



In conversation with **CYNTHIA MURPHY**, author of

THE MIDNIGHT GAME

BookTok has dubbed you “the CEO of plot twists.” How do you come up with all the twists and turns in your books?

I like to think of the moments in books that have made my jaw drop and go from there. I try to misdirect the reader and take them on a journey where they can't quite catch their breath until the final chapter. In order to do this, I like to plan a loose outline of the big moments that will happen in the story, as well as the final twist, then allow the characters to do their thing in between.

Do you have a favorite thriller trope?

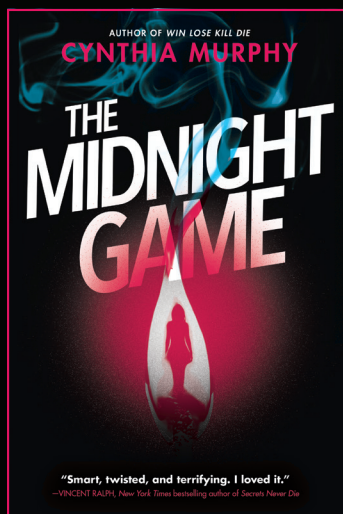
I know this will be a contentious point, but I really love an unhinged villain, especially when they reveal the deranged reasoning behind their dastardly deeds (bonus points for a villainous monologue—I'm a real sucker for those). Give me Amy from *Gone Girl*, Joe from *You*, or more recently, Oliver from *Saltburn*. I'm so interested in the psychology—and psychopathy—of the bad guy. When they reveal and justify the terrible things that they do, it fascinates me!

***The Midnight Game* features six points of view. How did you maintain six unique voices?**

I started with six distinct characters and tried to flesh out their personalities before I started writing. I knew that each of them would need a different approach to the game as well as a reason for being there, so I gave each of them a secret and a way of covering it up. This really helped make them all more three-dimensional, and from there I was able to play with their dialogue to make them sound even more unique.

In *The Midnight Game*, six strangers meet to summon the Midnight Man. Was he inspired by any classic horror or thriller villains?

The Midnight Game is actually based on the creepypasta of the same name. Creepypasta is essentially internet folklore, and this is a more modern version of the Bloody Mary game I knew when I was growing up. I love the idea of taking something that people might be familiar with and twisting it—my own strange version of a mythological retelling. Faceless horror icons like Michael Myers spring to mind, too—like the Midnight Man, you never know when he will appear. . . .



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