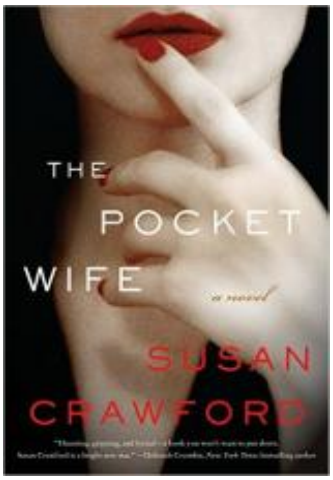
The Pocket Wife

by Susan Crawford



About the Book

Dana Catrell?s life is in chaos. She?s married to a lawyer who makes her feel trivial, sticking her inside his pocket like loose change. She?s also sliding towards the brink of insanity. Devastated by mania, a result of her bipolar disorder, Dana finds that there are troubling holes in her memory, including what happened on the afternoon of her friend Celia?s death. She?s horrified to learn she?s the only other person with a key to Celia?s house --- and the last person to see her alive.

She and Celia had shared recipes and gossip. But not secrets --- until that afternoon. Closing her eyes, Dana can see images, loose pieces of a hazy puzzle. Sangria in a glass, a tiny rip in Celia?s screen door, Celia lying in a pool of blood, the broken vase beside her head, the kitchen knife just so above her hand. But there are infuriating, terrifying gaps.

Is murder on her mind --- or is it all in her head?

As evidence starts to point in her direction, Dana will use the clarity her mania brings her to fill in the blanks and clear her name before her demons win out. But her husband?s odd behavior and the persistent probing of Detective Jack Moss complicate Dana?s search for answers. The closer she comes to piecing together shards of her broken memory, the closer Dana comes to falling apart. Is there a killer lurking inside her?or is there one out there in the shadows of reality, waiting to strike again?

Discussion Guide

1. Dana thinks about The Poet from time to time throughout the book. Although he isn?t actually one of the characters in her present situation, he does play an important part in her life. What is his role?

2. Peter has been with his wife for many years. He has helped her put herself together more than once, waited long nights

for her to come home, cared for Jamie when she?s left him time after time. Do you think Peter is justified in doing any of the things he does throughout the book? If so, which ones?

3. Peter is untruthful at several points throughout the story. Most of his lies are told to protect himself but some of them make Dana doubt her perceptions even more than she already does. Which of Peter?s lies are most damaging to Dana?

4. Dana spends a lot of time and energy searching for the cell phone Celia showed her on the day Celia was killed. Why is finding this phone so important to Dana?

5. Jack Moss has an affinity for the lost and feral, as we see when he rescues Spot from Celia?s front yard. If Anne had been more like Dana, would her marriage to Jack have had a better chance, and, if so, why?

6. How does the Pablo Neruda quote at the beginning of the story tie in with Dana?s situation?

7. Jack has to make some difficult decisions that will ultimately impact the people around him. In Jack?s place, would you have acted differently? If so, how?

8. All the characters in the book have some positive characteristics, but they also are deeply flawed. Which of them has the least redeeming qualities? Which ones have the most? Why?

9. Dana clearly likes Detective Moss. What is it about him that she finds so appealing?

10. Ronald and Dana have a few strange encounters. How does Dana feel about Ronald? Is she conflicted about her feelings for him? Does she trust him? Did she like him any better before Celia?s death? What does Dana like/dislike about Ronald?

11. The Assistant D.A. Lenora is anxious to wrap up the two cases --- Celia Steinhauser?s murder and the missing teenage girl. What motivates her? She is an incredibly driven person. Why?

12. Where do you see Jack and Dana in five years?

13. As Dana slides into psychosis, she becomes less understandable, but are there facets of her personality that are somewhat universal, despite her bipolar illness? Which of Dana?s traits are most relatable?

14. Kyle is extremely angry and distant when he deals with his father and he resents him for what Kyle perceives as abandonment. How does Jack feel about leaving his two boys when they were young? Do you think he should have done things differently? If so, what? And if he had, would he have been as willing to risk his career to help his son?

15. What drives Dana? What drives Jack? What drives Kyle?

Author Bio

Susan Crawford grew up in Miami, Florida, and graduated from the University of Miami with a B.A. in English and a minor in psychology. She later moved to New York City and then to Boston before settling in Atlanta to raise three

daughters and to work in the field of adult education. A member of The Atlanta Writers Club and The Village Writers, Susan teaches at Georgia Piedmont Technical College and dabbles in local politics. She lives in Atlanta with her husband and a trio of rescue cats, where she enjoys reading books, writing books, rainy days and spending time with the people she loves.

Critical Praise

?Not a word is wasted in Susan Crawford?s fast-paced, thrilling debut. As Crawford explores the boundaries of memory and sanity, the suspense steadily gathers, and in her skilled hands, readers will be left guessing until the very end.?

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