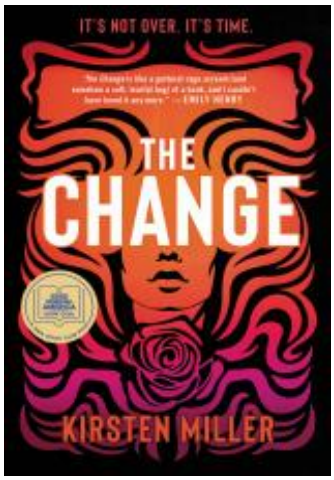
The Change

by Kirsten Miller



About the Book

"Big Little Lies" meets *The Witches of Eastwick,* THE CHANGE is a gloriously entertaining and knife-sharp feminist revenge fantasy about three women whose midlife crisis brings unexpected new powers --- putting them on a collision course with the evil that lurks in their wealthy beach town.

In the Long Island oceanfront community of Mattauk, three different women discover that midlife changes bring a whole new type of empowerment.

After Nessa James? husband dies and her twin daughters leave for college, she?s left all alone in a trim white house not far from the ocean. In the quiet of her late 40s, the former nurse begins to hear voices. It doesn?t take long for Nessa to realize that the voices calling out to her belong to the dead --- a gift she?s inherited from her grandmother, which comes with special responsibilities.

On the cusp of 50, suave advertising director Harriett Osborne has just witnessed the implosion of her lucrative career and her marriage. She hasn?t left her house in months, and from the outside, it appears as if she and her garden have both gone to seed. But Harriet?s life is far from over --- in fact, she?s undergone a stunning and very welcome metamorphosis.

Ambitious former executive Jo Levison has spent 30 long years at war with her body. The free-floating rage and hot flashes that arrive with the beginning of menopause feel like the very last straw --- until she realizes she has the ability to channel them, and finally comes into her power.

Guided by voices only Nessa can hear, the trio of women discover a teenage girl whose body was abandoned beside a remote beach. The police have written the victim off as a drug-addicted sex worker, but the women refuse to buy into the official narrative. Their investigation into the girl?s murder leads to more bodies, and to the town?s most exclusive and isolated enclave, a world of stupendous wealth where the rules don?t apply. With their newfound powers, Jo, Nessa and

Harriet will take matters into their own hands.

Discussion Guide

1. Each of the three protagonists of THE CHANGE --- Jo, Nessa and Harriett --- develops a particular power in mid-life that?s uniquely suited to them. If mid-life were to bring you a specific new power, what would it be? How would you use that power?

2. Author Kirsten Miller has said that certain elements of THE CHANGE are ?ripped from the headlines.? Were there storylines or characters who reminded you of real-life events or people? Why do you think the author drew inspiration from current events?

3. Jo starts her gym Furious Fitness because she sees that the women who come there ?were blowing off steam before they exploded.? Why are so many women in the book so full of rage --- and what do they do with that rage? Do you identify with that anger?

4. Harriett tells Jo: ?I feel like I spent the first twenty years of my life trying to figure shit out. The second twenty I wasted on the wrong people... Then I reached this stage of my life, and all that fell away... And for the first time in my life I knew what the hell I was doing.? Age and experience have made Harriett smarter and more powerful than ever. But that?s also the moment when her boss and her husband dump her. Does that ring true for you? Have you seen this dynamic at work in your own life?

5. Mattauk, where the women live, is a seemingly idyllic beach town, but ?Nessa wondered what [her parents] would have said if they had known there was a monster lurking in the shadows of their storybook town. Would that have come as a surprise? Or had they known, deep inside, that?s how things worked --- even in pretty little places like Mattauk.? What do you think? Do people move to places like Mattauk thinking that exclusivity will keep them safe? Does it?

6. The women of THE CHANGE pit themselves against evil men, but not all the men we meet are bad guys. What did you make of characters like Franklin, Art, Josh, Eric, even Chase? What do they tell us about men?s potential as partners and allies?

7. Stories of Culling Pointe?s past victims are interspersed throughout the book. Why do you think Kirsten Miller chose to include those? Did they affect the way you felt about the main story?

8. Did the truth about Claude shock you? Were there clues about her complicity that the other women should have seen earlier? Were you surprised that she turned on Leonard in the end?

9. Claude tells the girls who she procures, ?What you just received was a shot in the arm... A little dose of ugliness. A glimpse of the way things really work. You survived, and now you?re not only immune, you?re stronger than you were before. Take the money you?ve made and the wisdom you?ve earned and put them both to good use. That?s what I?ve done.? Do you think there?s any truth to that? Do you think Claude really believes it?

10. Claude later tells Harriett that ?Nothing?s going to stop [predatory men] from doing what they want to do. These are some of the richest men in the country... The only thing I could do was make sure some good came out of it.? Did you buy this argument? Did any good actually come out of what happened at

Culling Pointe?

11. What do you think becomes of Jo, Nessa and Harriett in the years after the close of this novel? How will their new powers affect the next phase of their lives? What would you like to see them do?

Author Bio

Kirsten Miller is the author of THE CHANGE, a "GMA" Book Club pick; LULA DEAN'S LITTLE LIBRARY OF BANNED BOOKS; THE WOMEN OF WILD HILL; and the groundbreaking YA series starring Kiki Strike. Born and raised in a small town in North Carolina, she now lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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