BOOK CLUB KIT

LISTEN FOR THE LIE
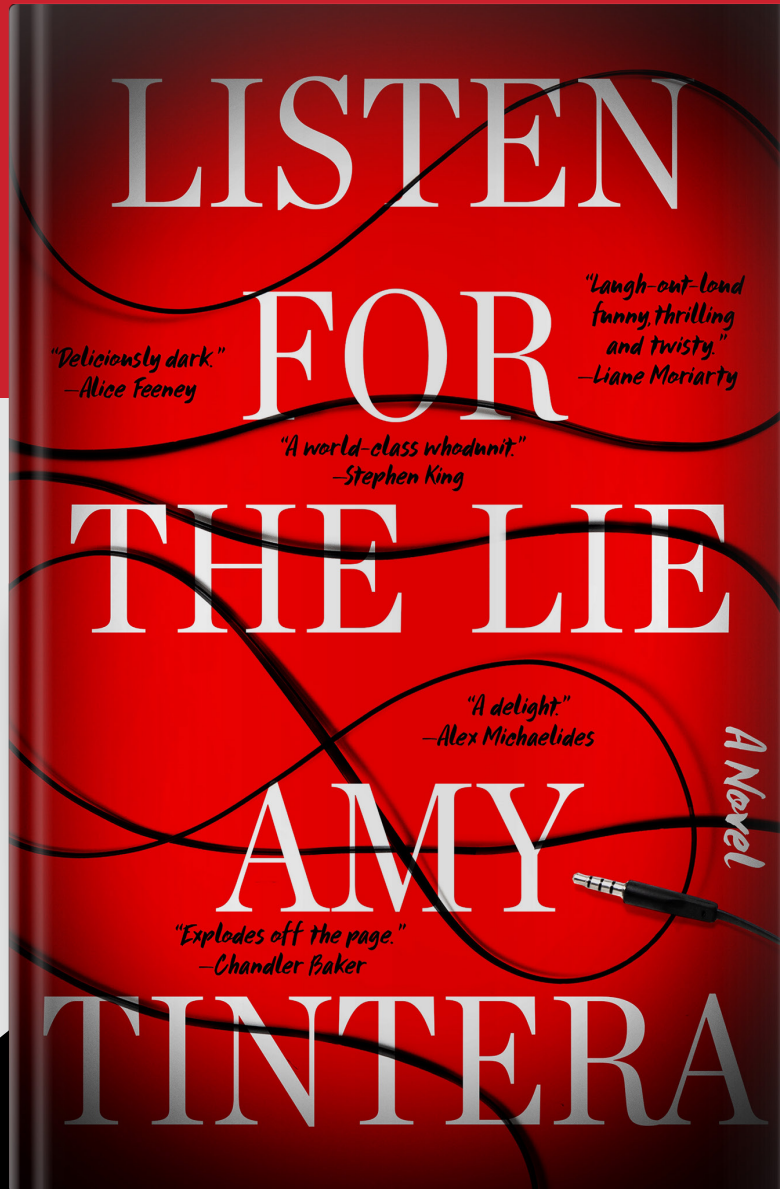
"Deliciously dark."
—Alice Feeney

"Laugh-out-loud funny, thrilling and twisty."
—Liane Moriarty

"A world-class whodunit."
—Stephen King

"A delight."
—Alex Michaelides

"Explodes off the page."
—Chandler Baker

A Novel

AMY TINTERA

"It's the first book where we all agree that it is a 5 star read and possibly one of the best books we have read as a book club."

—JUST FOR THE THRILL OF IT (DALLAS, GEORGIA)

AN INTERVIEW

with Amy Tintera

AMY TINTERA is the *New York Times* bestselling author of several series for young adults. She earned degrees in journalism and film and worked in Hollywood before becoming an author. Raised in Austin, Texas, she frequently sets her novels in the Lone Star State, but she now lives in Los Angeles, where there's far less humidity but not nearly enough Tex-Mex. *Listen for the Lie* is her adult debut.

You are the bestselling author of young adult novels and series, like *Reboot* and *Ruined.* Why did you make the switch from writing YA to adult novels? How is the process different, and has anything surprised you?

While writing my 2020 YA novel, *All These Monsters*, I realized that I wanted to explore some darker themes with older characters. The *Monsters* books deal with heavy issues, like abusive relationships and cycles of abuse, and I really began to think about what I could do with those sorts of themes with an adult main character.

