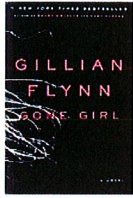


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Gone Girl

Gillian Flynn, 2012

Crown Publishing

432 pp.

ISBN-13: 9780307588364

Summary

Marriage can be a real killer.

One of the most critically acclaimed suspense writers of our time, *New York Times* bestseller Gillian Flynn takes that statement to its darkest place in this unputdownable masterpiece about a marriage gone terribly, terribly wrong. The *Chicago Tribune* proclaimed that her work “draws you in and keeps you reading with the force of a pure but nasty addiction.” *Gone Girl*’s toxic mix of sharp-edged wit and deliciously chilling prose creates a nerve-fraying thriller that confounds you at every turn.

On a warm summer morning in North Carthage, Missouri, it is Nick and Amy Dunne’s fifth wedding anniversary. Presents are being wrapped and reservations are being made when Nick’s clever and beautiful wife disappears from their rented McMansion on the Mississippi River. Husband-of-the-Year Nick isn’t doing himself any favors with cringe-worthy daydreams about the slope and shape of his wife’s head, but passages from Amy’s diary reveal the alpha-girl perfectionist could have put anyone dangerously on edge. Under mounting pressure from the police and the media—as well as Amy’s fiercely doting parents—the town golden boy parades an endless series of lies, deceptions, and inappropriate behavior. Nick is oddly evasive, and he’s definitely bitter—but is he really a killer?

As the cops close in, every couple in town is soon wondering how well they know the one that they love. With his twin sister, Margo, at his side, Nick stands by his innocence. Trouble is, if Nick didn’t do it, where is that beautiful wife? And what was in that silvery gift box hidden in the back of her bedroom closet?

With her razor-sharp writing and trademark psychological insight, Gillian Flynn delivers a fast-paced, devilishly dark, and ingeniously plotted thriller that confirms her status as one of the hottest writers around. (*From the publisher.*)

Author Bio

- Birth—N/A
- Raised—Kansas City, Missouri, USA
- Education—B.A., University of Kansas; M.A., Northwest University
- Awards—Ian Fleming Steel Daggers
- Currently—lives in Chicago, Illinois

Gillian Flynn is an American author and former television critic for *Entertainment Weekly*. She has published three novels: *Sharp Objects* (2006), *Dark Places* (2009) and *Gone Girl* (2012).

The plot of *Sharp Objects* revolves around a serial killer in a Missouri town, and the reporter who has returned to her hometown from Chicago to cover the event. Themes include dysfunctional families, violence and self-harm. In *Dark Places* a woman who investigates whether or not her incarcerated brother was truly responsible for the murder of their family in the 1980s, which happened when she was a child during the era of panic about Satanic ritual abuse. Her third novel, *Gone Girl* (2012) concerns the disappearance of Amy Dunne, and her husband is under investigation by the police.

All three novels have received wide praise, including from authors such as Stephen King. In 2007, *Sharp Objects* was shortlisted for the Mystery Writers of America Edgar for Best First Novel by an American Writer; Crime Writers' Association(CWA) Duncan Lawrie; CWA New Blood; and Ian Fleming Steel Daggers, winning in the last two categories. (*From Wikipedia.*)

Book Reviews

Ms. Flynn's dazzling breakthrough. It is wily, mercurial, subtly layered and populated by characters so well imagined that they're hard to part with—even if, as in Amy's case, they are already departed. And if you have any doubts about whether Ms. Flynn measures up to Patricia Highsmith's level of discreet malice, go back and look at the small details. Whatever you raced past on a first reading will look completely different the second time around.

Janet Maslin - New York Times

Ice-pick-sharp... Spectacularly sneaky... Impressively cagey... *Gone Girl* is Ms. Flynn's dazzling breakthrough. It is wily, mercurial, subtly layered and populated by characters so well imagined that they're hard to part with—even if, as in Amy's case, they are already departed. What makes Flynn so fearless a writer is the way she

strips her characters of their pretenses and shows no mercy while they squirm...Flynn dares the reader to figure out which instances of marital discord might flare into a homicidal rage.

