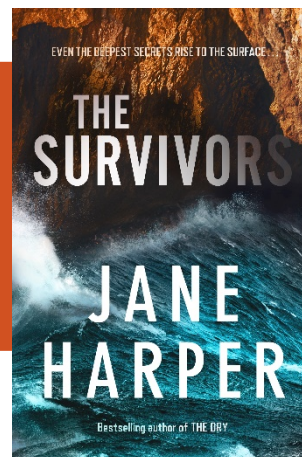




The Survivors

Jane Harper



Book Club Discussion Notes

Author Background

Born in Manchester, Jane Harper's family moved to Australia when she was eight. She returned to the UK as a teenager and studied History and English at the University of Kent. After obtaining a journalism qualification, she worked as a newspaper journalist before moving back to Australia in 2008, working with the *Geelong Advertiser* and as a business journalist in Melbourne.

Jane was encouraged to pursue creative writing when her short story was included in the 2014 fiction edition of *The Big Issue*. Just two years later, her debut novel, *The Dry* (written during a 12-week online writing course with Curtis Brown Creative), thrust her into the literary spotlight and became an international bestseller and now a major motion picture. Other books quickly followed: a second book featuring policeman Aaron Falk in *Force of Nature* (2017) and two standalone books, *The Lost Man* (2018) and *The Survivors* (2020).

Jane has won numerous awards, including the CWA Gold Dagger Award for Best Crime Novel, the British Book Awards Crime and Thriller Book of the Year and the Australian Book Industry Awards Book of the Year. She lives in Melbourne with her husband and two children.

Book Summary

The Survivors is set in the fictional coastal community of Evelyn Bay on the south coast of Tasmania. Thirty-year-old Kieran Elliott has returned home with his partner Mia and young baby to help his mother pack up the family home as his father succumbs to the ravages of dementia.

However, there are memories in Evelyn Bay that Kieran would rather forget. Twelve years ago, his brother Finn and his diving business partner Toby tragically died at sea trying to rescue Kieran during a devastating storm. At the same time, a young girl, Gabby Birch, completely disappeared.

The close-knit community has been drowning in grief – and some cases, anger – ever since. So, when the body of a young woman is discovered on a beach, simmering suspicions, pent-up guilt and dark secrets rise to the surface once again.

Mia was Gabby's best friend so what does she know? Why is Toby's son, Liam, so angry with Kieran? And what does the recently arrived thriller writer G.R. Barlin have to play in all this? Dive in and find out...

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Like *The Dry*, *The Survivors* is set in a small town where rumours run rife and old wounds fester. How does this setting impact on the events of the novel? Would a novel set in a larger town or city be as successful?
- ❖ Jane Harper's novels have been described as 'formulaic', do you agree? If so, what are the benefits/disadvantages of this? Can you think of other authors who do the same thing?
- ❖ Dark and dangerous caves, rugged cliffs, perilous seas, shipwrecks - discuss what role the landscape plays in this and other Jane Harper books.
- ❖ How is social media portrayed in this book and is it an accurate reflection of social media as you know it? Is it a useful plot tool for feeding red herrings (misleading information) to the reader?
- ❖ How has survivor's guilt impacted on the lives of Kieran and Gabby's sister Olivia?
- ❖ How successful is the female author in writing as a male protagonist (Kieran)? What issues does the book raise about teenage masculinity, social conventions and fitting in?
- ❖ Did you suspect who was responsible for Bronte and Gabby's deaths before it was officially revealed? At what point did you do this and why?
- ❖ Some readers have questioned the motive for Bronte's murder. Did you find it plausible - why or why not?

References

- ❖ Pan Macmillan Australia: <https://www.panmacmillan.com.au/9781760783945/>
- ❖ Jane Harper: <https://janeharper.com.au/>
- ❖ Booktopia: <https://bit.ly/3gyrOd9>
- ❖ Good Reads: <https://bit.ly/3gfUQ00>
- ❖ *The Australian* (review): <https://bit.ly/3ggksdR>