All Good People Here
by Ashley Flowers

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Discussion Questions

1. Ashley Flowers skillfully crafts a narrative featuring unreliable characters, hidden motives, and secrets. How does the depiction of Krissy through both flashback chapters and the opinions of her neighbors and detectives influence your initial understanding of her? Did your perception of Krissy shift throughout the book, and if so, how? Additionally, consider how Flowers employs Margot's own struggles with self-doubt and guilt to raise questions about her reliability as our central narrator.

2. The pervasive nature of small town life plays a crucial role in the novel. How does the intense scrutiny and tendency towards gossip within Wakarusa shape the initial aftermath of January's murder and the subsequent investigation? Explore how this environment both helps and hinders Margot's efforts to uncover the truth. Is the intense public interest a form of true concern for the missing girl, or does it feed a morbid spectacle?

3. All Good People Here presents a complex and morally ambiguous view of justice and accountability. Consider Margot's decision not to disclose the truth about the twins' paternity at the end of the novel. Was her choice motivated by compassion towards Billy and Jace, or is it an act that withholds full justice from January? Moreover, examine the portrayal of Billy's actions. How does Flowers complicate the traditional "good vs. evil" narrative of crime stories by showing the humanity within a killer?

4. The role of media sensationalism in true crime cases is a central theme of the novel. Discuss how the catastrophic media coverage of January's case fuels public opinion and influences the course of the investigation. How does the public's perception of Krissy and Jace, heavily shaped by media portrayals, contribute to the injustice they face? Could the novel be a commentary on the potentially damaging narratives created by true crime media?

5. The novel delves deeply into themes of survivor's guilt, lasting trauma, and the pursuit of purpose. Discuss how Margot's survivor's guilt is a driving force throughout the novel and informs her relentless pursuit of justice. Analyze how Margot's personal journey intertwines with her role as a truth-seeker in the case. Furthermore, explore the ways in which long-term trauma influences the lives of Jace, Luke, and even Billy Jacobs.

6. Ashley Flowers, as the host of the popular true crime podcast Crime Junkie, brings a unique perspective to the genre. Discuss ways in which the novel both aligns with and departs from the typical conventions of true crime stories. For example, consider how it deals with the resolution of cases and the representation of crime victims. Does Flowers use All Good People Here to subtly critique and address potential problems within the true crime genre?

7. The dual timeline structure plays a crucial role in the novel. How does the juxtaposition of Margot's 2019 investigation and the 1994 chapters surrounding January's murder enhance the narrative? Analyze how the past informs the present, and in particular, how societal attitudes and investigative practices potentially influence the two cases differently.

8. Margot's relentless pursuit of justice comes at a personal cost. Discuss how her obsession with January's case impacts her relationships and her career. Consider whether her actions could be seen as justified, or potentially destructive to herself and those around her. Does the novel raise questions about the limits of personal involvement in such cases?

9. All Good People Here features complex portrayals of motherhood. How does the novel explore the pressures and societal expectations placed upon Krissy in her role as a mother? Compare her mothering to that of Margot's own mother – what does this tell us about both women? Additionally, analyze the concept of "motherhood" in the sense of how Margot's nurturing instincts extend to solving January's case.

10. Like many thrillers, All Good People Here relies on twists and unexpected revelations. Was the final "reveal" regarding Billy as January's killer satisfying? Did it make sense given his character development throughout the novel? Were there other clues or hints cleverly placed along the way? Discuss other moments in the story that had an impactful surprise element, and the role they played in heightening suspense.

Author Interview

'Crime Junkie' Host Ashley Flowers Discusses Her Debut Novel and How She Fell in Love with True Crime
by Bellamy Richardson

Ashley Flowers has taken her passion for true crime to new dimensions.

The producer and co-host of Crime Junkie, a chart-topping podcast with over 500 million downloads and 250 episodes, turned her expansive knowledge of the topic into a fictional murder mystery titled All Good People Here, which is set to release Aug. 16.

Flowers' debut novel follows Margot, a young reporter, as she returns to her hometown of Wakarusa, Ind., to unearth the backstories of her lifelong neighbors — and tries to find answers regarding the murder of her childhood friend, January Jacobs, which has gone unsolved for 25 years.

Though Flowers, 32, is known for being the voice of multiple podcasts under the media company audiochuck — of which she is the founder and CEO — she first fell in love with the crime and mystery genre through reading.

