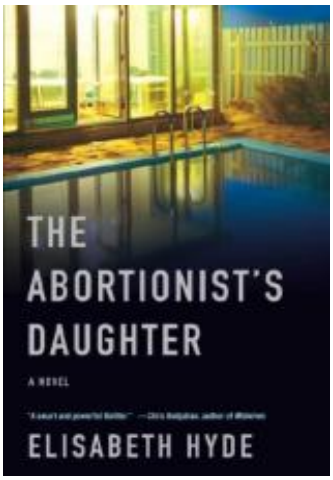
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The Abortionist's Daughter

by Elisabeth Hyde



About the Book

Elisabeth Hyde has taken a powerful moral predicament and constructed around it a richly layered, compulsively readable novel about a murder in a small Colorado town, about the choices we make and the way their unintended consequences ripple through our lives.

Two weeks before Christmas, Diana Duprey, an outspoken abortion doctor, is found floating in her pool, a bruise the size of a golf ball visible through her dark curls. A national figure, Diana inspired passion and ignited tempers, never more so than on the day of her death.

Her husband, Frank, an attorney in the D.A.'s office for more than twenty years, had fought bitterly with her on the day of her murder. Yet to reveal the nature of their fight would cost him not only his career but something greater still --- a relationship he will go to any lengths to protect. Diana's daughter, Megan, a college freshman, had also quarreled with Diana that day, and her role in her mother's murder will prove more significant than she ever could have anticipated. The Reverend Stephen O'Connell, founder of the town's pro-life coalition, obviously had issues with Diana, but his anger extended beyond the political to the personal --- namely, Dr. Duprey's involvement with his own troubled teenager. Meanwhile, the detective on the case grapples to make sense of it all. His investigation implicates many in this town and reveals a series of gross miscalculations, each one challenging what we know, or think we know, about community, fidelity, justice, and love.

A riveting and provocative page-turner: a novel of stunning economy and momentum by a writer poised for wide discovery.

Discussion Guide

1. Diana and Frank are very different people?Diana was passionate and outspoken, while Frank was much more strict

and restrained. Evaluate the strength of their marriage; do you think they balanced each other out well?

2. The last thing that Megan says to her mother is ?have fun killing babies.? Why do you think Megan chose to attack her mother this way? Does Megan disagree with her mother?s decision to perform abortions?

3. Although Frank Thomson has been a prosecuting attorney for over twenty years and should know better, he cleans his house while it is a crime scene. What are his possible reasons for doing this? What did you think about his decision to clean up?

4. In the course of an investigation, Frank comes across pornographic pictures of Megan online. Do you think Frank overreacted? Do you think he does the right thing by waiting to confront Megan?

5. Why do you think Megan agreed to let Bill photograph her in the nude?

6. Megan ?had had a lot of boyfriends in her life.? Do you think she saw Huck as just another boyfriend, or do you think her feelings ran deeper? What did Huck see in her?

7. At what point should the police intervene when someone is stalking an ex-girlfriend / boyfriend? How do you decide when someone is a risk? Should Megan or Diana have told someone about Bill?s increasingly desperate behavior?

8. Megan grows up a lot throughout the course of the novel. Discuss her reaction to her mother?s death and her emotional transformation.

9. Many characters in this novel end up making gross miscalculations. Discuss. Which ranks as the worst, in your view?

10. Were you able to figure out who the killer was? How did the different suspects? motives compare throughout the book?

11. Discuss Huck?s relationship with Carolyn. Were you surprised when he cheated on her? Why or why not?

12. Rose experiences pressure about her pregnancy from nearly everyone she knows?parents, boyfriends, doctors, counselors and demonstrators. Discuss the impact that these characters had on her. Why do you think she makes the choices that she does?

13. After reading this book, do you feel any differently about the abortion issue? Do you think it is helpful to use fiction as a way to explore real-life issues?

Author Bio

Elisabeth Hyde was born and raised in New Hampshire, and briefly practiced law for the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. In 1982, she took some time off to write her first novel, HER NATIVE COLORS, and never looked back. She has been awarded working scholarships to the Bread Loaf Writers Conference, teaches creative writing

through artist-in-residence programs, and is also the author of MONOOSOOK VALLEY and CRAZY FOR CHOCOLATE. She lives in Colorado with her family.

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