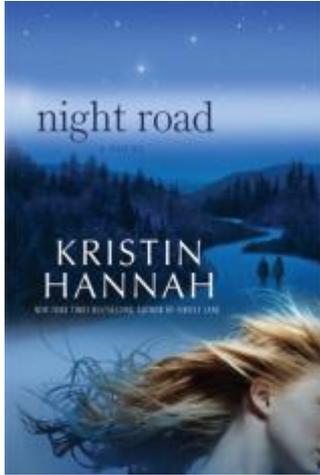


Night Road

by Kristin Hannah



About the Book

Jude Farraday is a happily married, stay-at-home mom who puts everyone's needs above her own. Her twins, Mia and Zach, are bright and happy teenagers. When Lexi Baill enters their lives, no one is more supportive than Jude. A former foster child with a dark past, Lexi quickly becomes Mia's best friend. Then Zach falls in love with Lexi and the three become inseparable. But senior year of high school brings unexpected dangers and one night, Jude's worst fears are confirmed: there is an accident. In an instant, her idyllic life is shattered and her close-knit community is torn apart. People --- and Jude --- demand justice, and when the finger of blame is pointed, it lands solely on 18-year-old Lexi Baill. In a heartbeat, their love for each other will be shattered, the family broken. Lexi gives up everything that matters to her --- the boy she loves, her place in the family, the best friend she ever had --- while Jude loses even more.

When Lexi returns, older and wiser, she demands a reckoning. Long buried feelings will rise again, and Jude will finally have to face the woman she has become. She must decide whether to remain broken or try to forgive both Lexi...and herself.

NIGHT ROAD is a vivid, emotionally complex novel that raises profound questions about motherhood, loss, identity and forgiveness. It is an exquisite, heartbreaking novel that speaks to women everywhere about the things that matter most.

Discussion Guide

1. Jude Farraday is obviously a tenacious and committed mother. She very clearly tries to do anything and everything she can to keep her children safe. Do you think all of this effort makes her a "good" mother? Or is she over-invested in her children's lives? Does this kind of micro-managing keep kids safe, or put them in a position where they don't trust their own judgment?
2. One of the powerful themes in this novel is the delicate balance a mother must find between holding on to her children and letting them go. How does Jude succeed in finding this balance? How does she fail?
3. At one point or another in this book, every character feels extreme growing pains. How do you feel each character "grew up" throughout the story?

4. On page 71, Jude observes that her husband accused her of being a helicopter parent, all noise and movement, hovering too close to her children, but if that were true, he was a satellite, positioned so far up in the sky he needed a telescope to track the goings on his own home. How does this sentence illustrate Jude's view of motherhood? Is she right? Is Miles unaware of what's going on in his children's lives? How does Jude render Miles ineffective and what is the price for that?
5. Jude seems to make all the rules for her children. Why does she ignore Miles' suggestions and advice? Why does he let her?
6. For years, Jude promised her children that they could "tell her anything, that she would pick them at night up no questions asked." But when put to the test, she fails. Can you understand why she disciplined her children for drinking? What would you have done?
7. When the senior year partying starts, Jude knows that her kids are going to parties where alcohol is served, and she gets proof that they are drinking. How should she have handled this? Should she and Miles have forbidden them from going to parties? Why didn't they? What were they afraid of?
8. In knowing about the drinking, were Jude and Miles tacitly allowing it? Is it enough to tell your kids about the dangers of drinking and driving and then trust them to make good decisions?
9. In many parts of the country, parents choose to have a "take the keys" party for their teenage children, with the thought that it will be a safer environment. What do you think of this? Would you do it?
10. Jude seems to find a kind of solace in her grief. It appears that she would rather stop feeling anything than to experience her own pain. Do you think this is believable? Understandable?
11. How did Jude's handling of grief add to the heartache her family suffered? How do her perceptions of fault play into her coldness?
12. Jude has an extremely strained relationship with her own mother. How does this broken relationship contribute to the story?
13. Lexi comes from a very different world than the Farradays. How does her past contribute to the unfolding of the events? How is her past responsible for the decision she makes to drive that night?
14. When Jude discovers the romance between Zach and Lexi, she is immediately worried for Mia. Why? Were her fears justified?
15. Lexi pays an very high price for her actions that night. Did she do the right thing by admitting guilt? How does her past play into and contribute to the decisions she makes about Grace?
16. The author seems to be making some strong statements about the judicial system, especially with regard to power and money. Do you agree that Lexi paid a higher price for her guilt because she was powerless and broke?
17. Jude says at one point that she is seeking "justice" from the court. Is she? Did she find it?
18. Assign blame for what happened on that tragic night. How much of what happened is Lexi's fault? Zach's? Jude's? Mia's?
19. Discuss your thoughts about Grace's "invisible" friend. Who is she? How did she help Grace deal with her emotions?
20. In the end of the novel, Jude learns that in the sea of grief, there were moments of grace, moments of time when one could remember what was left, rather than all that had been lost. What does she mean by this? How does it summarize the lessons learned she and Lexi learned? How will this new understanding change all their lives? Do you believe it? Do you think a person can ever truly overcome a tragedy of this magnitude, and if so, how?

Author Bio

Kristin Hannah is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 21 novels. A former lawyer turned writer, she is the mother of one son and lives with her husband in the Pacific Northwest and Hawaii.

Critical Praise

"It is the first book in a very long time to make me cry."

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