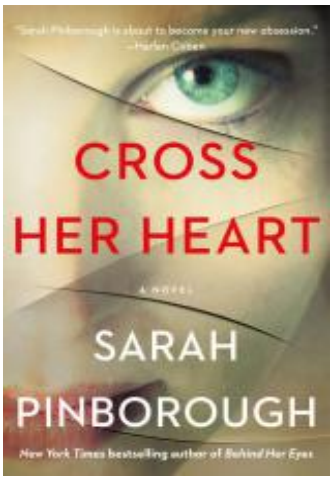
Cross Her Heart

by Sarah Pinborough



About the Book

Lisa is living a lie, and everyone is about to find out.

Lisa lives for her daughter Ava, her job and her best friend Marilyn.

But when a handsome client shows an interest in her, Lisa starts daydreaming about sharing her life with him, too. Maybe she?s ready now. Maybe she can trust again. Maybe it's time to let her terrifying secret past go.

But when her daughter rescues a boy from drowning and their pictures are all over the news for everyone to see, Lisa's world explodes.

As she finds everything she has built threatened, and not knowing who she can trust, it's up to Lisa to face her past in order to save what she holds dear.

But someone has been pulling all their strings. And that someone is determined that both Lisa and Ava must suffer.

Because long ago Lisa broke a promise. And some promises aren't meant to be broken.

Discussion Guide

1. Female friendships are dynamic and at the center of the activity in CROSS HER HEART. Discuss the relationships between our protagonist, Lisa, and her daughter, Ava, and with her best friend, Marilyn.

2. Ava performs an act of great heroism by rescuing a boy from drowning, though it presents a dichotomy of emotions for Lisa. Describe why Lisa has mixed feelings over her daughter's actions, along with the impact it will have on both of

their lives.

3. Men play a big role in the make-up of this story?or, more accurately, the lack of men. How does the fact that Ava is being raised with an absentee father impact her life? How does Lisa's past relationships with men affect her approach to relationships in the present?

4. What secrets do Lisa, Ava and Marilyn all have that they keep from each other? How do you think their relationships would change if and when these secrets are revealed to each other?

5. Sarah Pinborough has stated that she had more close relationships with men in her 20s and 30s than with women. She also has confessed to feeling awkward --- clunky and uncomfortable --- around other women. How do these personal experiences translate into the narrative of the story and personalities of the female characters?

6. When a childhood best friend breaks a promise, it is an unforgivable betrayal. How does this situation drive the plot and intentions of those involved?

7. Ava has a relationship that makes her feel special, but she chooses to hide this fact from her mother. Why? What would change if Lisa knew, and why would she stand in the way of her daughter's happiness?

8. Describe the small things that begin to appear from Lisa's past and how each affects her in the present. Do they truly cause Lisa's life to unravel, or is she simply letting her anxiety get the best of her?

9. Marilyn has her own issues that are easy to overlook given the focus on Lisa and Ava. How do Marilyn's dark secrets impact her relationship with Lisa? Does she take her fantasy life too far, especially when it comes to the sexy male client she is fixated on? Why does Marilyn choose to nudge Lisa towards this client instead of pursuing him for herself?

10. What is the significance of labeling each chapter ?Before,? ?After? or ?Now?? Does the order in which things are revealed lessen the big twists in the plot or make them more intense and unexpected?

11. Promises play a significant role in CROSS HER HEART. Discuss the novel?s principal promise and how keeping it versus breaking it affects the lives of everyone involved in the Now.

12. Who is Charlotte, and how does her introduction to the novel affect things? Who is Girl B, and what role does she play in the Before?

13. It is obvious that Lisa, like everyone else, has sins. Is the payment that is extracted for her sins appropriate, and does ?the punishment fit the crime??

14. Discuss the overall journey that Lisa takes from the Before, through the Now and up to the After. How does the fact that she is a troubled and somewhat unreliable narrator impact the outcome of CROSS HER HEART?

15. Pinborough got her start writing horror novels. The horror genre has been elevated in the past several decades due to the literary fiction of authors like Stephen King, Robert McCammon and Dan Simmons. Discuss where you can find elements of Pinborough's horror-writing experience within the characters and plotting of CROSS HER HEART.

Author Bio

Sarah Pinborough is the award-winning, *New York Times* and internationally bestselling author of such novels as BEHIND HER EYES 13 MINUTES. She lives in London.

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