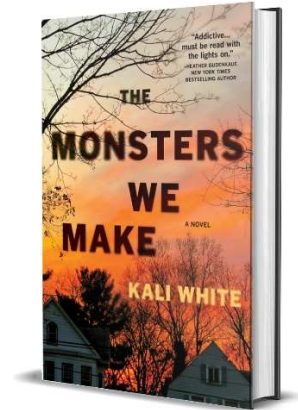


THE MONSTERS WE MAKE

Reading Group Guide



1. *The Monsters We Make* is inspired by the real-life missing child cases of Johnny Gosch, Eugene Martin, and Marc Warren Allen in the Des Moines, Iowa area. In particular, the Johnny Gosch and Eugene Martin abductions were watershed cases in the state and reverberated throughout much of the Midwest. Were there any cases from your own childhood or area you grew up that affected you? Cases that may have shaped your behaviors, beliefs, or fears in any way? If not, how do you think your behaviors, beliefs, or fears would have evolved if you were exposed to an incident such as this in your hometown?
2. The story is set during the summer and fall of 1984 when parenting was less vigilant, and childhood was less restricted. How was your childhood different from childhoods today? Are the differences, do you think, positive or negative?
3. How might *The Monsters We Make* be different if it were set in another city and state, or even in another time, like today?
4. What role do secrets play in this story? How are secrets different for the adults in the story than for the children?



5. Of the three point of view characters, Crystal, Sammy, and Dale, was there one who resonated with you more than the others? If so, why?
6. Describe Tina's relationship with her children. Did you empathize with her in any way? And how would you describe Dale's relationship with his son? How did their genders and family structures play a role in their parenting decisions and behaviors throughout the story?
7. What character do you believe underwent the most change by the end of the story? Was the evolution for the better, or for the worse?
8. What is the significance of the title? Does it take on different meanings depending on how one views it? What might it mean to each of the main characters?
9. The story explores the idea of "tunnel vision" in multiple characters. How did "tunnel vision" affect different characters and why?
10. By the end of the story, Crystal challenges the notions of what "monsters" are in our society and how we define them. What did you think of her final thoughts? Did you agree or disagree with them? Did it make you think differently about how we sometimes characterize criminals?

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