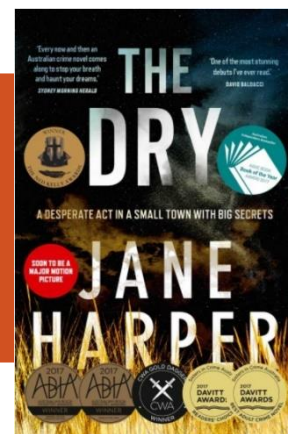




The Dry

Jane Harper



Author Background

Jane Harper was born in Manchester in the UK and moved to Australia with her family aged eight. She returned to the UK later where she studied English and History at the University of Kent in Canterbury. On graduating, she completed a journalism entry qualification and got her first reporting job as a trainee on the *Darlington & Stockton Times* in County Durham.

Jane returned to Australia in 2008 where she worked at the *Geelong Advertiser* followed by the *Herald Sun*, among other publications. Jane lives in Melbourne with her husband and their two children.

The Dry is Jane's first novel, with rights sold to over twenty territories. It has now been turned into a film starring Eric Bana as Aaron Falk.

The book received multiple state, national, and international awards such as the 2015 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for an Unpublished Manuscript, the 2017 Ned Kelly Award for Best First Fiction, the 2017 ABIA Award for Book of the Year, and the 2017 UK Crime Writers' Association Award for Crime Novel of the Year.

Jane has since written three more books, *Force of Nature*, *The Lost Man*, and *The Survivors*, all receiving high acclaim. Jane is now working on her fifth novel.

Book Summary

Luke Hadler turns a gun on his wife and child, then himself. The farming community of Kiewarra is facing life and death choices daily. If one of their own broke under the strain, well...

When Federal Police investigator Aaron Falk returns to Kiewarra for the funerals, he is loath to confront the people who rejected him twenty years earlier. But when his investigative skills are called on, the facts of the Hadler case start to make him doubt this murder-suicide charge.

And as Falk probes deeper into the killings, old wounds start bleeding into fresh ones. For Falk and his childhood friend Luke shared a secret... A secret Falk thought long buried... A secret which Luke's death starts to bring to the surface...

Discussion Questions

- ❖ The novel begins with a prologue that describes flies being drawn to the scene of the murders. Why is this approach such a powerful way to introduce the events of the novel?
- ❖ The drought overshadows everything that happens in *The Dry*. In some ways it could almost be said to be another character. What is it about the drought and its effects on the town that make people less likely to question what happened to the Hadlers?
- ❖ How does the drought colour our impressions of Kiewarra, its residents, and the Australian bush throughout the novel? What are the positives and negatives of living in a small, tight-knit community?
- ❖ Secrets and lies and the reasons why people keep them are at the core of this novel. Why do you think the characters in this book keep the secrets they do and what effect does this have on each of them? What does this tell us about the nature of secrets, and the need for truth? Is it better for some secrets to be kept?
- ❖ How has growing up without a mother affected Aaron's life? In what ways does this become especially apparent when he and his father move to Melbourne and cut ties with his childhood home?
- ❖ How did Aaron's relationship with Ellie and the events surrounding her death affect Aaron and his ability to engage with people?
- ❖ Do you think that leaving town was the right way for Erik Falk to deal with the situation he and Aaron were facing? How did his father's doubts about him affect Aaron?
- ❖ Jane Harper has chosen to tell this story in the past tense and third person, from Aaron's point of view, and with flashbacks from various characters threaded throughout. What is the effect of this? How does it shape your understanding of Aaron, as well as the other characters in the novel?
- ❖ Some of the flashback scenes are shown to the reader a second time in a more expanded form as the novel progresses. What does this device show us about the reliability of the assumptions we make about the events and characters?

References and further reading

- ❖ <https://janeharper.com.au/about-jane>
- ❖ Book Browse - The Dry:
https://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm/book_number/3516/the-dry#reading_guide