

READING GROUP NOTES

THE MYSTERY WRITER
SULARI GENTILL

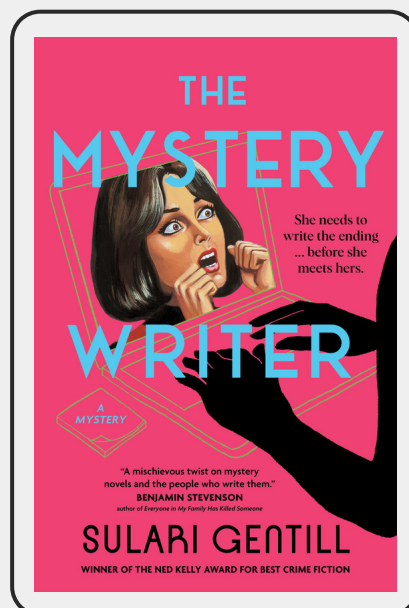
She needs to write the ending ... before she meets hers.

'A writer's writer, who never disappoints.'—Australian Women's Weekly

'It's the perfect cosy crime read!'—Woman's Day

'A mischievous twist on mystery novels and the people who write them.' —Benjamin Stevenson

'Some mysteries need a crime writer to solve. Clever, twisty, and surprisingly unexpected.' —Michael Robotham



1.

The author includes snippets from conspiracy theory chat rooms almost immediately in this story and continues their use throughout. What was your first reaction to that part of the storytelling? Did it make you think you were about to read a particular type of novel? What do these passages accomplish in terms of the larger story?

2.

Theo's bold decision to abandon her law education and the career path she was expected to follow in favor of pursuing her passion—writing—had some unexpected, some dangerous, and some surprising results. Given what happens to her character throughout the book, do you think she would have been happier if she had stuck with law and the more stable, traditional lifestyle it would have provided? Why or why not? Have you ever chosen to pursue a passion over a more "reliable" profession? What was the outcome?

3.

Cormac Etheridge grew up in a family of doomsday preppers, who can come across to some as extreme in their ideologies and behaviors. Often when we encounter people whose views and lifestyles are diametrically opposed to our own, our reaction is to dismiss, poke fun, or become angry when we can't sway them to our way of thinking. While it's easy enough to "unfriend" someone on social media, have you had to "ghost" a close friend or family member over "irreconcilable differences"? Or have you found strategies that allow you to still like and respect—and, when necessary, forgive—them?

4.

When Theo meets Dan Murdoch, she is flattered and excited that a bestselling author has taken an interest in her and her writing. Do you think Theo was actually in love with Dan the person, or simply infatuated with Dan the writer and what he might do for her career? Have you ever been in a relationship in which you questioned your own motivations?

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5.

In this digital age, it's almost impossible to escape one's past and "start fresh" where no one knows you or your history. Day Delos and Associates Management offers new beginnings for talented high-earning authors who have committed crimes or otherwise disgraced themselves in the public's eye. Do you think it's fair that past mistakes should follow the perpetrators forever, influencing the professional opportunities available to them? If you had committed a crime or indiscretion and had atoned or served your time, would you expect to be able to pick up your life where you left off and resume your career? Why or why not?

6.

If an agency or publisher offered you representation or publication on the condition that you turn over complete control of your social media to them, would you do it? Why or why not?

7.

Mac's youngest brother, Caleb, claims he was acting in Mac's best interest when he leaked Theo's whereabouts to the reporter who then turns up murdered. Do you think he may have had other motivations for his actions? Given the circumstances, would you have done the same?

8.

Theo also feels she is acting in her brother's best interest when she confesses to Dan's murder and disappears. Do you think her main motivation was love, or guilt over having blown up Gus's life, both now and a decade earlier? Was her decision selfless or selfish?

