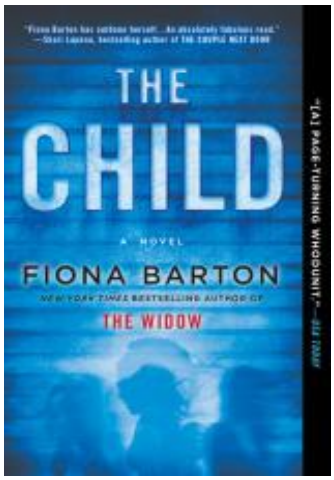
The Child

by Fiona Barton



About the Book

The author of the stunning *New York Times* bestseller THE WIDOW returns with a brand-new novel of twisting psychological suspense.

As an old house is demolished in a gentrifying section of London, a workman discovers a tiny skeleton, buried for years. For journalist Kate Waters, it?s a story that deserves attention. She cobbles together a piece for her newspaper, but at a loss for answers, she can only pose a question: Who is the Building Site Baby?

As Kate investigates, she unearths connections to a crime that rocked the city decades earlier: A newborn baby was stolen from the maternity ward in a local hospital and was never found. Her heartbroken parents were left devastated by the loss.

But there is more to the story, and Kate is drawn --- house by house --- into the pasts of the people who once lived in this neighborhood that has given up its greatest mystery. And she soon finds herself the keeper of unexpected secrets that erupt in the lives of three women --- and torn between what she can and cannot tell.

Discussion Guide

1. How would you describe Emma and Jude?s relationship? Do you think Jude loves her daughter? Why or why not?

2. Do you think Kate plays a larger role in this book than she does in THE WIDOW? How does her presence in the story affect how it unfolds? Why do you think this ?cold case? investigation is so important to her initially, and does her motivation change over the course of the novel?

3. Several examples of victim blaming occur in the novel. For instance, in the initial kidnapping investigation, the police

blame Angela for leaving her child alone in the hospital room. How does the book treat victim blaming? How might the story be different without it?

4. What is the role of journalism in the book? Like in THE WIDOW, the media is inextricably linked with the police investigation. What do you think of Kate?s methods and involvement? Do you think the media help or hinder the police during crime investigations?

5. Discuss the theme of motherhood in the novel. Would you describe the women in the book as good mothers? Why or why not? How has motherhood affected each of the characters? How does it affect their interactions with each other?

6. Discuss Will?s character. Will is the only male character whose perspective is shown in the book. Do you think this is significant? Why do you think the author chose to include his perspective? How does it affect your feelings towards him?

7. Angela?s devastation over the loss of her child seeps into every aspect of her life, including her marriage and her relationship with her other children. Discuss the role of trauma and recovery, and how trauma can be passed down through generations.

8. Discuss the relationship between secrets and truth in this story. Almost all of the characters keep secrets. Whose actions are justified and whose are not? Use examples from the book to illustrate your points.

Author Bio

Fiona Barton, the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE WIDOW, THE CHILD, THE SUSPECT, LOCAL GONE MISSING and TALKING TO STRANGERS, trains and works with journalists all over the world. Previously, she was a senior writer at the *Daily Mail*, news editor at the *Daily Telegraph*, and chief reporter at the *Mail on Sunday*, where she won Reporter of the Year at the British Press Awards.

Photo Credit: Jenny Lewis

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Publication Date: March 6, 2018
Genres: Fiction, Psychological Suspense, Psychological Thriller, Suspense, Thriller
Paperback: 400 pages
Publisher: Berkley
ISBN-10: 110199049X
ISBN-13: 9781101990490