# Long-Term Care Book Club

The Last Ocean: A Journey through Memory and Forgetfulness

Author: Nicci Gerrard

## Discussion Guide & Chapter Questions

### Introduction & Chapter 1

How did you react to Nicci’s description of her father’s trip to Sweden and his experience of prolonged hospitalization?

Discuss the statement “***it is easier to ignore those living with dementia if they are subtly dehumanized, mindless”*** (p. 23)

How is the culture of dementia evolving?

### Chapter 2 – Getting Older

Why do some people with dementia make a living will?

### Chapter 4 – Memory and Forgetting

How does the memory protect us from trauma? (p. 70/71)

At what point does forgetfulness become something more than a natural part of aging?

Why is “***a diagnosis just the start***” of a journey with dementia?

### Chapter 6- Shame

What is the connection between dementia and shame?

How do caregivers experience the shame associated with dementia (inherited shame) (p. 110)

### Chapter 7- The Carers

How is the story of dementia also about the people those care for those living with dementia (p. 114)?

What are your thoughts on the term “care partner” vs. “Caregiver”

Share your thoughts and feelings as you read the stories shared by caregivers in this chapter.

### Chapter 8- Connecting through the arts

How can the arts promote a connection between caregivers and people with dementia?

What is the benefit of creative writing for caregivers?

### Chapter 9- Home

Discuss the connection between home and the following: (a) self (b) things/objects and (c) activities

What are the differences in priorities between potential resident and family members when choosing a long-term care home?

Is reciprocity possible when caring for someone with dementia?

### Chapter 10- The Later Stages

How did you react to the author’s description of the later stages of her father’s dementia?

Share your thoughts on John’s Campaign (p. 177)

### Chapter 11- Hospital

How is the description of daily life in a hospital similar to daily life in Long-term care for residents?

### Chapter 12- At the End

How do the stories shared in this chapter demonstrate the difference between what caregivers see and the world of people with dementia?

### Chapter 13- Saying Goodbye

Discuss how “Dementia is a particularly long farewell to the self” (p.207)

Share your thoughts on the statement that “To mourn someone who is still alive brings a particular, complicated pain” (p. 208)

What would your list look like if you were diagnosed with dementia?

### Chapter 14- Death

25) How might the death of a person with dementia be viewed as a relief to their family and caregivers?

**Month # 2**

Lead into reading “Talking about Death wont’ kill you”