

# READING GROUP GUIDE

'A timely and powerfully told tale of a working-class community in crisis...a new and exciting voice in fiction'

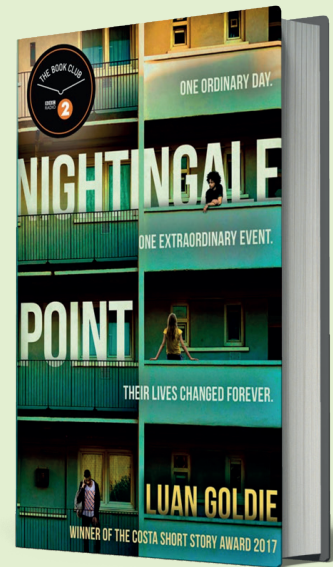
Mike Gayle

'So much warmth in the description of a working-class community...it's not perfect or idealistic, but it's warm and recognisable'

Jendella Benson

#NightingalePoint

@LuanGoldie



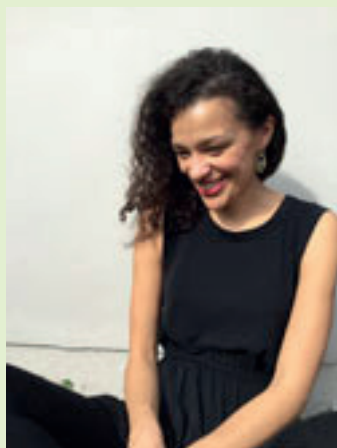
## ABOUT THE BOOK

On an ordinary Saturday morning in 1996, the residents of Nightingale Point wake up to their normal lives and worries.

It's a day like any other, until something extraordinary happens.

When the sun sets, Nightingale Point is irrevocably changed and somehow, through the darkness, the residents must find a way back to lightness, and back to each other.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



LUAN GOLDIE is a primary school teacher, and formerly a business journalist. She has written several short stories and is the winner of the Costa Short Story Award 2017 for her short story 'Two Steak Bakes and Two Chelsea Buns'.

She was also shortlisted for the London Short Story Prize in 2018 and the *Grazia/Orange* First Chapter competition in 2012, and was chosen to take part in the Almasi League, an Arts Council-funded mentorship programme for emerging writers of colour.

*NIGHTINGALE POINT* is her debut novel.

# MEET THE RESIDENTS OF NIGHTINGALE POINT

## Malachi:

Malachi has big dreams but seems to always have the weight of the world on his shoulders. After the death of his mother, he juggles his studies with taking care of his younger brother and keeping them both afloat financially. After a chance meeting, he falls in love with Pamela who lives with her father on the Nightingale Point estate. Malachi and Pamela's love story becomes inextricably linked to what unfolds on the estate and its aftermath.

## Tristan:

Tristan, Malachi's younger brother, is fifteen when the novel begins and starts off as a bit of a trouble maker. But it is hard not to find Tristan endearing. He expresses his creativity through his sartorial choices and composing his own rap lyrics. Over the course of the story, he is forced to come to terms with the emotional fallout from what happens to him and how it has impacted his life.

## Pamela:

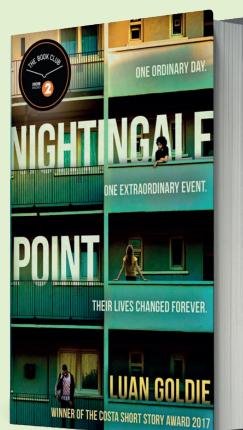
Pamela is sixteen years old when the novel begins. She feels trapped by her controlling and overprotective father and loves the freedom she finds when she goes for a run. Pamela's father disapproves of her relationship with Malachi and does everything in his power to keep them apart.

## Mary:

Originally from the Philippines, Mary came to London to pursue her career in nursing. Her husband, David, is often away, travelling with his musical act. Mary loves her children and grandchildren and keeps a close eye on Malachi and Tristan, making sure they are fed properly and don't get into too much trouble. But Mary sometimes struggles with the duty she feels as a caregiver to the people in her life and wanting to follow her own heart.

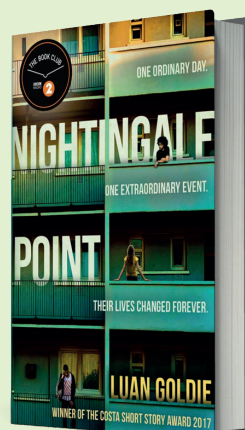
## Elvis:

Elvis has recently moved to the Nightingale Point estate from the Waterside Centre. He loves living in his own flat, full of all his favourite things. Lina, his care worker, comes to help him every day. Elvis is a stickler for rules, loves steak and kidney pie, and is an expert at growing tomatoes. Elvis is perhaps the only character who retains his unfalteringly optimistic outlook on life throughout the novel.



# DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Which character in *Nightingale Point* did you most identify with and why? Did your view of the characters shift as the story progressed?
2. Tristan decides to keep something a secret from his brother Malachi. Did you agree with his decision? Would you have acted differently if you were in the same situation?
3. Did you feel sympathy for Jay? Discuss if you think there should have been greater consequences for his actions.
4. Mary seems to have a much closer bond with Tristan and Malachi than her own grown-up children. What did you make of their relationship?
5. Elvis and Tristan form an unlikely friendship as the story progresses. What do you think each of them ended up learning from the other?
6. Out of all the characters, Tristan undergoes the most dramatic journey, emotionally and physically, over the course of the novel. The last time we see him he's on the cusp of another momentous life event. How do you think he'll cope with this event?
7. *Nightingale Point* is not an overtly political novel, but issues of race, class and the duty of care we owe to those in our community underpin the story. Discuss which political issues in the novel have changed since 1996 and which are ones we are still grappling with in 2019.
8. Mary is a strong and independent woman who moved from the Philippines to London as a young woman for a very different kind of life. But Mary stayed married to David for all those years despite his behaviour. Why do you think Mary was so intent on trying to make her marriage work?
9. Discuss the representation of disability and mental health in the novel.



# READERS LOVE *NIGHTINGALE POINT*

'Very occasionally, a story comes along that you know will stay with you.  
This book is one of those stories'

'Beautifully written'

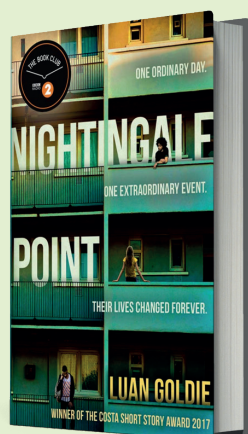
'An exceptional, memorable read – one of my reading  
highlights of 2019 so far'

'This was a beautiful story...heartbreaking'

'Astonishing. A brilliant, thoughtful read'

'Fantastic'

'A triumphant debut of a novel'



## OTHER READING

If you loved *Nightingale Point* then we think you will also love these books:

*The Bricks that Built the Houses* by Kate Tempest

*My Name Is Leon* by Kit De Waal

*White Teeth* by Zadie Smith

*Brick Lane* by Monica Ali

*In Our Mad and Furious City* by Guy Gunaratne