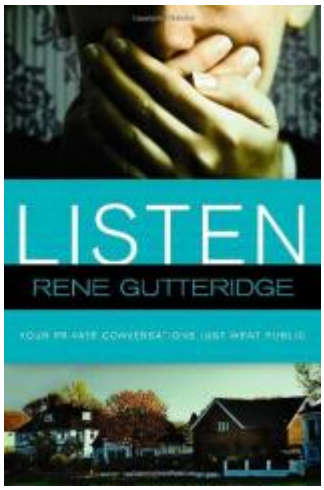
Listen

by Rene Gutteridge



About the Book

Nothing ever happens in the small town of Marlo…until the residents begin seeing their private conversations posted online for everyone to read. Then it's neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, as paranoia and violence escalate. The police scramble to identify the person responsible for the posts and pull the plug on the Website before it destroys the town. But what responsibility do the people of the town have for the words they say when they think no one is listening? Life and death are in the power of the tongue.

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Discussion Guide

Use these questions for individual reflection or for discussion within your book club or small group. If your book club reads **Listen** and is interested in talking with me via speakerphone, please feel free to contact me through my Web site at www.renegutteridge.com, and I'll do my best to arrange something with you. Thanks for reading!

1. Do you believe words have power over you? What about the words you speak in private? Do they still have power? Over you? Over someone else?

2. Can you recall an instance where words changed you, either for better or worse?

3. Kay's life was changed by words when she was young, but the pain it caused her and others continued into the next generation. What steps can we take to make sure painful words do not continue to cause harm through more generations?

4. Why do you think Frank kept his sister a secret, even from his best friend?

5. If you were the one who discovered who was behind the Web site, would you turn them in? What if it were a friend or family member? Would you try to protect them from the consequences?

6. How have social networking sites and other technological advances --- like texting and Twittering --- changed what we say about ourselves and others? Do you think people feel freer to share personal details? What issues can this present?

7. If you have a damaged or estranged relationship in your life, and you were asked to write the person a letter, could you do it? Why or why not? What would make it hard or easy?

8. What are three words you'd like to have spoken about you?

9. What do you think are five of the most powerful words in the English language? What makes them powerful?

10. The Bible has a lot to say about the power of the tongue. For instance, Damien quotes James 3:5-6 in his letter to Marlo. Read and discuss the following verses: Psalm 34:12-14, Proverbs 13:3, and Proverbs 15:4.

Author Bio

Rene Gutteridgeis the award-winning and bestselling author of 22 novels, including her latest releases, MISERY LOVES COMPANY (suspense), GREETINGS FROM THE FLIPSIDE (comedy) and HEART OF THE COUNTRY (drama). Her recent suspense titles also include LISTEN, POSSESSION and ESCAPEMENT. She has novelized seven screenplays and movies, including two new releases due out in 2014, JUST 18 SUMMERS and OLD FASHIONED. NEVER THE BRIDE, a romantic comedy with screenwriter Cheryl McKay, won the Carol Award in 2010 for best women's fiction.

Her indie film --- the comedy *Skid*, based on her novel --- is in postproduction and due to release in 2014. Rene is a creative consultant on *Boo*, a film based on her beloved novel series, which is in development at Sodium Entertainment with Cory Edwards attached as director and Andrea Nasfell as screenwriter. Rene is also a cowriter in a collaborative comedy project called "The Last Resort" with screenwriters Torry Martin and Marshal Younger.

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