Marilyn Stasio - New York Times Book Review

Gillian Flynn's new novel, *Gone Girl*, is that rare thing: a book that thrills and delights while holding up a mirror to how we live... Through her two ultimately unreliable narrators, Flynn masterfully weaves the slow trickle of critical details with 90-degree plot turns... Timely, poignant and emotionally rich, *Gone Girl* will peel away your comfort levels even as you root for its protagonists—despite your best intuition.

San Francisco Chronicle

I picked up *Gone Girl* because the novel is set along the Mississippi River in Missouri and the plot sounded intriguing. I put it down two days later, bleary-eyed and oh-so-satisfied after reading a story that left me surprised, disgusted, and riveted by its twists and turns... A good story presents a reader with a problem that has to be resolved and a few surprises along the way. A great story gives a reader a problem and leads you along a path, then dumps you off a cliff and into a jungle of plot twists, character revelations and back stories that you could not have imagined. *Gone Girl* does just that.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Gillian Flynn's barbed and brilliant *Gone Girl* has two deceitful, disturbing, irresistible narrators and a plot that twists so many times you'll be dizzy. This "catastrophically romantic" story about Nick and Amy is a "fairy tale reverse transformation" that reminded me of Patricia Highsmith in its psychological suspense and Kate Atkinson in its insanely clever plotting.

Minneapolis Star-Tribune

For a creepy, suspenseful mystery, Ms. Pearl suggested *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn, a novel due out this week. "You will not be able to figure out the end at all. I could not sleep the night after I read it. It's really good," Ms. [Nancy] Pearl said. "It's about the way we deceive ourselves and deceive others."

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Flynn's third noir thriller recently launched to even more acclaim than the first two novels, polishing her reputation for pushing crime fiction to a new literary level and as a craftsman of deliciously twisting and twisted plots.

Kansas City Star

To call Gillian Flynn's new novel almost review-proof isn't a put-down, it's a fact. That's because to give away the turn-of-the-screw in this chilling portrait of a marriage gone wrong would be a crime. I can say that *Gone Girl* is an ingenious whodunit for both the Facebook generation and old-school mystery buffs. Whoever you are, it will linger, like fingerprints on a gun... Flynn's characters bloom and grow, like beautiful, poisonous plants. She is a Gothic storyteller for the Internet age.

Cleveland Plain Dealer

That adage of no one knows what goes on behind closed doors moves the plot of *Gone Girl*, Gillian Flynn's suspenseful psychological thriller... Flynn's unpredictable plot of *Gone Girl* careens down an emotional highway where this couple dissects their marriage with sharp acumen... Flynn has shown her skills at gripping tales and enhanced character studies since her debut *Sharp Objects*, which garnered an Edgar nod, among other nominations. Her second novel *Dark Places* made numerous best of lists. *Gone Girl* reaffirms her talent.

Oline Cogdill - South Florida Sun-Sentinel

An ingenious and viperish thriller... It's going to make Gillian Flynn a star... The first half of *Gone Girl* is a nimble, caustic riff on our Nancy Grace culture and the way in which "The butler did it" has morphed into "The husband did it." The second half is the real stunner, though. Now I really am going to shut up before I spoil what instantly shifts into a great, breathless read. Even as *Gone Girl* grows truly twisted and wild, it says smart things about how tenuous power relations are between men and women, and how often couples are at the mercy of forces beyond their control. As if that weren't enough, Flynn has created a genuinely creepy villain you don't see coming. People love to talk about the banality of evil. You're about to meet a maniac you could fall in love with.

Jeff Giles - Entertainment Weekly

A great crime novel, however, is an unstable thing, entertainment and literature suspended in some undetermined solution. Take Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, the third novel by one of a trio of contemporary women writers (the others are Kate Atkinson and Tana French) who are kicking the genre into a higher gear... You couldn't say that this is a crime novel that's ultimately about a marriage, which would make it a literary novel in disguise. The crime and the marriage are inseparable. As *Gone Girl* works itself up into an aria of ingenious, pitch-black comedy (or comedic horror — it's a bit of both), its very outlandishness teases out a truth about all magnificent partnerships: Sometimes it's your enemy who brings out the best in you, and in such cases, you want to keep him close.

