

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



GREER HENDRICKS is the coauthor of the New York Times bestseller *The Wife Between Us* and the forthcoming *An Anonymous Girl* (January 8, 2019). Prior to becoming a novelist, she spent two decades as an editor at Simon & Schuster. She obtained her master's degree in journalism from Columbia University, and her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Allure*, and *Publisher's Weekly*. She lives in Manhattan with her husband and two children.

SARAH PEKKANEN is born in New York City, arriving so quickly that doctors have no time to give her mother painkillers. This is the last time Sarah ever arrives for anything earlier than expected. Her mother still harbors a slight grudge.

Sarah's family moves to Bethesda, Maryland, where Sarah, along with a co-author, writes a book entitled "Miscellaneous Tales and Poems." Shockingly, publishers do not leap upon this literary masterpiece. Sarah sends a sternly-worded letter to publishers asking them to respond to her manuscript. Sarah no longer favors Raggedy Ann stationery, although she is sure it impressed top New York publishers.

Sarah's parents are hauled into her elementary school to see the shocking condition of her desk. Sarah's parents stare, open-mouthed, at the crumpled pieces of paper, broken pencils, and old notebooks crowding Sarah's desk. Sarah's organization skills have since improved. Slightly.

After college and a solo backpacking trip around Europe – during which Sarah got continually lost – Sarah begins work as a journalist, covering Capitol Hill. Unfortunately, Sarah cannot understand the thick drawls of the U.S. Senators from Alabama, resulting in many unintentional misquotes. Sarah is groped by one octogenarian politician, sumo-bumped off a subway car by Ted Kennedy, and unsuccessfully sued by the chief of staff to a corrupt U.S. Congresswoman. Sarah also works briefly as an on-air correspondent for e! Entertainment Network, until the e! producers realize that Capitol Hill isn't, by any stretch of the imagination, what one might call sexy.

Sarah takes a job at Gannett New Service/USAToday, covering Capitol Hill. Sarah is assigned to cover the White House Correspondents Dinner and ride in the Presidential motorcade to the dinner. Sarah convinces a White House aide to let her stick her head out of the limousine moon-roof during the ride and wave to onlookers. Later, her triumph is tempered by the fact that bouncers will not allow her into the Vanity Fair after-party. Sarah attempts entry three times in case the bouncers were just kidding.

Sarah takes a job writing features for the Baltimore Sun, and interviews the actor who played Greg Brady. She refrains from asking if he really made out with Marcia, but just barely.

Having left her journalism job to chase around after her three active sons, Sarah starts writing a column for Bethesda Magazine and begins work on a novel. She does not write it on Raggedy Ann stationery.

Sarah signs with fabulous agent Victoria Sanders, who sells her debut book, titled *The Opposite of Me*, to the editor Sarah has always dreamed of working with: Greer Hendricks at Atria, an imprint of Simon & Schuster (oh, if only it were that easy – but Sarah is prohibiting any mention of the times she nearly hurled her computer across the room in frustration or wrote entire chapters that were far inferior to those in *Miscellaneous Tales and Poems*).

Atria publishes Sarah's subsequent novels *SKIPPING A BEAT*, *THESE GIRLS*, *THE BEST OF US*, *CATCHING AIR*, *THINGS YOU WON'T SAY*, *THE PERFECT NEIGHBORS* and *THE EVER AFTER*. Rights to Sarah's books are sold in China, Australia, Germany, Italy, Holland, Poland, Canada, Russia and Spain and her novels become international bestsellers.

- Author's websites

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. For the person who chose this book: What made you want to read it? What made you suggest it to the group for discussion? Did it live up to your expectations? Why or why not?
2. How is the book structured? Does the author use any narrative devices like flashbacks or multiple voices in telling the story? How did this affect your reading of the story and your appreciation of the book? Do you think the author did a good job with it?
3. Talk about the author's use of language/writing style. Have each member read his or her favorite passage out loud. (You might want to warn them ahead of time that they'll be doing this so they'll be prepared.) How does this particular passage relate to the story as a whole? Does it reveal anything specific about any of the characters or illuminate certain aspects of the story?
4. On page 7, Samantha asks Nellie one of the defining questions of the novel: "Ever think he's too good to be true?" At what point did you start to think that Sam might be right, and Richard might actually be too good to be true?
5. What do you think is the significance of Vanessa's new job at an upscale clothing store? How might it affect her to still be in the upper class world she once occupied, but in a much different role? Compare and contrast her experience there to her previous job as a teacher.
6. Throughout the novel, Aunt Charlotte and Vanessa have an extremely close relationship, even when Vanessa struggles to be honest with her aunt. How do you see this relationship affecting the choices Vanessa makes? Is there someone in your family with whom you have a similar bond?
7. Discuss the mystery aspect of the plotline. How effective is the author's use of plot twists and red herrings? Were you able to predict certain things before they happened, or did the author keep you guessing until the end of the story? Did you find that the novel held everyone's interest throughout the story, or were there times when it failed to totally engross members of the group?

