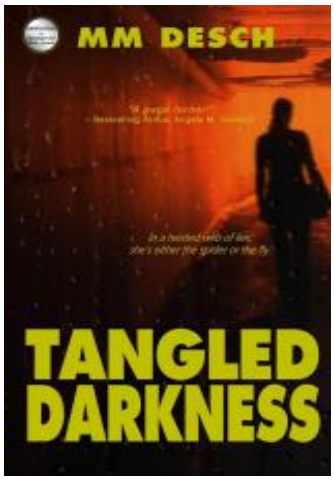
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Tangled Darkness

by MM Desch



About the Book

In a twisted web of lies, she's either the spider or the fly.

When a psychiatric clinical assistant turns up dead, Dr. Leslie Schoen finds herself a suspect in the case --- and facing allegations that could destroy her career.

As Detective Davis works the investigation, Leslie launches her own inquiries. She soon uncovers deception and illegal schemes involving stolen prescription opioids. It seems everyone around her is hiding something, and as she gets closer to the truth, the threats against her escalate. She struggles with keeping dangerous information from her pregnant wife, Izzy, and knows she needs to confront traumatic demons from her own past. But as she delves deeper into a web of lies, one thing becomes clear: someone will do anything to keep their criminal plans in the shadows.

With her family and even her life on the line, Leslie must outwit those who want her silenced before it?s too late. No one?s motives are what they seem, and the killer may be closer than anyone thinks.

Fans of Freida McFadden, Lucinda Berry and Patricia Cornwell will enjoy TANGLED DARKNESS.

Discussion Guide

This guide is designed to be a starting point for your book club's discussion. Feel free to explore the questions that resonate most with your group and to let the conversation flow organically. Enjoy your discussion of TANGLED DARKNESS!

Questions for Critical Thinking

1. From the beginning of the novel, Leslie is portrayed as a competent and caring psychiatrist. How does the accusation of stealing opioids challenge this perception, both for the reader and for other characters in the book?

2. Damon Grady's death is a pivotal moment in the story. Before his death, what were your impressions of him? Did you suspect he was involved in the clinic's dark secrets?

3. Bryce Nelson is a complex antagonist. What do you believe are his primary motivations? Are his actions driven by greed, a desire for control, or something else entirely?

4. Michelle Wichim's character undergoes a significant transformation. What were the key factors that led to her actions? Do you see her as a victim, a villain or both?

5. Sloan Mannon is a seemingly peripheral character who is deeply entangled in the clinic's illegal activities. What role does his character play in the broader narrative?

Connecting to Personal Experiences

1. Leslie's struggle to be honest with her wife, Izzy, about the medical board investigation is a central conflict. Have you ever found yourself withholding information from a loved one to protect them? What were the consequences?

2. The theme of recovery is central to Leslie's character. Do you have any personal experiences with addiction or recovery, either your own or that of someone you know? How did these experiences shape your reading of the novel?

3. The workplace dynamics at the clinic are fraught with tension and mistrust. Have you ever been in a professional environment where you felt something was amiss? How did you navigate that situation?

4. TANGLED DARKNESS explores the idea that past traumas can resurface unexpectedly. Have you ever had an experience where a past event had a significant impact on your present?

Genre and Setting

1. How does TANGLED DARKNESS fit within the psychological thriller genre? What are some of the classic elements of this genre that you see in the novel?

2. The story is set in Portland, Oregon. How does the author use the setting to enhance the mood and atmosphere of the novel? Do you think the story would have been different if it were set in another city?

3. The author, MM Desch, is a former psychiatrist. How do you think her professional background influenced the writing of the novel, particularly in the portrayal of the characters and the medical setting?

Broader Conversations

1. Compare TANGLED DARKNESS to other psychological thrillers you have read. What makes this novel unique?

2. The novel touches on several contemporary issues, including the opioid crisis and the challenges of the healthcare

system. How does the story's portrayal of these issues reflect or challenge your understanding of them?

3. The characters in TANGLED DARKNESS grapple with moral dilemmas and make choices with significant consequences. Discuss a moral dilemma from the book that you found particularly compelling. What would you have done in that situation?

Author Bio

Mary Desch, writing under the pen name MM Desch, brings a wealth of psychiatric expertise to her informed psychological thrillers. She draws from her extensive career as a general and addiction psychiatrist across multiple states to craft relatable characters facing intense psychological and physical dangers. Her thorough understanding of human motivations, conflicts and trauma recovery infuses her writing with authenticity and suspense.

A lifelong mystery enthusiast, Mary's passion for the genre evolved from childhood fascination with *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* to a deep appreciation for detective fiction in college. This enduring love for suspenseful storytelling naturally led her to write psychological thrillers.

When not delving into the intricacies of her next novel or novella, Mary enjoys hiking, long walks with her wife and their spirited mini schnauzer, exploring local food scenes, golfing, and following women's professional basketball.

Critical Praise

?Desch weaves psychological revelations together that work on different levels?[resulting] in a delicate balance between a murder investigation and personal revelations which create exquisite tension and drive a memorable, revealing plot.?

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