Salon

A portrait of a marriage so hilariously terrifying, it will make you have a good hard think about who the person on the other side of the bed really is. This novel is so

bogglingly twisty, we can only give you the initial premise: on their fifth anniversary, Nick Dunne's beloved wife Amy disappears, and all signs point to very foul play indeed. Nick has to clear his name before the police finger him for Amy's murder.

Time

Amy disappears on her fifth wedding anniversary, and while Nick has not been a model husband, could he really have killed her? It's soon evident that if Amy is dead, that's the least of the reader's worries. Flynn's last novel, *Dark Objects*, was a *New York Times* best seller, but this one is expected to break her out.

Library Journal

Discussion Questions

Use our LitLovers Book Club Resources; they can help with discussions for any book:

- **How to Discuss a Book** (helpful discussion tips)
- **Generic Discussion Questions—Fiction and Nonfiction**
- **Read-Think-Talk** (a guided reading chart)

Also consider these LitLovers talking points to help get a discussion started for *Gone Girl*:

1. Consider Amy and Nick Dunne as characters. Do you find them sympathetic...at first? Talk about the ways each reveals him/herself over the course of the novel. At what point do your sympathies begin to change (if they do)?
2. Nick insists from the beginning he had nothing to do with Amy's disappearance. Did you believe him, initially? When did you begin to suspect that he might have something to do with it? At what point did you begin to think he might not?
3. How would you describe the couple's marriage? What does it look like from the outside...and what does it look like from the inside? Where do the stress lines fall in their relationship?
4. On their fifth anniversary, Nick wonders, "What have we done to each other? What will we do?" Is that the kind of question that might present itself in any marriage? Yours? In other words, does this novel make you wonder about your own relationship? And can you ever truly know the other person?
5. Amy and Nick lie. When did you begin to suspect that the two were lying to one another...and to you, the reader? Why do they lie...what do they gain by it?
6. Do you find the Gillian Flynn's technique of alternating first-person narrations compelling...or irritating. Would you have preferred a single, straightforward narrator? What does the author gain by using two different voices?
7. A skillful mystery writer knows which details to reveal and when to reveal them.

How much do you know...and when do you know it? In other words, how good is Flynn at burying her clues in plain sight? Now that you know how the story plays out, go back and pick out the clues she left behind for you.

8. Flynn divides her narrative into two parts. Why? What are the difference between the two sections?

9. In what way does Amy's background—her parents' books about her perfection—affect her as an adult?

10. The Dunnes move to North Carthage, near Hannibal, the home of Mark Twain. How has *Tom Sawyer* been worked into *Gone Girl*...and why? What does that extra-textual detail add to the story?

11. Did you suspect Nick's big secret? Were you surprised—shocked—by it? Or did you have an inkling?

12. Does Amy try hard enough to like North Carthage? Or is she truly a duck out of water, too urbane to ever fit into a small, Midwestern town?

13. What are Amy's treasure hunts all about? Why does she initiate them for Nick?

14. Critics, to a one, talk about the book's dark humor and author's wit. What passages of the book do you find particularly funny?

15. Movie time: who would you like to see play what part?

(Questions by LitLovers. Please feel free to use them, online or off, with attribution. Thanks.)

(Publisher-issued questions are [here](http://www.randomhouse.com/book/196906/gone-girl-by-gillian-flynn#reader%27sguide) .)

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About the Author

Full text biography:

Gillian Flynn

Birth Date : 1971

Known As : Flynn, Gillian Schieber

Place of Birth : United States, Missouri, Kansas City

Nationality: American

Occupation : Novelist

Table of Contents:

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about this author

Awards:

Edgar Award finalist, Mystery Writers of America, Ian Fleming Steel Dagger and New Blood Dagger awards, Crime Writers' Association, all 2007, all for *Sharp Objects*; Black Quill Award, *Dark Scribe*, 2010, for *Dark Places*; International Author of the Year, Specsavers National Book Awards, 2013, for *Gone Girl*.

