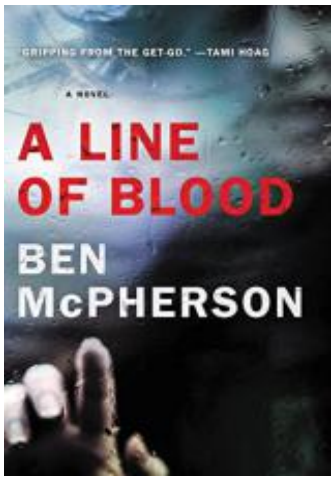
A Line of Blood

by Ben McPherson



About the Book

Whose secrets cut deeper?
Your family's.

Whose secrets do you fear?
Your neighbor's.

Whose secrets can kill?
Your own.

For Alex Mercer, his wife, Millicent, and their precocious 11-year-old son, Max, are everything --- his little tribe that makes him feel all's right with the world. But when he and Max find their enigmatic next-door neighbor dead in his apartment, their lives are suddenly and irrevocably changed. The police begin an extremely methodical investigation, and Alex becomes increasingly impatient for them to finish. After all, it was so clearly a suicide.

As new information is uncovered, troubling questions arise --- questions that begin to throw suspicion on Alex, Millicent, and even Max. Each of them has secrets it seems. And each has something to hide.

With the walls of their perfect little world closing in on them day after day, husband, wife and son must decide how far they'll go to protect themselves --- and their family --- from investigators carefully watching their every move?waiting for one of them to make a mistake.

A LINE OF BLOOD explores what it means to be a family --- the ties that bind us and the lies that can destroy us if we're not careful. Highly provocative, intensely twisty and suspenseful, this novel will have you wondering if one of them is guilty --- or if all of them are --- and will keep you on edge until its shocking final pages.

You will never look at your loved ones the same way again?

Discussion Guide

1. A LINE OF BLOOD is set in Finsbury Park, a London neighborhood. How does the neighborhood set the tone for the action, and what context does it provide for the characters?

2. Do these characters --- Alex, Millicent and Max --- take responsibility for their actions, and for how their actions affect each other? What role does guilt play in the story? How does each character rationalize his or her decisions?

3. How far does each character go to preserve the family? Would you make the same choices in similar circumstances? Is morality important in the story? Is it important to you as a reader? Do you think justice is ultimately served?

4. What do we know about the murder victim Bryce? What don?t we know about him? What do you think made him alluring to his neighbors?

5. Max feels he is defending his father and punishing his mother. Could he be described as ?a bad kid?, or troubled, or is he simply a traumatized child? Can any of these excuse his actions? Do you have sympathy for him or for his parents? If you do or don?t, how does that reaction color your reading of the story?

6. What type of relationship does Max have with each of his parents? How do you imagine the family was different before Sarah's death and before Bryce came into their lives?

7. How would you describe this novel? Is it a thriller, a mystery, a family drama or something else? What aspects of the story make it difficult to categorize?

8. What impact does Alex's relationship with his father have on his relationship with Max?

9. What do you make of Millicent's personal history, and how do you think it might have affected her as a mother and a wife?

10. Discuss the roles and importance of the supporting characters Fab5, Arla, and Mr. Ashani. How do they help move the story forward?

11. What role does loss play in the novel? Loss is a common theme in psychological suspense; do you think it is used effectively here? What emotions and ideas do you think Ben McPherson was most concerned about expressing in A LINE OF BLOOD?

12. How do you feel about Alex, Millicent, and Max? Do you relate to them? How do you feel about their actions in the novel? Do you have to love characters in order to feel invested as a reader?

13. What surprised you most in this story?

14. What types of readers would you recommend read A LINE OF BLOOD and why? Does this novel remind you of

any others you've read?

Author Bio

Ben McPherson is a television producer, director and writer and for more than 10 years worked for the BBC, among other outlets. He is currently a columnist for *Aftenposten*, Norway's leading quality daily, and lives in Oslo with his wife and two children.

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