Flowers says she inherited her passion for true crime from her mother and grandmother before her. "That's what my mom was into — when I was really little, I was watching Perry Mason with her and reading Agatha Christie and Nancy Drew and these fictional stories that I realized were based on the real world," she told PEOPLE. "As I got older and older, I just became fascinated with this darker side of reality."

"People keep calling [my book] a departure from what I'm doing, but to me it feels like I'm going back to how this all started," Flowers says. "For me, it started with fiction mystery novels that I would read as a young kid."

Though Flowers says she didn't draw on specific crime cases or podcast episodes when crafting the story for her novel, she admits "there's no way my true crime life didn't bleed into it." In fact, Flowers based a key piece of evidence in her book on part of a true crime case she studied for her podcast: the threatening note written in big letters on the Jacobs family's barn that seemed to link January's murder with the more recent murder of a girl a few towns over.

"In my book, there's a moment when there's a note on the barn," she says. "There's a real case that we've covered before [on the podcast] where there's a note on a barn."

The bigger picture she wants to get across to readers is inextricably linked to what she has learned from studying true crime — that many people can seem to fit the perfect profile of the criminal, but often it only seems that way due to coincidences or random facts. "From the outside, it's so easy to cast judgment or place blame when you really don't know what's happening behind closed doors, which is also the meaning behind the title," she explains.

Besides having an encyclopedic knowledge of true crime, the novel's setting is also familiar to Flowers, an Indiana native. Flowers' Crime Junkie co-host and lifelong best friend Brit Prawat grew up in the real town of Wakarusa, where the two spent their childhood summers together.

"I've always seen these bigger cities pop up over and over again, and as a local, I always wanted to see my own place represented," Flowers says. "So I was like, 'if I'm going to write a book, this is what I know better than anything else — let's set it in this really tiny, obscure place that is really meaningful to me, but also might showcase Indiana to the rest of the world.'"

At the moment, Flowers does not have any concrete plans to write a sequel to her debut novel, but she is open to writing more in the future.

"It was a roller coaster of a process," she says of writing All Good People Here. "Now that the book is finished and I can hold onto it, this is the most exciting part of it all, and it's got me fired up to want to do another one. But I'm looking to the readers to see if they like it and if they want to hear more from me. If they do, I would love to write another book."

Spending so much time immersed in the world of true crime can be scary, but Flowers says it is all worth it because of the positive impact that comes out of sharing these stories.

"We're talking to these families every single week who are going through the worst times and looking for justice for their loved one, and that can weigh on you" she says. "But I think I'm able to do it because I truly believe that if myself and my whole team weren't doing this, the world would be a worse place, and we're making it better for these families and these victims."

From - https://people.com/books/emcrime-junkie-emhost-ashley-flowers-discusses-debut-novel/

Author Biography

Ashley Flowers is the Founder and Chief Creative Officer of audiochuck, the award-winning, independent media and podcast production company known for its standout content and storytelling across different genres, including true crime, fiction, comedy, and more. Ashley is also the author of the New York Times bestseller All Good People Here, which debuted in 2022.

Flowers also hosts several audiochuck shows, including top-rated podcasts Crime Junkie, The Deck, and The Deck Investigates. At the core of the company and all its content, Ashley and her team are committed to developing responsible true crime content.

Ashley is passionate about advocacy work and established the nonprofit Season of Justice to provide financial resources to both law enforcement agencies and families in order to help solve cold cases.

Flowers was born and raised in Indiana, where she lives with her husband, her daughter, and their beloved dog, Chuck.

https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/2256840/ashley-flowers/

Reviews

All Good People Here by Ashley Flowers with Alex Kiester.

Flowers, the host of the true crime podcast Crime Junkie, debuts with a twisty psychological thriller coauthored with Kiester (The Truth About Ben and June). Twenty-five years after the unsolved murder of Margot Davies's childhood best friend, January Jacobs (forever frozen in public memory—shades of JonBenét Ramsey—as that tiny dancer looking disturbingly older than six in her skimpy competition costume), Margot remains haunted by the case, as well as the way pious finger-pointing in her hometown of Wakarusa, Ind., helped shatter her surviving family. So when duty drags Margot, now a crime reporter for an Indianapolis newspaper, back to Wakarusa to care for the ailing uncle who raised her, she hopes this might be her chance to crack the case—especially once, less than a day after her arrival, a five-year-old vanishes in a neighboring town. The reporter swiftly discovers that the townsfolk she once thought she knew may have been concealing far more complex and problematic passions than apparent back then to a child such as herself. This intricate, intriguing puzzler should surprise even those readers certain they know where the plot's heading. Flowers is off to a promising start.