

"Part Agatha Christie,
part Veronica Mars, and
completely entertaining."

—KAREN M. McMANUS,
#1 *New York Times* bestselling
author of *One of Us Is Lying*



THE AGATHAS

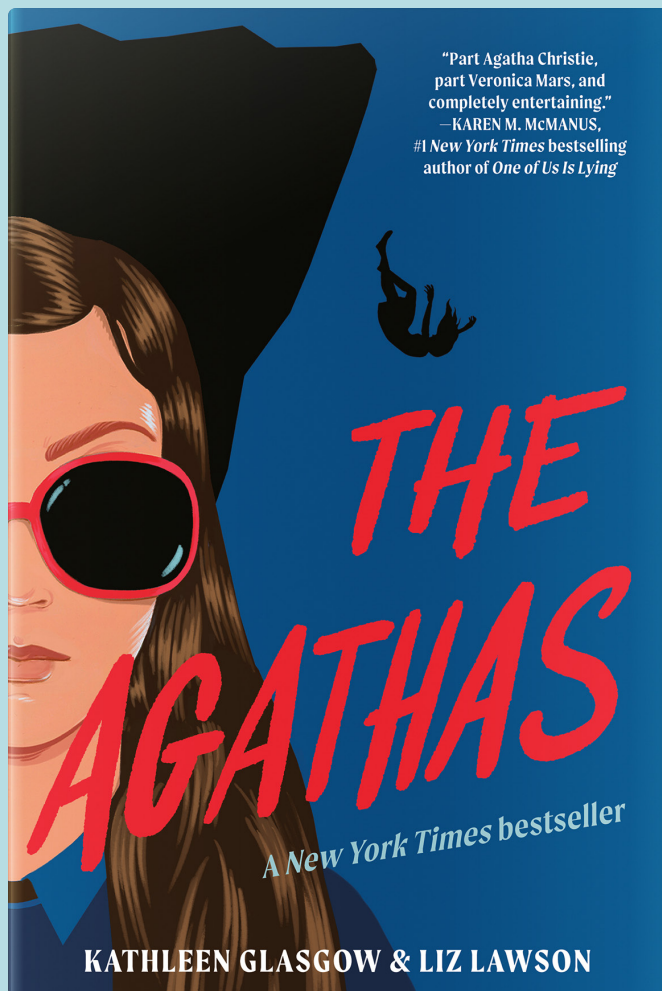
A New York Times bestseller

KATHLEEN GLASGOW & LIZ LAWSON

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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About the Book

Who killed Brooke Donovan?
It's the biggest mystery of the summer, and everyone in Castle Cove thinks it's the wrong guy. Fans of *One of Us Is Lying* and *Riverdale* can't miss this page-turning whodunit that's sure to be the next must-read young adult thriller!



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About the Authors

Kathleen Glasgow is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Girl in Pieces*, *How to Make Friends with the Dark*, and *You'd Be Home Now*. She lives and writes in Tucson, Arizona.

Liz Lawson is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Agathas* (with Kathleen Glasgow) and *The Lucky Ones*. Liz lives with her family and two VERY bratty cats. You can find her on TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter at @lzlwsn.

Discussion Questions

The Past Can Haunt Us The author drops hints to the reader that something major has recently happened to the two main characters, Iris and Alice. Iris seems to fear someone she calls “the Thing,” and Alice disappeared for five days. Write to explain how these two things contribute to the suspense of the novel.

If You Had to Choose One . . . The authors present the reader with two protagonists, Iris and Alice. At first the reader’s sympathy is more with Iris, who seems more of a traditionally sympathetic character of her socioeconomic circumstances, but during the novel the reader’s affections swing toward Alice at times. This happens as more is revealed about her thoughts and situation and feelings, especially toward her dead friend Brooke. So, if you had to choose one protagonist that the reader is more sympathetic to, who would you choose, and why? Write to persuade someone on this, and present to a classmate.

We’re Always Learning Our experiences shape who we become, and life teaches us things every day. As Iris and Alice go on a journey to find out what happened to Brooke, they end up discovering characteristics or attributes about *themselves* that they hadn’t previously known. Write to explain what these attributes are and how they develop throughout the story.

