

Girl, 11

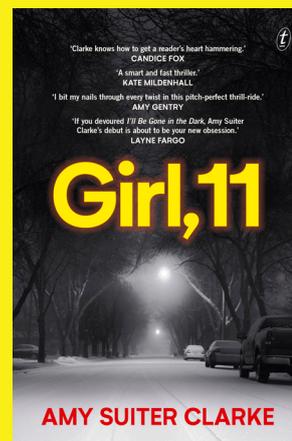


Amy Suiter Clarke

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FICTION, TRADE PAPERBACK

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PRaise for *GIRL, 11*

'Clarke knows how to get a reader's heart hammering.'

CANDICE FOX

'*Girl, 11* is delivered with poise, style and cunning—making it impossible to put down.'

ALEX SEGURA

'A chilling, expertly constructed thriller that strikes the perfect balance between page-turning twists and piercing commentary on the true cost of crime.'

LAYNE FARGO

ABOUT AMY SUITER CLARKE

Amy Suiter Clarke is a writer and communications specialist. Originally from a small town in Minnesota, she completed an undergraduate in theatre in the Twin Cities. She then moved to London and earned an MFA in Creative Writing with Publishing at Kingston University. She currently works for a university library in Melbourne. *Girl, 11* is her debut novel.

A READER'S INTRODUCTION TO *GIRL, 11*

Former social worker Elle Castillo is the host of a popular true-crime podcast that tackles cold cases of missing children in her hometown. After four seasons of successful investigations, Elle decides to tackle her white whale: the Countdown Killer, or TCK.

Twenty years ago, TCK established a pattern of taking and ritualistically murdering girls, each a year younger than the last. No one's ever known why—why he stopped abruptly with his eleven-year-old victim, or why he followed the ritual at all.

Weeks into her new season, Elle sets out to interview a listener promising a tip, only to discover his dead body.

When a child is abducted days later, in a pattern that looks very familiar, Elle is convinced TCK is back. Will she be able to get law enforcement on her side and stop TCK before it's too late?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do you feel about Elle at the end of the book versus the beginning? Did your opinion of her change throughout the novel? If so, what changed it? If not, why?
2. What do you think of Elle's friendship with Sash and Natalie? Do you think it's common for people who can't become parents to 'adopt' a friend's child as their own in an unofficial way?
3. Elle and Martín have a strong, supportive marriage and the plot of this book does not revolve around conflict between them. How is it different or similar to other marriages depicted in psychological suspense novels?
4. While she's not a police officer herself, Elle has to work alongside the detectives to accomplish her goals in the book. How did you feel about this book featuring an amateur sleuth? Would you have preferred she be a detective? If not, would you have preferred she find a way to investigate without the police getting involved?
5. Many of the secondary characters in this book stand between Elle and her goals, but they later become essential to achieving them. What can this tell us about how we approach handling challenging relationships in our own lives?
6. Much of the story in this book is told through podcast transcripts rather than standard prose. How did you feel about this narrative style? Do you listen to podcasts yourself? Did whether or not you

listen to podcasts impact your enjoyment of the transcripts?

7. How did you feel about the introduction of DJ's point of view? Were you glad it was included or would you have preferred it wasn't? How would it have changed the book if you didn't hear from him?
8. At its core, this book is about two people's very different reactions to a childhood trauma. Elle and DJ both went through something terrible as children, but their lives took dramatically diverse paths as adults. What factors do you think went into the choices they made?
9. Elle brings listeners and readers in on a secret about her past at a crucial point in the novel. How did you feel about this revelation? Were you surprised? Did you suspect it? Do you think the author wanted you to guess her identity? If so, why?
10. At the end of the book, Elle realises her focus on victims over perpetrators in the podcast has shifted. How do you feel about the way true crime treats victims generally? What are the ethics of an amateur sleuth or even a journalist making the worst thing that has happened to a person an object of media consumption without their permission?

PODCAST RECOMMENDATIONS

If you're disappointed that *Justice Delayed* is over, here are some of the podcasts that inspired Elle Castillo.

- *Uncover* (CBC Podcasts)
- *Someone Knows Something* (CBC Podcasts)
- *Tom Brown's Body* (Texas Monthly)
- *The Clearing* (Pineapple Street Media)
- *Truth & Justice with Bob Ruff* (NBI Studios)
- *Missing & Murdered* (CBC Podcasts)
- *In the Dark* (APM Reports)
- *Cousins by Blood* (Matt Duff)
- *Jensen and Holes: The Murder Squad* (Exactly Right)
- *Undisclosed* (Undisclosed)
- *Bear Brook* (New Hampshire Public Radio)
- *Root of Evil* (TNT/Cadence13)

COCKTAIL LIST

Thank you to Justine from Literary Elixirs for her delicious recommendations.

Rosemary Mezcal Apple Cider

Inspired by the setting of Minnesota, a state known for its apples. This cocktail is also complex and tart, with a warmth from the mezcal to counter this serial cold case.

Ingredients:

- 245 mls mezcal
- 125 mls fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon agave nectar

- 2 cups unfiltered apple cider
- 4 fresh rosemary sprigs
- few pinches sea salt

Mixology:

Pour mezcal, lime juice, agave, apple cider, and a few pinches of sea salt into cocktail shaker. Stir to incorporate agave. Pinch off a few rosemary leaves and muddle into liquid for just a few seconds, crushing against base of cocktail shaker to release flavour. Add ice, cap cocktail shaker, and shake. Pour through strainer into four glasses with large ice cube and garnish with rosemary sprigs and apple slices.

Sassy Amaretto Martini

Dark and intense just like the story, sassy and passionate like Elle and with a coffee hit to keep you going until the end this is a different, yet delicious, take on a classic.

Ingredients:

- 45 mls blueberry liqueur
- 30 mls amaretto liqueur
- 45 mls espresso

Mixology:

Shake vigorously over ice and double strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with roasted coffee beans.

The Bennett

A variation on the classic Gimlet, this cocktail leans on the all-important addition of Angostura bitters. If you like, add a dash of cinnamon to amplify the spice. Bitters and spice and all things nice...

Ingredients:

- 60 mls gin
- 45 mls lime cordial
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters

Mixology:

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker. Shake and strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with a floating lime wheel.

Strawberry Basil Mocktail

A non-alcoholic drink with fruity flavour and a savoury undertone.

Ingredients:

- 3 medium strawberries
- 4–6 basil leaves
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 teaspoon sweetener of choice
- 1 cup sparkling water

Mixology:

Muddle strawberries, basil, lime and sweetener in glass for about 1 minute. Top with sparkling water and stir gently. Add ice and garnish.