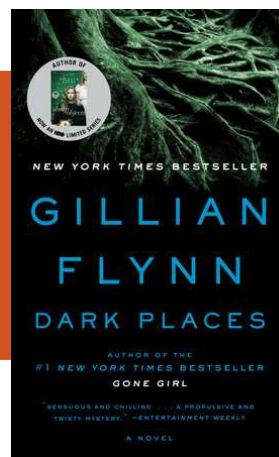




Dark Places

Gillian Flynn



Book Club Discussion Notes

Author Background

Gillian Flynn is an American writer and the author of the runaway hit *Gone Girl*, an international sensation that spent more than 100 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. She also wrote the Golden-Globe nominated screenplay for the film adaptation that starred Ben Affleck and Rosemund Pike. Flynn's previous novels, *Dark Places* and Dagger Award-winner *Sharp Objects*, were also New York Times bestsellers. Her newest release, *The Grownup*, is an Edgar Award-winning short story and a homage to the classic ghost story. Her work has been published in 41 languages. A former writer and critic for Entertainment Weekly, she lives in Chicago with her husband and children.

Book Summary

Libby Day was seven when her mother and two sisters were murdered in "The Satan Sacrifice of Kinnakee, Kansas." She survived—and famously testified that her fifteen-year-old brother, Ben, was the killer. Twenty-five years later, the Kill Club—a secret society obsessed with notorious crimes—locates Libby and pumps her for details. They hope to discover proof that may free Ben.

Libby hopes to turn-a-profit off her tragic history. She'll reconnect with the players from that night and report her findings to the club—for a fee. As Libby's search takes her from shabby Missouri strip clubs to abandoned Oklahoma tourist towns, the unimaginable truth emerges, and Libby finds herself right back where she started—on the run from a killer.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Did you like the book? Why or why not?
- ❖ The book was written in very short chapters, rotating from one character's point of view to another's, as well as flipping between 1985 and current day. Was it successfully done? Did it help or harm the story?
- ❖ Did you find the characters in this story believable?
- ❖ Libby is a liar, a manipulator, a kleptomaniac, and an opportunist. Does she have any redeeming qualities? Do you think the author intended for her to be likeable? Are you able to empathise with her? If so, why?
- ❖ Which secondary character did you like the best? Which did you like the least? Why? Did you change your opinion of these people as the novel progressed and more information was revealed about them?
- ❖ Throughout the book, many characters seem to feel as though life is something that happens to them; others take a more proactive role in steering its course, often with disastrous consequences. Discuss the book's theme of action versus reaction, investigation versus acceptance. Where does Libby's behaviour fit in this contrast?
- ❖ "No one ever forgives me for anything," one character says. What role does forgiveness play in *Dark Places*? Which characters should be more forgiving? Less?
- ❖ Why do you think the author chose to set the murders on a farm? What images and themes does the heartland and farming evoke?

References

- ❖ <https://www.mentorpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Dark-Places-Discussion-Questions.pdf>
- ❖ <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/70462/gillian-flynn/>