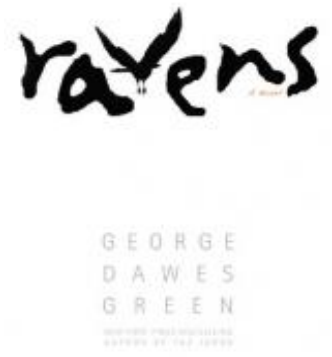
ReadingGroupGuides
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Ravens

by George Dawes Green



About the Book

The Boatwrights just won 318 million dollars in the Georgia State lottery. It's going to be the worst day of their lives.

When Shaw McBride and Romeo Zderko pull up at a convenience store off I-95 in Georgia, their only thought is to fix a leaky tire and be on their way again to Florida-away from their dull Ohio tech-support jobs. But this happens to be the store from which a $318 million dollar Jackpot ticket has just been sold --- and when a pretty clerk accidentally reveals to Shaw the identity of the winning family, he hatches a ferociously audacious scheme: He and Romeo will squeeze the family for half their prize.

That night, he visits the Boatwright home and takes the family hostage, while Romeo patrols the streets nearby, prepared to murder the Boatwrights' loved ones at any sign of resistance. At first, the family offers none. But Shaw's plot depends on maintaining constant fear-merciless, unfaltering terror-and soon, under the pressure, everyone's sanity begins to unravel?

At once frightening, comic, and suspenseful, **Ravens** is a wholly original and utterly compelling novel from one of our most talented writers.

Discussion Guide

1. How does winning the jackpot affect each member of the Boatwright family differently? How do they envision the money changing their lives?

2. Do you think winning a huge amount of money would dramatically change your life for the better, or would it introduce complexities and problems?

3. How does technology play a role in the novel? Does Green portray technology as a pernicious force in society? Do you think Shaw could have pulled off his plan without the aid of the Internet?

4. Early in the novel, as Shaw begins to lay out his plans to blackmail the Boatwrights, he thinks, ?What he needed was beauty. A life of pure beauty, nothing less. He?d pay any price for it.? What do you think Shaw means by ?a life of pure beauty?? What is he willing to sacrifice in order to achieve this life?

5. Soon after Romeo and Shaw put their plan into motion, Romeo thinks, ?What?s the matter with me? Shaw says I need you ? I say, OK, at your service. Why don?t I tell him I can?t do this?? Why does Romeo end up going along with Shaw?s plan despite his reservations? What draws him to Shaw?

6. Is Mitch Boatwright a coward? Do you think he could have done more to protect his family? Why or why not?

7. While driving Tara to Nell?s house for the fi rst time, Shaw thinks to himself, ?What I have to do is keep this fire going. The furnace of black flames. Be unafraid to have it inside me. Be willing to create every horror. Fear becomes discipline becomes profoundest love.? What does he mean by this? Why does he equate fear with love?

8. What sort of relationship do Tara and Shaw develop? Do you think there is sexual tension between them? And if there is attraction, do you think it is one- sided or mutual?

9. Similarly, do you think there is any sexual tension between Romeo and Shaw? In what ways does Green explore the relationship between sex and power in this novel?

10. Why is Romeo drawn to Claude? With what does his relationship with Claude provide him?

11. During the jackpot press conference, Tara is relieved to see that the audience buys Shaw?s story and thinks to herself, ?He?s OK. He knows what he?s doing. Maybe he even believes in what he?s doing: that he?s some kind of Lamp of Redemption sent to shine upon a benighted world. But the important thing is: they all believe.? Why is it important to Tara that the audience believes Shaw?s story? Do you think Tara believes Shaw, or is she ambivalent?

12. A connection with other people, or the lack thereof, is a theme in the novel. In what ways does the desire for connection drive each major character in the novel?

13. At the jackpot party, Tara?s aunt Miriam proclaims that Shaw is ?truly devout?an absolute gift from God.? Why do the people of Brunswick view Shaw as a religious figure? What role does religion play in the novel? How is each major character?s religious faith tested or altered throughout the story?

14. ?The Wick? is an integral part of the novel. In what ways is the novel?s setting important to the story?

15. Nell?s treatment of Burris is often callous. Do you like her nonetheless?

16. Romeo and Shaw are not typical villains. Do you fi nd either character sympathetic? Why or why not?

17. Why do you think Burris, written off in Brunswick as a joke, is the only person who suspects something suspicious regarding Shaw?s relationship with the Boatwrights? Just as there are no conventional villains in the novel, are there any

conventional heroes?

Author Bio

George Dawes Green, founder of The Moth, is an internationally celebrated author. His first novel, THE CAVEMAN'S VALENTINE, won the Edgar Award and became a motion picture starring Samuel L. Jackson. THE JUROR was an international bestseller in more than 20 languages and was the basis for the movie starring Demi Moore and Alec Baldwin. RAVENS was chosen as one of the best books of 2009 by the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Daily Mail* of London and many other publications. George Green grew up in Georgia and now lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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