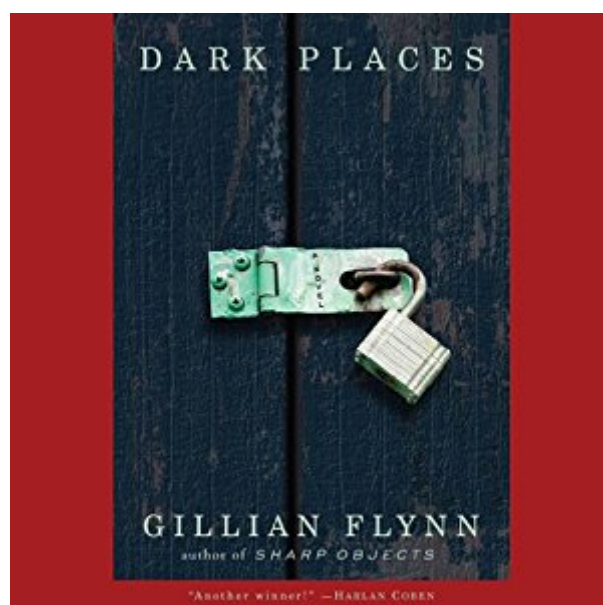


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Dark Places: A Novel



Synopsis

FROM THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF GONE GIRL 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 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. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Libby Day was seven years old when her mother and two sisters were massacred in a blood-soaked home invasion dubbed by the press as "The Satan Sacrifice of Kinnakee, Kansas." It was Libby's testimony which put her then-fifteen-year old brother, Ben, into prison for the rest of his life for the heinous murders. Now, it is almost twenty-five years later, and Libby, depressed, angry and broke has agreed to attend a meeting of the Kill Club, a strange conglomerate of people obsessed with famous murders. Some of the Kill Club members have become interested in the murders of Libby's family because they are convinced that Ben has been wrongly convicted. After meeting with the Kill Club, Libby, although still sure that Ben is the murderer, decides to try to make

some cash from her family's grisly history by charging the Kill Club members to interview people who might have further information about the murders. In hauntingly compelling prose, this wonderfully talented author deftly unfolds the story of what really happened during the early morning hours of January 3, 1985, and how searching for, and uncovering, that truth will change the lives of Libby and Ben. The book is told in an interesting intermittent flashback format, with Libby, tough and damaged from her horrific childhood, narrating the present-day chapters in first-person, while the flashback chapters, told in third-person, describe the actions of several key characters on one winter's day in 1985. Besides Libby, the most fascinating character in the book is that of Ben, the awkward, aimless, angry boy, tottering on the brink of manhood.

Who killed Libby Day's family? This is the mystery that is presented on the first page and the subsequent chapters detail Libby's attempt - half-hearted at first, to get the answers she so desperately needs in order for her to get on track in life. The book alternates points of view from Libby in present day to various characters from the past - describing the events that led up to, and include the infamous day of the murders twenty-five years previous - January 2, 1985. The book is paced and the author writes excellent and well developed descriptions of the characters - Libby's mother, aunt Diane, sisters and brother - as well as of the setting of the Kinnakee, Kansas farm and Libby's house on the bluff in Kansas City, Missouri. (As a KCMO native, I was surprised to find a book set in this Midwest city because it is so rare and I really enjoyed that fact about the book.) Because of the way the novel is written, the various points of view in each chapter are used to advance Libby's determination and investigation into actually and finally finding out who killed her family and why. The plot is revealed in layers and the reader isn't quite sure how all of this is going to come together - but it does. This is not a heart pounding thriller, but a more dark and plodding one - you know that denouement is just around the corner - you're hoping that Libby is going to get the information she wants as she confronts first one and then another of the surviving family and others involved with the search for the killer(s) of her family. Indeed, the hangers on - the Kill Club members - and her father, the loser Runner, only add to her consternation as she seems thwarted at every turn.

The basic plotline of this story was excellent. Youngest daughter in a single-mother family of four survives the slaughter of said family and then testifies that her brother was the killer. Nearly twenty-five years later circumstances arise that make her question everything she's ever known and the ensuing story about finding answers leads us to a resolution. I thought this premise sounded

very interesting and that the novel would provide me with a little bit of thought-provocation and a lot of suspense. Unfortunately, the way each of these characters were written made them very unsympathetic to me as a reader. Many may disagree with me, by saying that anyone who experiences the brutal death of a family member has the right to be selfish throughout the rest of his or her life. But, I disagree with that theory and the actions of Libby Day, her tone in telling the story and her mood towards those around her who only wanted to help did not endear her to me at all. What redeemed this novel for me were the flashback chapters told from the perspectives of Ben and Patty Day, accused brother and murdered mother respectively. Hearing the story told, in the day leading up to the murders, from their points of view were the pieces of this book that made me keep reading instead of tossing the book aside for something better. In these chapters, the author did a remarkable job of laying out the puzzle pieces that no one had been able to put together up to that point. This story has many layers and I'm sure that different readers will get many different messages from it. I was disappointed that I didn't like the main character more, but that didn't stop me from wanting to get answers about what really happened "that night" just like she did.

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