8. How important is the setting to the story? If applicable, discuss the time period in which the book is set. Does the author provide enough background information for you to understand the events in the story?
9. When did you realize who Vanessa, Nellie, and Emma actually are? How did this new understanding shape your experience of the rest of the story, and how do you think it will affect your experience if you reread the novel?
10. On page 162, Vanessa says, "I guess I thought marrying Richard would erase my concerns. But my old anxieties simply yielded to new ones." Do you think that that is a common misconception about entering into a marriage? If so, why do you think so many men and women believe this?
11. What is the most important part of a mystery or thriller to each member of the group-characterization, action, dialogue, or setting? How does this book rate in each of these areas?
12. *The Wife Between Us* asks difficult questions about how much someone's past can explain or excuse their behavior. What's your opinion? Did getting to know more about Vanessa's or Richard's backstory help to explain or justify their choices at all?
13. The theme of sight – foresight, hindsight, and even real, physical eyesight – is wound throughout the entire novel. Maggie, the young sorority pledge, repeatedly says, "I hate it when I can't see." Do you think that anyone in this novel could (or should) have been able to see more clearly the consequences of their actions? Do you believe in the old saying, "Hindsight is 20/20?"
14. Is the author equally invested in both character and plot? Or did the author put more effort into developing the story than in creating compelling and believable characters? Were the motivations of the characters believable, or did their actions feel like a means to further the plot?
15. Agatha Christie wrote in her autobiography about her dislike of mysteries having a romantic subplot. Do you agree or disagree with her views? Did this book have an element of romance? If so, do you feel the love aspect enhanced or detracted from the story?
16. Did the end of the novel leave you questioning who was really calling the shots and who had a full picture of what was going on? Which character do you think was truly orchestrating the events that were set into action – or was there more than one person responsible? Why do you believe this?
17. Would you recommend this work to a non-mystery/thriller fan simply on the basis of its literary merit? Would you endorse it purely because of the skillful writing and the well-developed characters? Or do you think the work would strictly appeal to fans of the mystery/thriller genre.
18. What did you like or dislike about the book that hasn't been discussed already? Were you glad you read this book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Do you want to read more work by this author?

- <http://greerhendricks.com/the-wife-between-us/reading-group-guide/reading-group-questions/>

BOOK REVIEWS

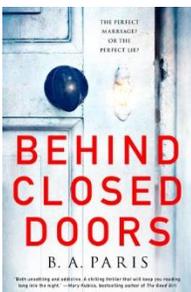
Publisher's Weekly

Hendricks, who spent more than 20 years as a book editor, joins forces with Pekkanen (*The Best of Us*) to create a jaw-dropping psychological thriller. Unreliable narrator Vanessa Thompson is obsessed with her ex-husband's fiancée and on the verge of becoming unhinged. She gave up everything to have a fairy tale life in Westchester with too-good-to-be-true hedge fund manager Richard. After a series of failed fertility treatments, their marriage unraveled, and Richard leaves her for a younger woman. Hendricks and Pekkanen chronicle a marriage gone wrong through the alternating accounts of the shattered Vanessa and a vibrant, younger woman named Nellie. This is not another eye-rolling story about the jealous ex-wife stalking her replacement, as readers will discover as Vanessa's motivations are revealed. Unforgettable twists lead to shocking revelations all the way through the epilogue. 250,000-copy announced first printing. Agent: Victoria Sanders, Victoria Sanders and Associates. (Jan.).

Kirkus Reviews

An angry ex-wife is stalking a young, innocent fiancée who is a carbon copy of her former self...or so it seems. The use of a multiviewpoint, chronologically complex narrative to create suspense by purposely misleading the reader is a really, really popular device. Two words: *Gone Girl*. While we are not the fools we once were and now assume immediately that we are being played, the question is whether we still take pleasure in the twists and revelations that follow. Pekkanen (*The Perfect Neighbors*, 2016, etc.) and Hendricks' debut collaboration falls into the first wife/second wife subgenre of this type of story (e.g., *The Girl Before*, *The Last Mrs. Parrish*). In all of these, an unbelievably handsome, wildly successful, secretive, rigid, orderly, and controlling husband—here it's Richard, a 36-year-old hedge fund manager with "a runner's wiry build and an easy smile that belied his intense navy-blue eyes"—marries the same type of woman more than once, sometimes more than twice. Of course, he's not who he seems. Perhaps the female characters are not, either. Here, we meet Nellie, an adorable New York preschool teacher who is not quite sure she wants to give up the fun, shoestring, highly social lifestyle she shares with her roomie to move to a sterile suburb with Richard. But the wedding date—of course he hasn't even told her the location, just "buy a new bikini"—draws ever closer. Something bad happened to Nellie in Florida a long time ago that has made her anxious and hypervigilant. Meanwhile, Vanessa, the spurned wife, lives with her artist Aunt Charlotte (a great character), is boozing heavily, and is about to lose her job at Saks. She's stalking Nellie, determined to prevent the marriage at all costs. Since you know there's got to be more to it than this, the fun is in trying to figure it out before they tell you. We didn't! One of the subplots, the one about the bad thing in Florida, was fresher than the main plot—maybe Hendricks and Pekkanen should have written a whole book about that. Easy to read, smoothly put together. A good airport book. (Kirkus Reviews, October 15, 2017).

READALIKES



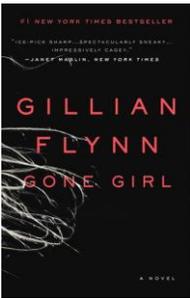
***Behind Closed Doors* by B.A. Paris**

The friends of a seemingly perfect socialite couple begin to see cracks in the facade when they realize that the husband and wife are never apart and that there are bars on one of their upstairs windows.



Best Day Ever by Kaira Rouda

Paul Strom has the perfect life: a glittering career as an advertising executive, a beautiful wife, two healthy boys and a big house in a wealthy suburb. And he's the perfect husband: breadwinner, protector, provider. That's why he's planned a romantic weekend for his wife, Mia, at their lake house, just the two of them. And he's promised today will be the best day ever.



Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn

When beautiful Amy Dunne disappears from her Missouri home, it looks as if her husband Nick is to blame. But though he protests his innocence, it's clear that he's not being entirely truthful. Gone Girl is not only the story of a disappearance, but a truly frightening glimpse of a souring marriage.