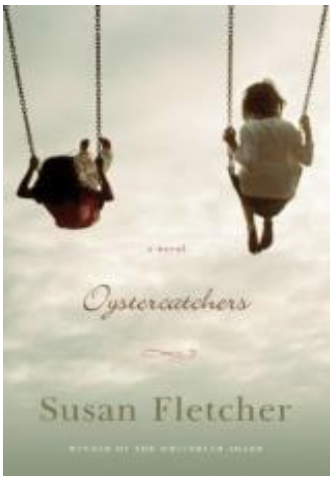
Oystercatchers

by Susan Fletcher



About the Book

Sixteen-year-Amy lies in a coma. Her elder sister, Moira, sits beside her in the evenings and tells this story seeking forgiveness and retribution. She tells of her own life?her secrets, her shameful actions, and her link to the accident that has brought her sister to this bed.

An only child until the age of eleven, Moira perceived the arrival of Amy as a betrayal. Sent away to boarding school, she became untrusting, inward, lonely. Even after marriage, she continued to doubt herself and that anyone could love her and be faithful. It is only Amy?s accident that brings her back to her family, closer to her husband, and closer to understanding the implications of her own dark nature.

Discussion Guide

1. Why does Moira feel she needs to recount her story to Amy? Would she have done so if Amy hadn?t had her accident?

2. Are Moira?s suspicions that she is the less loved of her parents? two children founded?

3. How does her parents? perceived betrayal in sending her to boarding school affect Moira?s interactions with others as she matures?

4. What choice is Moira making when she takes a sip from the shampoo bottle in her dormitory?

5. Discuss the symbolism of water throughout the novel.

6. How does the relationship of the brothers Ray and Stephen mirror that of the sisters Moira and Amy?

7. Why is Moira close with Til when she is so emotionally remote with her parents?

8. Although Moira is telling the story of her own life to Amy, she frequently refers to herself in the third-person. What does **Oystercatchers** reveal about self-recognition?

9. How does Moira come to better understand Heather?s cruelty to her after Amy?s accident?

10. Was Moira and Ray?s decision to marry young rash?

11. Moira perceives herself as ungainly and weird, so what accounts for various men?s attraction to her throughout the novel?

12. Why did Amy seek Moira?s approval given their almost elementally different personalities?

13. What is Moira to blame for, in the end?

14. What are the roles of accident and human will in the life-story Moira recounts?

15. 15. In Ray?s painting, Till?s theater-acting, and Moira?s storytelling, what does **Oystercatchers** capture about the human desire to expressive ourselves to others?

Author Bio

Susan Fletcher was born in 1979 in Birmingham and graduated from the prestigious UEA Creative Writing Course. Her previous novel, **Eve Green**, won the Whitbread Award for First Novel and the Betty Trask Award ? a prize for the best debut novel by a writer under thirty-five ? and was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award. She lives in the United Kingdom.

Critical Praise

?Her prose is extraordinarily lyrical: haunted, dreamlike and precise, reminiscent at times of Sylvia Plath. . . Fletcher?s words are undeniably beautiful and her themes are profound . . . a haunting novel.?

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