

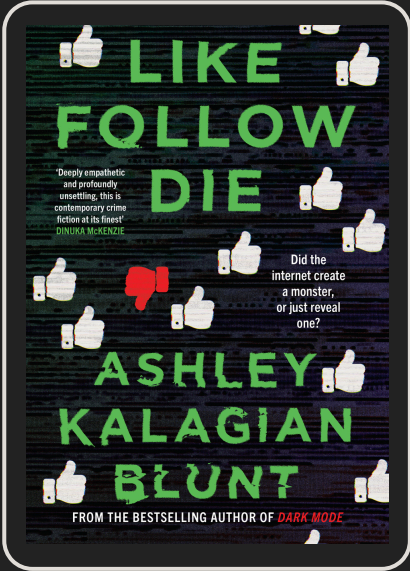
READING GROUP NOTES

LIKE, FOLLOW, DIE
ASHLEY KALAGIAN BLUNT

When a homicide cop knocks on a mother’s door, she has to decide how much to reveal about her son’s devastating actions.

‘there’s a chilling authenticity to Like, Follow, Die’ –
Claudia Karvan

‘Deeply empathetic and profoundly unsettling, this is contemporary crime fiction at its finest’ – Dinuka McKenzie



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How does growing up in the moneyed suburbs of Sydney’s east affect Ben’s worldview?

Kyle notes, ‘Some people could break the rules, even get caught, and yet continue to thrive’ (page 261). In your opinion, is this true?

Inspiration for Lauren Bruece came from a real life anti-feminist influencer who went viral for advocating that women should not be entitled to vote, one voice in the emerging ‘womansphere’. Do you think Lauren truly believes what she’s saying, or is it just a means to an event of attention and fame.

How does Kyle struggle with Seda’s pregnancy?

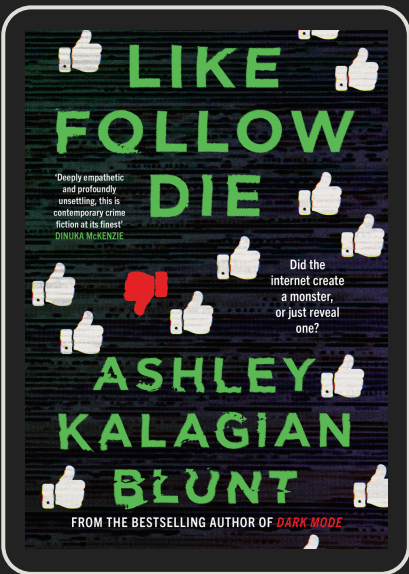
As their movement grew more militant, Suffragettes resorted to property destruction, including smashing indows of government buildings, setting fire to postboxes, and even committing arson against unoccupied buildings (see page 254). Were you aware of the Suffragettes’ use of violence to advance their political aims?

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‘There are cultures where, if someone goes astray, it’s not considered an individual failing. The community looks at themselves and asks, :How did we fail? What could we have done to prevent this?’ (page 269). This concept comes from an interviews with Harvard law professors Dehlia Umunna and Martha Minow about forgiveness and the law in episode 139 of the podcast Criminal. How does this concept motivate Corinne’s actions?

Corinne reflects, ‘The public could only fathom two options. Either Ben was born evil, and so his violence was inevitable. Or he was born innocent and raised with no moral guidance, possibly abused and traumatised. Neither was true. Ben was born innocent and raised with love’ (page 294). What do you believe about this?



How does Kyle’s experience of family life contrast with Ben’s?

Corinne says, ‘Ben always had this epic sense of history. You read how much he loved Xenophon. Take that and layer in superhero narratives and video games centred on competition and fighting. Of course Ben was primed to understand the world as “us versus them”. I should have taught him that real life is about accommodating others...I should have taught him a lot of things. But I thought my job was to support him while he grew into his own person’ (page 300). What do you believe a parent’s job is, especially in the age of social media?

The power of storytelling and narrative is prevalent throughout the book: the media have preconceived narratives, Ben buys into the worldview crafted by men’s rights activists, and Corrinne is desperate to share her story in an attempt to regain control of the narrative around her son. Police investigation is also a form of stroytelling, collectivig evidence to shape plausible scenarios for presecutors and juries. Why do stories hold so much power?

Considering everything that happened to ben, Corinne asks, ‘If only one thing were different, could that have changed everything?’ (page 359). What do you think?

Did the final twist surprise you?