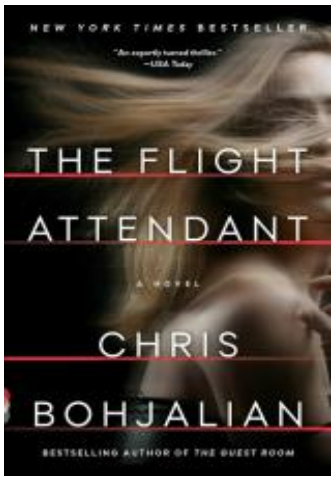
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The Flight Attendant

by Chris Bohjalian



About the Book

From the author of THE GUEST ROOM comes a powerful story about the ways an entire life can change in one night. A flight attendant wakes up in the wrong hotel, in the wrong bed, with a dead man --- and no idea what happened.

Cassandra Bowden is no stranger to hungover mornings. She's a binge drinker, her job with the airline making it easy to find adventure, and the occasional blackouts seem to be inevitable. She lives with them, and the accompanying self-loathing. When she awakes in a Dubai hotel room, she tries to piece the previous night back together, counting the minutes until she has to catch her crew shuttle to the airport. She quietly slides out of bed, careful not to aggravate her already pounding head, and looks at the man she spent the night with. She sees his dark hair. His utter stillness. And blood, a slick, still wet pool on the crisp white sheets.

Afraid to call the police --- she's a single woman alone in a hotel room far from home --- Cassie begins to lie. She lies as she joins the other flight attendants and pilots in the van. She lies on the way to Paris as she works the first class cabin. She lies to the FBI agents in New York who meet her at the gate. Soon it's too late to come clean --- or face the truth about what really happened back in Dubai. Could she have killed him? If not, who did?

Set amid the captivating world of those whose lives unfold at 40,000 feet, THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT unveils a spellbinding story of memory, of the giddy pleasures of alcohol and the devastating consequences of addiction, and of murder far from home.

Discussion Guide

1. What traits do Cassie and Elena (?Miranda?) have in common, and what are their fundamental differences? Though they were raised worlds apart, how did their parents teach them to conceal their true selves? To what extent do both

women manage to deceive themselves as well?

2. How did your opinion of Alex Sokolov shift as his life story unfolded? At first, what did you think the motive behind his murder was?

3. How is Cassie?s dependence on alcohol linked to her dependence on lying? What is at the root of her cycle of intoxicated euphoria followed by self-loathing?

4. What accounts for the very different paths Cassie and her younger sister, Rosemary, take in life? How does their relationship compare to the one between you and your siblings?

5. What does THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT say about the distinction between bad decisions and destiny? To what degree are Cassie and Elena in control of their misdirected choices?

6. Discuss the men in Cassie?s life. What keeps her from experiencing real intimacy? What?s different about Enrico?

7. In this novel, what did you learn about the cyber world and the real world after the fall of the Soviet Union? Does technology give you hope or make you worry?

8. When Cassie compulsively pilfers items while traveling and then wraps them up as gifts, is she simply trying to live on a limited budget, or does it say something deeper about her relationship to possessions and the images of her she wanted her loved ones to have?

9. As the flight attendants in the novel work a variety of international routes, what do their experiences prove about the common threads that exist in all of humanity, no matter where we are?

10. What does it take for Cassie to own up to her missteps? Before she met Alex, had she ever harmed anyone but herself?

11. As you read the FBI reports, what did you discover about information and power? Would you have followed the advice of attorney Ani Mouradian, telling the truth to the FBI?

12. Are the novel?s characters either cold-blooded or compassionate, or are they some combination of each? Were you good at predicting which characters were the bad guys?

13. Even though she has logged thousands of miles in her career, Cassie still marvels at the miracle of flight when she sees a plane passing overhead. How did the novel enhance your appreciation for air travel and flight crews? What elements of the job surprised you the most? If you were in Cassie?s line of work, which routes would you bid on most often?

14. In the novel and in your own experience, what does it ultimately take to become the person you always wanted to be?

15. What are the hallmarks of this author?s storytelling? How was your experience of THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT enhanced by the Bohjalian novels you?ve previously read?

Author Bio

Chris Bohjalian is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of 26 books, including THE AMATEUR, THE JACKAL'S MISTRESS, THE PRINCESS OF LAS VEGAS, THE LIONESS, HOUR OF THE WITCH, MIDWIVES and THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT, which has been made into a MAX limited series starring Kaley Cuoco. His other books include THE RED LOTUS; THE GUEST ROOM; CLOSE YOUR EYES, HOLD HANDS; THE SANDCASTLE GIRLS; SKELETONS AT THE FEAST; and THE DOUBLE BIND. His novels SECRETS OF EDEN, MIDWIVES and PAST THE BLEACHERS were made into movies, and his work has been translated into more than 35 languages. He is also a playwright (*Wingspan* and *Midwives*). He lives in Vermont.

Critical Praise

?Flight attendant Cassie Bowden: a self-destructive alcoholic who favors one-night stands, a gifted liar, a petty thief. But she?s also someone we can relate to: a soul damaged during childhood, terribly alone, and desperate for love.... Readers who enjoyed the imperfect heroine in Paula Hawkins?s THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN and the anxiety-ridden paranoia of Fyodor Dostoyevsky?s CRIME AND PUNISHMENT will be hooked by this murder mystery.?

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