

Book Review from Janet W. / Feb. 9, 2022

Review of A Flicker in the Dark by *Stacy Willingham*

Overall: 4-1/2 out of 5 Stars, I loved this book!

I'm a spellbound audience for a gripping mystery, and this debut novel by Stacy Willingham, A Flicker in the Dark, does it for me! I read this lyrical, tightly (for the most part) written thriller in THREE days (which I know isn't a big deal for some of our patrons, but for me, of late – this is HUGE!). I could not put this book down.

An accurate summary statement about A Flicker in the Dark I found on Bookreporter.com – “It's no secret that serial killers are extremely popular in suspense fiction, but Willingham takes her novel a step further by writing from the perspective of the *family* of a killer, the people left to deal with the aftermath of a killer's spree, often to traumatizing and life-altering consequences.” I think that's a precise conclusion of what makes this new thriller unique in voice, tone, & context.

An excellent plot overview from Goodreads.com: “When Chloe Davis was twelve, six teen girls went missing in her small Louisiana town. By the end of the summer, Chloe's father had been arrested as a serial killer and put in prison. Chloe and the rest of her family were left to grapple with the truth and try to move forward... Now, twenty years later, Chloe is a psychologist in private practice in Baton Rouge... She finally has a fragile grasp on the happiness she's worked so hard to get. Sometimes...she feels as out of control of her own life as the troubled teens who are her patients. And then a local teenage girl goes missing, then another.. that terrifying summer comes crashing back. Is she paranoid, and seeing parallels that aren't really there, or for the second time in her life, is she about to unmask a killer?”

All in all, for me, Chloe was a complex, sometimes “unreliable” (in a good-story way!) narrator; lots of little (and some big) plot twists & turns. (In truth, there was a piece of the ending I pretty much guessed; BUT there was another facet that I did not see coming! I love that in a solid mystery!) I found Willingham's debut novel to be masterful, atmospheric, tension-laden & satisfying from beginning to end. I can't wait to read her upcoming second novel!