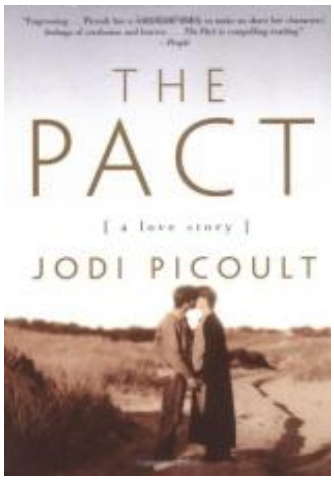
The Pact: A Love Story

by Jodi Picoult



About the Book

The Golds and the Hartes, neighbors for 18 years, have always been inseparable. So have their children -- and it's no surprise that in high school Chris and Emily's friendship blossoms into something more. But the bonds of family, friendship, and passion -- which had seemed so indestructible -- suddenly threaten to unravel in the wake of unexpected tragedy.

When midnight calls from the hospital come in, no one is ready for the truth. Emily is dead at 17 from a gunshot wound to the head. There's a single unspent bullet in the gun that Chris pilfered from his father's cabinet -- a bullet that Chris tells police he intended for himself. But a local detective has doubts about the suicide pact that Chris describes.

It is a multi-layered novel that invites discussion about the mysteries of relationships of all kinds: How well we know ourselves, our children, our best friends. In the end **The Pact** poses the heart-stopping question: How far would you go for someone you love?

Discussion Guide

1. How do you feel the extended family environment created by the Hartes and the Golds affected their children? Did it contribute to Emily's death? Is there such a thing as being too close to another non-blood relative family?

2. How did the marital relationships of the Golds and the Hartes contribute to Gus's and Michael's temptations?

3. Is Melanie justified in her feelings and actions toward the Hartes following Emily's death?

4. "Chris and Emily had grown up with love, with wealth, and with each other. What more could they have needed?"

(page 35) In your opinion, what more did they need? Were Chris and Emily content with what they had at any time in their lives?

5. Consider the personalities of the Hartes and the Golds. Do opposites attract? Does it make for the best communication in a marriage?

6. In what ways does jail change Chris? What ways does it benefit him and/or hurt him?

7. Is the punishment meted out to Chris just? In your opinion, is Chris guilty of murder? Do you think Chris's trial will affect Jordan's view of the justice system? Explain.

8. What is the significance of the "blank" piece of paper that Chris finds in the tin can at the end of the book?

9. Does the title just refer to the pact between Emily and Chris?

Author Bio

Jodi Picoult is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of over 30 novels, including HOLLOW BONES, BY ANY OTHER NAME, MAD HONEY (co-authored with Jennifer Finney Boylan), WISH YOU WERE HERE, THE BOOK OF TWO WAYS, A SPARK OF LIGHT, SMALL GREAT THINGS, LEAVING TIME and MY SISTER'S KEEPER, and, with daughter Samantha van Leer, two young adult novels, BETWEEN THE LINES and OFF THE PAGE. She lives in New Hampshire with her husband.

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