Just Kids Most teenagers long to be able to make their own decisions and to be treated seriously by adults. In *The Agathas*, very few adults do this to Alice and Iris and Iris’s friends, with Alice’s nanny Brenda being one of the few. While this of course discourages the girls, they stand up to several of these adults either don’t believe them or are trying to somehow interfere with their investigation. Think of a time in your life when you thought that an adult (It might be helpful to think of an adult OTHER than your parents) either would not believe you or was otherwise keeping you from doing what you thought you were entitled to do. Write to explain this conflict and how it was resolved.

Sometimes You Just Can’t Speak When Alice comes back from her disappearance, she decides to “crash” a party at Levy Castle, even though she’s been ostracized from the friend group she knows she will encounter there. She sees her former boyfriend Steve being intimate with Brooke, and also sees her friends Kennedy and Park. Right away Kennedy spots her and says, “Oh my god. *Ew.*” On page 33, Steve quietly asks, “What are you doing here, Alice?” Alice says, “I just . . .” and trails off. Think of three possible things Alice COULD have said. List these and for each explain two possible consequences for what Alice would say.

Minor Characters Matter Authors carefully create every character in their books, and although they focus on their main character(s), minor characters need to be integrated into a mystery story—both positive and negative—to add suspense. For example, Iris and Alice forge a relationship with Steve Anderson’s lawyer, Ricky Randall, and Ricky helps them with her knowledge of the case (and Alice and Iris help her with their discoveries as well). Think of another minor character who you think adds to the overall suspense of the story, then write to explain how this character contributes to the mystery and suspense of the book.

Agatha Herself Before each “Alice” section of the book is a quote from the great mystery novelist Agatha Christie. These quotes serve to foreshadow what will happen in that chapter. For example, before “Alice, November 7, 3:20,” the quote from Christie’s *The Mystery of the Blue Train* is “I do not argue with obstinate (stubborn) men. I act despite them.” This foretells Alice’s confrontation with Detective Thompson where despite being seriously interrogated about her whereabouts, Alice tries to explain that he should be considering Brooke’s character, meaning Brooke wouldn’t just disappear as Alice did. This shows her acting despite a stubborn man. Take three

of the Christie quotes that start Alice chapters and, using the example above, explain how they foreshadow what Alice will do in that chapter.

Partners Alice and Iris each have unique skills that help in their quest to figure out the mystery of Brooke's death. List a few skills that are unique to each girl, and use these to explain how the skills of each girl COMPLEMENT the other.

The Thing At the end of the book, the authors have website addresses for child abuse, domestic violence, teen dating violence, and a crisis text line under the heading of "Where to Get Help" because they're dealing with serious issues that in real life inflict pain and worry on its victims. Often there is no easy answer for what to do about domestic violence but think about the situation about Iris and her mother with who she calls "The Thing," someone that turns out later in the novel to be her father. Iris's mother has a court-ordered restraining

order against her husband, meaning he could not be anywhere in their vicinity, and has had it for at least a month, and probably much longer. In chapters 37–40, Iris's father forces his way into their house, and violence ensues. This attack not only violated a court order but was in no way brought on by Iris or her mother, who are just trying to survive with his threat and its accompanying fear, not to mention little income. Think of what Iris and her mother have done to prevent this attack—things within their power and write to explain POSSIBLE non-violent things that Iris and her mother could have done.



This guide was prepared by Greg Shafer. Greg Shafer has twenty-seven years of experience teaching in Florida middle schools, and holds three degrees from the University of Florida: a bachelor of arts in English, a bachelor of science in journalism, and a master's degree in English education. As a National Board-certified teacher, Mr. Shafer has taught middle school drama, language arts, and served as a peer evaluator as part of a \$100 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Hillsborough County Public Schools. In addition, Mr. Shafer has served as team leader for seventh and eighth grades for the majority of his teaching career, and holds his professional certification to teach middle grades, gifted, English 6–12, and ESOL.



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