Personal Information:

Born February 24, 1971, in Kansas City, MO; daughter of two community college professors; married Brett Nolan; children: a son. **Education:** University of Kansas, undergraduate degrees in English and journalism; Northwestern University, M.A. **Addresses:** Home: Chicago, IL. Office: Entertainment Weekly, P.O. Box 60001, Tampa, FL 33660-0001. Agent: Stephanie Kip Rostan, Levine Greenberg Literary Agency, 307 7th Ave., Ste. 2407, New York, NY 10001. **E-mail:** gillian@gillian-flynn.com.

Career Information:

Entertainment Weekly, Tampa, FL, former film and television critic.

Writings:

NOVELS

- *Sharp Objects*, Shaye Areheart Books (New York, NY), 2006.
- *Dark Places*, Shaye Areheart Books (New York, NY), 2009.
- *Gone Girl*, Crown (New York, NY), 2012.

Contributor to *Entertainment Weekly*

Sidelights:

Gillian Flynn served as a film and television critic for *Entertainment Weekly* before becoming a full-time fiction writer. Flynn's first novel, *Sharp Objects*, was delayed for a time when Flynn earned the prime assignment to cover the making of Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy during its filming in New Zealand. However, Flynn returned to her novel after the film project was completed, and the result was a well-received thriller.

Sharp Objects, is about a reporter named Camille, who returns to the small midwestern town where she was raised in order to investigate the murders of a number of children. During the investigation, Camille also finds herself forced to deal with her own dysfunctional family and her scarred psyche. Flynn credits her prolific reading and reviewing of mystery novels with her ability to maintain suspense throughout her own work, as well as her efforts to set a specific atmosphere for the book. In an interview for the *Redbook Bookclub Online*, Flynn stated: "I wanted *Sharp Objects* to have the feel of a fairy-tale gone really wrong. The evil, jealous queen (Camille's mother), the town surrounded by haunted woods, the attacks on children. Camille, then, is the beautiful young girl in serious danger that every good fairy tale has. In this story, she's as much in danger from herself as she is from outside forces." Joanne Wilkinson, in a review for *Booklist*, found that Flynn's effort is "fueled by stylish writing and compelling portraits of desperate housewives, southern style," and she called the book an "impressive debut novel." A contributor to *Kirkus Reviews* called *Sharp Objects* "a savage debut thriller that renders the Electra complex electric, the mother/daughter bond a psychopathic stranglehold."

"Edgar-finalist Flynn's second crime thriller tops her impressive debut, *Sharp Objects*," wrote a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer of Flynn's 2009 release, *Dark Places*. Set in Kansas in 1985, the story features Libby Day, who, as a seven-year-old child, was forced to endure the slaughter of her mother and two sisters. Further severing any ties to a stable family life, Libby testifies against her fifteen-year-old brother, Ben, who is found guilty of the murders. Now thirty-one years old, Libby is maladjusted and broke. With no friends or family, and with donations from sympathizers dwindling, Libby begins to seek out ways to make money. She encounters "The Kill Club," a group that focuses on and debates notorious murder cases, and sells family memorabilia to the members. When she finds out that most of the club's members believe Ben to be innocent of the crime, Libby is compelled to reexamine her past and the night of the tragedy in a "well-paced story" that, according to a *New Yorker* reviewer, "deftly shows the fallibility of memory."

Joanne Wilkinson praised *Dark Places* in *Booklist* and termed the novel "a gritty, riveting thriller with a one-of-a-kind, tart-tongued heroine." While noting some issues with the large cast of characters and their depictions in both the past and present, Nancy McNicol concluded her *Library Journal* review positively and assured that "tight plotting and engaging characters carry the reader over the few rough patches that appear." *Publishers Weekly* contributor Deanna Parsi, however, had no such reservations. "The narrative is well-crafted," she wrote, "with the story moving seamlessly between past and present."

In 2012 Flynn published her third novel, *Gone Girl*. Nick and Amy Dunne have a peculiar relationship. On their fifth anniversary, she suspiciously disappears. The story proceeds with a mix of Nick's actions after her disappearance and Amy's own diary entries, allowing for their story to unfold as the list of possible suspects and motives grows.

Writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, Janet Maslin observed that "*Dark Places*, in particular, drew attention from mystery aficionados, but *Gone Girl* is Ms. Flynn's dazzling breakthrough. It is wily, mercurial, subtly layered and populated by characters so well imagined that they're hard to part with--even if, as in Amy's case, they are already departed." In a review in *Maclean's*, Sarah Weinman declared: "*Gone Girl* is a bravura performance that captures the throbbing, visceral pulse of what happens when love erodes into something more malevolent and careens straight into a mutually shared hell." *Booklist* contributor Joanne Wilkinson claimed that this "compelling thriller... contains so many twists and turns that the outcome is impossible to predict." A contributor to *Kirkus Reviews* pointed out that *Gone Girl* is "one of those rare thrillers whose revelations actually intensify its suspense instead of dissipating it. The final pages are chilling." A contributor to *Publishers Weekly* called the novel "compulsively readable, creepily unforgettable," adding that it "is a must read for any fan of bad girls and good writing." In a review in *Library Journal*, Nancy McNicol commented: "Once again Flynn has written an intelligent, gripping tour de force."

Related Information:

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- *Bookmarks*, January 1, 2007; review of *Sharp Objects*, p. 43

- *Entertainment Weekly*, September 29, 2006, Gilbert Cruz, review of *Sharp Objects*, p. 89; May 8, 2009, Jennifer Reese, review of *Dark Places*, p. 67; December 4, 2012, Stephan Lee, "Best of 2012."
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ONLINE

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Gillian Flynn on *Gone Girl* | Interview

Gone Girl novelist Gillian Flynn says her women should not be dismissed (or taken on a road trip).

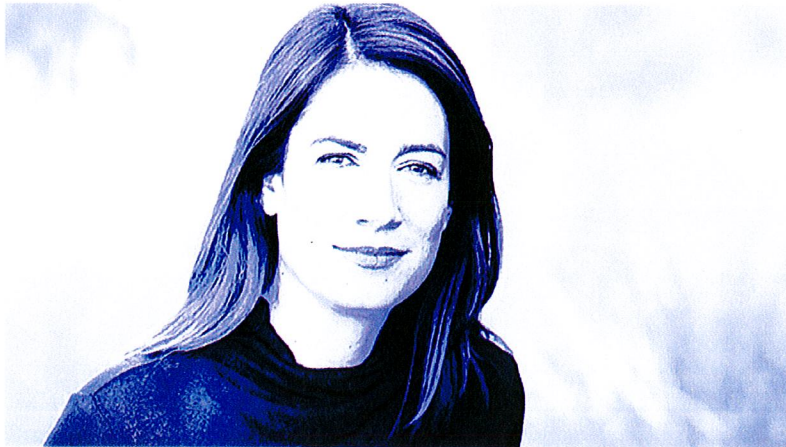
By Novid Parsi Thu Feb 7 2013

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Gillian Flynn

Photograph: Heidi Jo Brady, Photo illustration: Jamie DiVacchio Ramsey

If you haven't yet read Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, flip past this page now. We wouldn't want to rob you of the surprises the Chicago novelist packs into her 2012 best-selling thriller. On the day we spoke by phone, Flynn had been adapting *Gone Girl* for the screen, Reese Witherspoon will produce the movie. (And, the Internet tells us, David Fincher will direct? The author wouldn't confirm.) The 41-year-old native of Kansas City, Missouri, lives in Ukrainian Village with her attorney husband, Brett Nolan, and her son, Flynn ("my husband thought that was a nice way to keep the name in the family"). At the Harold Washington Library, she will discuss her third novel—an incisive probe into romance turned sour—the day before Valentine's.

The ending has been very polarizing; it's also not at all a Hollywood resolution. Is anyone suggesting you tweak it for the movie?

So far, that is not in the plans. It is a long road until we get there. I didn't know how it was gonna end. But I did like the idea of this strange symbiosis that these two people had created because they are both addicted to the gamesmanship of their marriage and also because they did complete each other, even if it was in [Laughs] an incredibly toxic way.

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9/30/2014

It occurred to me you hadn't been married long yourself when you must've first been thinking about *Gone Girl's* Amy and Nick.

Yeah, that's true. We might've been just engaged.

Seems like a very sober look at marriage from someone new to the institution.

