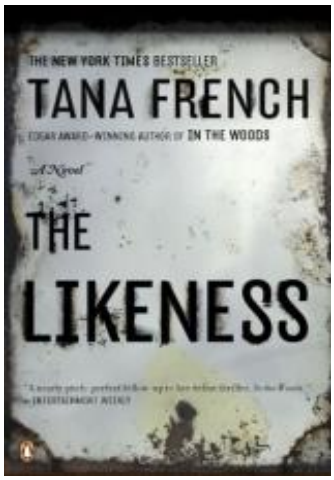
The Likeness

by Tana French



About the Book

The follow-up to Tana French?s bestselling debut **In the Woods** finds Detective Cassie Maddox shaken from the events of a dangerous murder investigation and working a desk job in Domestic Violence at police headquarters in Dublin, Ireland. She?s just settling into her new suits and a quieter, if less satisfying, life when her boyfriend Detective Sam O?Neill calls her to the scene of a murder. Cassie looks at the victim, stabbed in the chest and left for dead in a ramshackle rural cottage, and finds her mirror image. Identification reveals the victim?s name is Lexie Madison --- the very same handle Cassie once used as an undercover agent.

With no leads or suspects to speak of, Cassie?s boss, Frank Mackey, recognizes a unique opportunity: they can pretend that Lexie survived the stabbing and Cassie can go undercover as Lexie to solve the crime. At first, Cassie is reluctant to play along, but as she learns more about the case --- and its mysterious victim --- she realizes that the only way to exorcise the dead girl from her mind is to go into her life and find out what happened to her.

Posing as Lexie, Cassie becomes a graduate student at Trinity College and moves in with Lexie?s four roommates, a close but odd and anachronistic bunch sharing and rehabbing an old country estate named Whitethorn House. The roommates, accepting her story, seem to receive Lexie?s return warmly and their idyllic life is practically a vacation for Cassie. Amid the lively crew, the guarded detective, orphaned at an early age, finds an unexpected sense of belonging. Soon, though, Cassie learns that Whitethorn is the subject of local lore and a decades-long target of village hostility. And as Cassie goes deeper into Lexie?s world she realizes that Lexie?s secrets may be more dangerous than anyone imagined. Meanwhile, Frank and Sam worry that Cassie is getting a little too close to Lexie for comfort, endangering the investigation and, quite possibly, her own life in the process.

With her richly nuanced characters and deep psychological insight, Tana French explores themes of self-invention, deception, and the ways truth can emerge from even the most convincing disguises. Set against a backdrop of tightly knit class and cultural tensions, **The Likeness** goes beyond the conventions of the whodunit to comment on the inequities

and misguided values of modern society. In her second novel, French, a seasoned actress, proves that she?s also a writer of distinction. Her taut and riveting narrative enchants and thrills at every turn.

Discussion Guide

1. Early on in the book, Cassie Maddox says that ?all the best undercovers have a dark thread woven into them, somewhere.? What is hers?

2. For Cassie, going undercover is almost a compulsion. What drives her to accept Frank?s offer and take on Operation Mirror?

3. The rule at Whitethorn House is ?no pasts,? yet the house is seeped in history and artifacts from earlier eras. How does the house help its inhabitants avoid their own histories?

4. Undercover, Cassie slowly gets drawn into life at Whitethorn House and develops a fondness for Lexie?s idiosyncratic housemates. What is it about this world that is so enchanting for her?

5. Cassie says this is Lexie Madison?s story, not hers, yet she tells it like it?s her own. Whose story do you think it is?

6. Commitment is an issue for Cassie, as she can?t seem to settle down with a desk job or her boyfriend. At the same time, she has chosen to work undercover and devote her every hour to this case --- a very serious commitment of a different kind. Is this a contradiction in her personality, or are they complementary behaviors?

7. Daniel, Abby, Rafe, Justin, and Lexie?s relationship is a fascinating study of group dynamics and each character plays a distinct role. Just as Lexie did before her, Cassie can home in on who she needs to be to fit in. Do you think this is something most people do in social situations or is it a special skill?

8. What does posing as Lexie teach Cassie about herself? What are the differences between the two characters and where does Cassie draw the line?

9. Cassie wonders if Frank Mackey may have had a stronger hunch about the killer than he was admitting all along. Do you think he knew who the killer was?

10. French leaves the story of what happened the night of the stabbing somewhat open. What do you think really happened to Lexie and who was truly responsible?

Author Bio

Tana French is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 10 books, including IN THE WOODS, THE LIKENESS and THE SEARCHER. Her novels have sold over eight million copies worldwide and won numerous awards, including the Edgar, Anthony, Macavity and Barry Awards, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Best Mystery/Thriller, and the Irish Book Award for Crime Fiction. She lives in Dublin with her family.

Critical Praise

This book will leave readers eagerly awaiting the next.

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