Sharp Objects: A Novel

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WICKED above her hipbone, GIRL across her heart
Words are like a road map to reporter Camille Preaker's troubled past. Fresh from a brief stay at a psych hospital, Camille's first assignment from the second-rate daily paper where she works brings her reluctantly back to her hometown to cover the murders of two preteen girls.

NASTY on her kneecap, BABYDOLL on her leg
Since she left town eight years ago, Camille has hardly spoken to her neurotic, hypochondriac mother or to the half-sister she barely knows: a beautiful thirteen-year-old with an eerie grip on the town. Now, installed again in her family's Victorian mansion, Camille is haunted by the childhood tragedy she has spent her whole life trying to cut from her memory.

HARMFUL on her wrist, WHORE on her ankle
As Camille works to uncover the truth about these violent crimes, she finds herself identifying with the young victims-a bit too strongly. Clues keep leading to dead ends, forcing Camille to unravel the psychological puzzle of her own past to get at the story. Dogged by her own demons, Camille will have to confront what happened to her years before if she wants to survive this homecoming.

With its taut, crafted writing, Sharp Objects is addictive, haunting, and unforgettable. As loyal Entertainment Weekly subscribers, we have been fans of Gillian Flynn for her smart, funny, and spot-on reviews of books, movies, and TV, but we were not prepared for her stunning debut novel Sharp Objects, a wickedly dark thriller that Stephen King calls a "relentlessly creepy family saga" and an "admirably nasty piece of work." We're calling it a cross between Twin Peaks and Secretary--sinister, sexy, and stylish. Perfect fall reading. --Daphne Durham

10 Second Interview: A Few Words with Gillian Flynn

Q: Do you prefer writing novels or reviewing?
A: I think writing is more pure--and actually a bit easier for me. It's just me and my laptop, not me and my laptop and a TV show that 30 people have worked on. Reviewing keeps you sharp--I can hardly watch or read anything without taking notes now--but plain old writing I find actually relaxing.

Q: Do think your writing is influenced more by books that you have read, or shows/movies that you have seen?
A: My mom spent her career as a reading teacher and my dad is a retired film professor, so I was really steeped in both books and movies growing up. To this day, when I get my dad on the phone, pretty much his first sentence is "Seen anything good lately?" I love putting words together (I've never met a simile I didn't like), but when I write I often think in "scenes"--I want these two people, in a dirty bar, with this song playing in the background.

Q: I hear you are working on your second book...is it is too early to ask what it's about?
A: I'm still playing around with the whole plot--when I wrote Sharp Objects, I wasn't even

sure who the killer was for a bit. But I can say [the new book] has to do with family loyalty, false memories, a wrenching murder trial, and a dash of good 'ole 1980s hair metal and devil worship.

Q: What is your writing process like? Have you changed anything about how you work since your first book?
A: My writing process is incredibly inefficient, and hasn't changed between books. I really don't outline: I know basically how I want the story to start, and vaguely how I want it to end (though like I said, with Sharp Objects even that changed!). Then I just write: Some characters I start finding more interesting, some less. I write entire swaths that I pretty much know I'll cut. I have an entire file of "deleted scenes." I guess the one thing that has physically changed is I moved into a new place since my first book--it has a great bathtub, and I'll prop my laptop up and write in the bath for hours. Which is, admittedly, weird.

Gillian Flynn is the chief TV critic at Entertainment Weekly. She lives in Chicago, where she is writing her second novel.
Other Books
Playing with Sharp Objects, [Needs update]
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