[Laughs] At the time, I didn't think about how absolutely unromantic a vision I was writing when I was a newlywed. I think it was because I wasn't someone who had necessarily always thought that I would end up married. So I thought about it a *lot*. It was like, I'm getting married—*what does this mean?* It was a very writerly, navel-gazing thing. I had spent a lot of time with my previous two books thinking about people who were tormented in this aloneness, and I was eager to look at what it meant when you join yourself to someone for life.

The acknowledgments are very gushing toward your husband. I wondered, Does she feel she has to make clear he is not Nick?

[Laughs] I was incredibly grateful that I had a husband who got it, that he was very confident in our marriage. If I had a spouse I had to constantly reassure, that book wouldn't have gotten made. I would've doubted myself and stopped writing it.

You've said you want to counter the woman-as-victim motif of thrillers; you want to write about the violence of women. What's at stake for you in imagining that violence?

Women are just as violently minded as men are, but with men it's taken for granted. It's something to be gotten out of the system or something to be put up with or dealt with, whereas women, it's still considered this very surprising thing. And that's because of this, to me, constantly enraging notion that women are supposed to be natural nurturers, we're naturally good.

But violence is a bad thing, right?

I shouldn't say specifically violence. I mean anger; I mean the darker emotions. The fact that it's kept in check is a very good thing. But if women are considered innately good, then it robs us of any sort of will for that. I try very hard to be a good person, and [Laughs] I want credit for that. I don't want people to say, "Oh, it's just because she's a woman." That simplifies women quite a bit.

Isn't there a fine line between the darkness of women and the stereotypical psycho bitch?

Well, I don't write psycho bitches. The psycho bitch is just crazy, she has no motive, she's a dismissible person because of her psycho bitchiness. And to me the whole point is to write scary women who aren't dismissible, who are frightening and calculating but you know the reason why. You know Amy's back story. And, to me, she's sympathetic. I mean, I wouldn't go on a road trip with her or anything.

Yet her response to an unfaithful husband is so extreme—so potentially psycho bitchy.

She's a functioning sociopath. She's not a well person. But that's very different than the iconic psycho bitch. I'm talking about the capital P, capital B Psycho Bitch, which to me is [Whispers]. She's just crazy 'cause her lady parts have gone crazy!

What's the most Amy-like thing about you?

I like that she does what she says she's gonna do. I appreciate that she rules with all her righteousness forward.

Why are you fascinated with murder?

I've always been. I had a very normal, Midwest, middle-class childhood, so I felt safe to roam over there. I tend to write about dark things that happen in a very domestic setting 'cause that to me is much scarier than the unknown. When I was really little, I liked scary movies. My dad was a film professor, so he would take me to wildly inappropriate movies. [Laughs] I was obsessed with *Psycho*.

Do your parents read your writing now and ask, "Anything you want to tell us?"

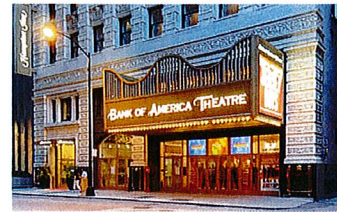
The first time my mom read my very first book, she was like, "I'm not gonna belabor this. It's not a big deal. But I have to ask the question: Is everything okay?" They put up with a fair amount of questions that they shouldn't.

"What's wrong with your daughter?"

And, by connection, "What's wrong with you?"

Flynn reads from and discusses *Gone Girl* at the [Harold Washington Library](#) February 13 at 6pm.

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'Gone Girl' interview: Screenwriter Gillian Flynn opens up about adapting her novel and how Ben Affleck's chin made it into the script

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Author Gillian Flynn adapted her novel "Gone Girl" for the screen. The film stars Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike. (AP Photo)

Marc Mohan | Special to The Oregonian By **Marc Mohan | Special to The Oregonian**

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on September 29, 2014 at 6:07 AM

If you want to see director David Fincher's new thriller **"Gone Girl"** without having its twists and turns spoiled, you'll probably need to act quickly or go into a self-imposed media blackout. The shocking developments in the story of Amy Dunn (Rosamund Pike), who goes missing on her fifth anniversary, leaving her husband Nick (Ben Affleck) as the prime suspect, will become fodder for water-cooler conversations and their Internet equivalents faster than you can say "The Crying Game." (And, no, it doesn't turn out that Amy's a man.)

