tender relationship of all: the one between mother and daughter.

Discussion points

My Name is Lucy Barton is a novel about the complex love between mothers and daughters. How does Lucy and her mother's relationship evolve over the course of the novel? Does your attitude towards Lucy's mother change?

What role does social class play in the novel? What does it tell us about Lucy's relationships and about America as a whole?

The novel is narrated by Lucy Barton from a point in the future. How do memory and hindsight affect our understanding of events?

Do you agree with character Sarah Payne's view that 'we have only one story'?

Lucy is a writer, but much of this novel is about the unsayable and the unsaid. Discuss.

Lucy's father is profoundly affected by his experience in World War Two. How does Lucy inherit his trauma?

What does the novel suggest about forgiveness and redemption?

Themed reading

Marilynne Robinson *Gilead*
Anne Tyler *A Spool of Blue Thread*
Anne Enright *The Green Road*
John Williams *Stoner*

Useful links

<http://www.elizabethstrout.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/feb/02/my-name-is-lucy-barton-review-elizabeth-strout>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/my-name-is-lucy-barton-by-elizabeth-strout-review-a-light-that-never-goes-out-1.2595261>

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/10/books/review/elizabeth-strouts-my-name-is-lucy-barton.html?_r=0