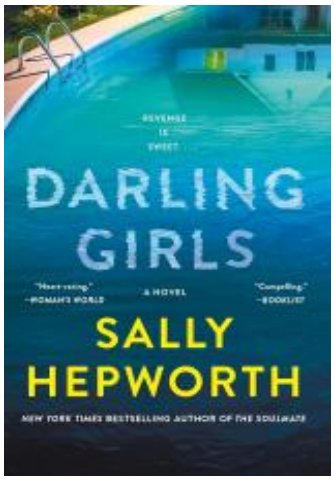
Darling Girls

by Sally Hepworth



About the Book

A thrilling page-turner of sisterhood, secrets, love and murder from *New York Times* bestselling author Sally Hepworth.

For as long as they can remember, Jessica, Norah and Alicia have been told how lucky they are. As young girls they were rescued from family tragedies and raised by a loving foster mother, Miss Fairchild, on an idyllic farming estate and given an elusive second chance at a happy family life.

But their childhood wasn?t the fairy tale everyone thinks it was. Miss Fairchild had rules. Miss Fairchild could be unpredictable. And Miss Fairchild was never, ever to be crossed. In a moment of desperation, the three broke away from Miss Fairchild and thought they were free. Even though they never saw her again, she was always somewhere in the shadows of their minds. When a body is discovered under the home they grew up in, the foster sisters find themselves thrust into the spotlight as key witnesses. Or are they prime suspects?

Discussion Guide

1. How did Jessica, Norah and Alicia?s time in foster care contribute to their bond as sisters despite not being related by blood? Discuss the importance of this bond to Jessica, Norah and Alicia and how their bond shows throughout the novel.

2. How does each character reflect their unique trauma from growing up with Miss Fairchild into their adult lives at the beginning of the novel? For example, in the beginning, Jessica steals Valium from her clients, Norah uses sex in a transactional way, and Alicia is unable to share her feelings for Meera.

3. In the end, Miss Fairchild reveals that she fabricated the story of her childhood and that she was the one who murdered her mother and stepfather?s child. What are Miss Fairchild?s actual and malevolent intentions for fostering?

4. Jessica learned how to navigate her environment as a child so as not to upset Miss Fairchild as much as possible. Discuss the impact of this on her relationship with Phil. Did she create a similar environment in her marriage?

5. In the end, it is revealed that Jessica told Miss Fairchild about their plan to report her to the police because she yearned for Miss Fairchild?s approval. Why do you think she felt a responsibility to do so despite her loyalty to her sisters? Do you think she still feels that yearning even as an adult? Why?

6. In chapter two, Jessica asks Norah how to handle her feelings, to which Norah replies: *?You bury them...good and deep.?* Why do you think Norah said this? How does burying her feelings affect Norah throughout the novel? Have you ever done this in your own life? How did it affect you?

7. Why do you think Alicia chose social work as her profession?

8. Why do you think Miss Fairchild volunteered to foster the babies? Was it simply about money, or do you think she had an ulterior motive?

9. In Chapter 70, Jessica mentions: *?And, despite everything that had happened at Port Agatha, she had to admit that there was something about it that felt like...home.?* Do you think Jessica moves to Port Agatha in the end? Why do you think Port Agatha symbolizes a home for Jessica? What symbolizes a home for you?

10. Did the end surprise you? How did you feel about Miss Fairchild before and after the twist?

Author Bio

Sally Hepworth is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 10 novels, most recently MAD MABEL. Sally?s novels have been called ?darkly charming? and praised by au

Sally's novels have sold millions of copies worldwide and been translated into over 30 languages.

Sally lives in Melbourne, Australia, with her family.

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