The process of writing the book was similar, except that it took much longer! I spent over two years writing *Listen for the Lie*, which was two to three times longer than my YA novels usually take. This was partly because I was writing other books at the same time, but also because I was learning a whole new genre on top of writing for a new age-group. It was my first time writing a thriller, so the learning curve was steep!

Listen for the Lie centers around two best friends, Lucy and Savvy. Why did you want to explore the theme of female friendship in this story?

I've always been fascinated by female friendships, and especially the way they're portrayed in the media. People tend to jump straight to "catty" and "jealous" when talking about relationships between women. I have certainly had some experience with that, but mostly I know women who have very deep, complex bonds. I wanted to explore what an intense friendship between two women would actually look like, from my perspective.

The fictional true crime podcast "Listen for the Lie" is key to solving Savvy's murder. Was there a specific real case that inspired you to tell the story through the lens of a true crime podcast?

I was partially inspired by the murder of Meredich Kercher and the media frenzy that rose up around Amanda Knox, the friend accused of murdering her. That case was one of the most egregious examples of the media latching on to the narrative of women hating each other, and without any evidence! It seemed that no matter how many times Amanda insisted that she and Meredith hadn't secretly hated each other, no one believed it. That case was in the back of my mind for years, and the way the media treated Amanda definitely informed how I shaped the main character, Lucy.

What do you hope readers take away from the book?

I hope they're left thinking about friendships between women — how they've been portrayed in the past, and how that's shaped our opinion of them. While writing the book, I also spent a lot of time thinking about the complex ethics of true crime podcasts, so I hope readers will as well. I think these podcasts do a lot of good (and I love listening to them!), but I also try to remember that there are real people behind the stories, people who maybe don't want to be caught up in a social media frenzy about the worst time in their lives.

What true crime podcasts, TV, or movies did you consume while working on the book?

I listened to *Serial* for a second time before I started writing, because, like a lot of people, the investigation into the murder of Hae Min Lee was my first true crime podcast. Season one of *Up and Vanished*, about the disappearance of Tara Grinstead, was also a big one for me — I had just started forming the character of Ben, and listening to that podcast helped me start to home in on the voice and style. *To Live and Die in L.A.*, investigating the murder of Adea Shabani, had just aired as I was writing the first draft, and I found that one incredibly helpful as well.

I also watched both seasons of *Fleabag* for the first time right before I started seriously working on the book, which was excellent timing, because I knew immediately that I wanted to strike a similar tone. I'd hoped to find a balance between a serious mystery and a black comedy, which seemed like a huge challenge. But the way *Fleabag* was so effortlessly hilarious while dealing with grief and a doomed romance was very inspiring.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen for the Lie* alternates between Lucy's point of view and Ben's podcast interviews. How did this structure impact your reading experience? How did you navigate the many points of view? How much did you trust the people of Plumpton?

2. As a narrator, Lucy has a bold and sarcastic sense of humor. How do you believe this affected her credibility among the people of Plumpton and the listeners of Ben's podcast?

3. Throughout the book, we encounter many characters who had loose alibis for the night of Savvy's murder. How did gender bias contribute to the fact that Lucy's guilt was presumed from the start, while the men who surrounded her were never questioned? What are some examples?

4. How does the small-town setting of Plumpton, Texas, contribute to the perspectives of those who surround Lucy?

5. During the book, we watch Lucy form a romantic relationship with Ben. How does this compare to the other relationships she has?

6. As we know from the beginning, Lucy has no idea if she killed Savvy or not. How was your reading experience affected by the way you learned what happened at the same time that Lucy did?

7. When Lucy began to embrace Savvy as her inner monologue, what did you think this would reveal? Did you see this as her leaning into the investigation? Or succumbing to it?

8. How many different people did you think did it? What were the clues that led you to these conclusions?

   Suggested by Book Club (Chicago, Illinois)

9. At any point in the book did you believe that Lucy was responsible for Savvy's death? If so, what factors contributed to this conclusion, and when did you change your mind?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

10 If Lucy's family were more supportive and not so dysfunctional, how might that have affected the trajectory of Lucy's life?

   Suggested by A Novel Bunch Bookstaclub (Austin, Texas)

11 If you listen to true-crime podcasts, did reading this book change the way you approach the facts and investigations presented on those shows?

If you decide to adopt *Listen for the Lie* for your book club,
we would love to hear about it! Please let us know
by emailing us at reader@celadonbooks.com or post
on social media using the hashtags #CeladonBookClub
and #ListenForTheLie.

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