The saga of "Amazing Amy" sprang from the mind of Gillian Flynn, who adapted her best-selling third novel for the screen. Flynn spoke by phone with The Oregonian. The conversation has been edited for length, clarity and to eliminate any major spoilers.



Q: Not only is "Gone Girl" the first adaptation of your work to hit the screen, but it's also your screenwriting debut. How much of a challenge was that, and how different are the writing muscles you need to use?

A: The only thing that screenwriting and novel writing have in common is that they use words. Novel writing is all about elaborating and being internal, going inside people's minds and intentions. With a screenplay, it all has to be visualized— the more you can show something on the surface, the better. Losing that ability to go inside people's minds, especially with what is a fairly internal narrative, was the tricky part of it.

Q: It's a story that depends very much on shifting perspectives, which I can imagine being difficult to convey in the way you're describing.

A: Also, I had to figure out how to boil this very big book down by about half, without turning it into a pure motor. I was worried it could easily be turned into a facile kind of procedural that was pure whodunit, with none of the relationship stuff, which is why I was really happy to be able to write the screenplay.

Q: How did that opportunity come about? Did you make the sale of the book rights contingent upon writing the screenplay? Would you have agreed to have the film made if you hadn't had that chance?

A: It would have been a much tougher decision. When I sold the option, it was granted that I would be able to write the first draft, and they would have the option of throwing it out and bringing in another writer, which is what very often happens: they let the author have a crack at it, and then they bring in someone else. But I wrote the draft and Fincher liked it, and was willing to work with me, which I thought was pretty great.

Q: I'm sure this came up when the book was first released, but now it's on a whole other level with the film: You've created a story that's almost impossible to discuss or review without giving stuff away. How much of "Gone Girl" are you comfortable with being revealed by marketers or critics, and did you consider pushing back some of the reveals to later in the movie compared to the book?

A: When I first finished writing the book I sat back and laughed and thought, "Great, I've written a book I can't possibly promote in any way. There's so much I can't talk about." Personally, I like to go into movies knowing as little as possible about them. I get annoyed when trailers show too much. I don't know what the solution is — it's hard to write about something when you can't talk about large swaths of it, but I've certainly appreciated the fact that, for the most part, reviewers have been very willing to preserve that surprise element for people.

Q: Overall, the movie hews pretty closely to the book, but there are some interesting additions, including a recurring joke about Nick Dunn's chin, which is to say Ben Affleck's chin, as a symbol of his untrustworthiness.

A: People have been very interested in the chin thing.

Q: The obvious question, I guess, is whether that was added after Affleck was cast.

A: I would have to double-check that. I think it might have been. I mean, the man has a magnificent chin.

Q: One of my favorite lines in the film comes towards the end, though it doesn't spoil anything if it's taken out of context. The line is "Octopus and Scrabble?" and I mention it because it made me remember one of the movie's first scenes, which mentions Mastermind and some other classic board games. That's not a coincidence, is it?

A: Not to come out and say it, but I like the idea of game-playing throughout. We're all playing different games when we're in relationships, so I like opening with the games and having more games towards the end.

Q: Another difference I noticed is that the time frame feels more compressed in the film than in the book. Things that happen weeks after Amy's disappearance in the novel happen only days afterward in the film. What was the rationale for that?

A: In the book, I could and did show what was happening during those other days, whereas in the movie I felt like it would be weird if we jumped to Day 20 with no explanation of what Nick had been doing in that time. I wanted everything to feel quick, and give that feeling of claustrophobia, that events were getting out of control very quickly.

Q: There's a moment early in the investigation of Amy's disappearance where Nick admits he doesn't know his wife's blood type, which made him seem suspicious and made me feel guilty, until one of the investigating officers asks another, "Should I know my wife's blood type?" So thanks for that, on behalf of all husbands who don't have that fact memorized.

A: Fincher had actually cut that line, and I told him you have to put that back in, because no one should necessarily know their spouse's blood type. They're going to feel guilty, and then there's this moment where they're let off the hook. It's so much fun!

--Marc Mohan, *Special to The Oregonian*

("Gone Girl" opens Oct. 3 at multiple locations.)

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