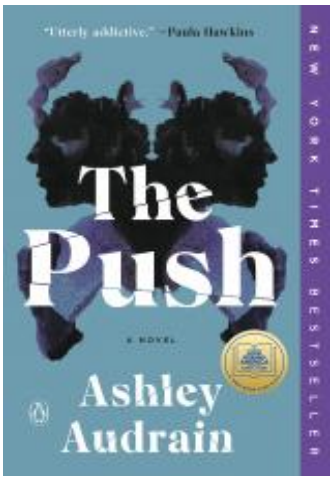
The Push

by Ashley Audrain



About the Book

A tense, page-turning psychological drama about the making and breaking of a family, and a woman whose experience of motherhood is nothing at all what she hoped for --- and everything she feared.

Blythe Connor is determined that she will be the warm, comforting mother to her new baby, Violet, that she herself never had.

But in the thick of motherhood?s exhausting early days, Blythe becomes convinced that something is wrong with her daughter --- she doesn?t behave like most children do.

Or is it all in Blythe?s head? Her husband, Fox, says she?s imagining things. The more Fox dismisses her fears, the more Blythe begins to question her own sanity, and the more we begin to question what Blythe is telling us about her life as well.

Then their son, Sam, is born --- and with him, Blythe has the blissful connection she?d always imagined with her child. Even Violet seems to love her little brother. But when life as they know it is changed in an instant, the devastating fallout forces Blythe to face the truth.

THE PUSH is a tour de force you will read in a sitting, an utterly immersive novel that will challenge everything you think you know about motherhood, about what we owe our children, and what it feels like when women are not believed.

Discussion Guide

1. In the book, Blythe struggles with feelings of inadequacy as she fails to live up to the perfect ideal of motherhood. How do societal pressures contribute to those feelings? How do you think society views motherhood --- what it should

look like, how it should feel, even who should be a mother --- and what kind of burden does that place on women?

2. Does being a ?good mother? always require selflessness and unconditional love? How much of ourselves do we owe our children?

3. What are your thoughts about Blythe as a mother? Did she fail Violet? Sam? What could or should she have done differently?

4. The theory of inherited trauma --- that we carry the scars of past generations --- is explored through Blythe?s mother and grandmother, who struggled in similar ways to her. How much do you think we carry forward from the experiences of the generation before us? Is it possible to break the cycle completely?

5. Nature versus nurture is a big theme in THE PUSH. Are we born, or are we made? And, especially, when children turn out to be violent or dangerous, how much blame lies with the way they are raised?

6. Blythe writes that both she and her mother ?had only one version of the truth? when it comes to what they can remember about their own upbringings --- there isn?t anyone left who can tell them a different side of the story. Do you think we subconsciously reframe what we remember about our past? Did you believe everything Blythe remembered about her childhood?

7. Blythe says of her early relationship with Fox: ?I had nothing when I met you, and you effortlessly became my everything.? What did you think about the quality of their relationship from the outset? Is there something dangerous about a love so all-consuming and addictive?

8. Do you think Fox ever lied about not believing Blythe in order to protect Violet? If so, do you think trying to protect his daughter was a good enough reason to doubt his wife?

9. When Blythe and Fox speak for the last time, Fox tells Blythe, ?[Violet] wasn?t always easy. But she deserved more from you. And you deserved more from me.? What do you think Fox lacked as a husband?

10. Were you surprised by the nature of Blythe and Gemma?s relationship? Even though it was based on a lie, do you think there was real friendship and understanding there?

11. Do you think Gemma was always being truthful with Blythe about her feelings for Violet?

Author Bio

Ashley Audrain's debut novel, THE PUSH, was a *New York Times*, *Sunday Times* (UK) and #1 international bestseller, and a "Good Morning America" Book Club pick. It has sold in more than 40 territories, and a limited television series is currently in development. Audrain previously worked as the publicity director of Penguin Books Canada, and prior to that she worked in public relations. She lives in Toronto, where she and her partner are raising their two young children. THE WHISPERS is her second novel.

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