

## **THE GIRLS WHO DISAPPEARED by Claire Douglas**

*Published by Penguin Random House UK*

My latest book recommendation is '*The Girls Who Disappeared*' by Claire Douglas. It is a gripping and twisty thriller about the mysterious disappearance of three girls after a night out with a friend.

### **MY REVIEW**

Returning from one of their regular nights out, teenagers Sally, Tamzin and Kate are being driven home in heavy rain by their friend Olivia Rutherford when someone steps out in front of the car, causing it to crash. Unconscious and trapped in the driver's seat, when Olivia eventually comes round her three friends have mysteriously disappeared without a trace.

Twenty years later, Jenna Halliday – a journalist at BBC Salford – leaves the problems of her disintegrating marriage behind and travels to Wiltshire to research the story for a podcast she is making to mark the twentieth anniversary of the disappearance. Staying in a remote cabin in the forest near where the accident happened, Jenna begins to interview people who knew the girls, including the detective who originally investigated the case, Brenda Hawthorn. As Brenda has now retired, she puts Jenna in touch with DS Dale Crawford, an expert in cold cases who has been tasked with revisiting the disappearance.

Unfortunately, not everyone is keen for a journalist to be snooping around and when a local recluse and drug addict is found dead in the forest, Jenna receives a warning note telling her to leave town or next time it will be her. Undaunted, she continues to investigate, but when someone attacks her in the forest, she realises there is more to the story than just a simple disappearance.

*'The Girls Who Disappeared'* is an intriguing and twisty story, told alternately from both Olivia's and Jenna's point of view. It also has a backstory running throughout, which at the beginning I found confusing as it did not seem to have anything to do with the main storyline. However, its relevance became clear as the story progressed, until finally things began to slot into place.

Like the author's previous novels, this one is cleverly written and totally gripping, with several twists along the way. With everyone harbouring secrets, it is hard to know who is telling the truth and surprises are abundant. Even the last chapter holds a final revelation.

*'The Girls Who Disappeared'* is a great read and one I can thoroughly recommend. It is easy to see why it was voted the number one *Sunday Times* bestseller.

## **THE AUTHOR**

Claire Douglas has worked as a journalist for fifteen years, writing features for women's magazines and national newspapers, but she has dreamed of being a novelist since the age of seven. She finally got her wish after winning the *Marie Claire* Debut Novel Award with her first novel, *'The Sisters'*, which was followed by *'Local Girl Missing'*, *'Last Seen Alive'*, *'Do Not Disturb'*, *'Then She Vanishes'*, *'Just Like the Other Girls'* and *'The Couple at No 9'*, which was a *Sunday Times* top three bestseller and a Kindle number 1. Claire lives in Bath, England, with her husband and two children.

***'The Girls Who Disappeared'* is published by Penguin Random House UK and is available in ebook, paperback and audiobook format from Amazon. It is also available in paperback and audiobook from Waterstones and in paperback from Foyles and W H Smith.**