

Twenty-Five Years Ago Today Reader's Guide

For more information on the book, visit <http://stacyjuba.com/blog/books-2/twenty-five-years-ago-today/>

Synopsis: For twenty-five years, Diana Ferguson's killer has gotten away with murder. When rookie obit writer and newsroom editorial assistant Kris Langley investigates the cold case of the artistic young cocktail waitress who was obsessed with Greek and Roman mythology, not only does she fall in love with Diana's sexy nephew, but she must also fight to stay off the obituary page herself.

1. Guilt over her role in her cousin Nicole's death dominates Kris in her adult life. Do you think she is being too hard on herself, or do you feel her self-punishment is deserved? In what ways does the tragedy she feels responsible for as a child affect Kris's personality? What other examples can you find in the book of characters dealing with guilt?
2. Kris feels that fate ended the lives of Diana and Nicole and that fate guided her to the microfilm. What are your thoughts on fate? How much control do you believe we all have over our destinies? Do Kris's beliefs about "fate's hit list" mesh with her intense guilt over Nicole's murder?
3. Even though they're dead when the book starts, Nicole and Diana act as catalysts for the current events. Based on the details that the author shared, how did you like each of their characters? Did they come across as real people, or could they have been fleshed out more? How effective was the flashback scene that showed Kris and Nicole walking home from school?
4. How did you like the references to Greek and Roman mythology? How much did you know about these subjects before reading this book? Why do you think Diana Ferguson identified with the Diana of myth?
5. The author draws upon her journalism background to sprinkle newspaper articles and "25 Years Ago Today" blurbs throughout the book. How did you like this technique? Did you find the segments interesting or distracting? What clues did you find?
6. Kris starts her job at the Fremont Daily News during a time of transition, in which Jacqueline will soon replace Dex at the helm of the paper. Who do you believe is the more effective leader, Dex or Jacqueline? What are each of their strengths and flaws? How does this transition at the newspaper mirror the transitional period in Kris's own life?
7. Who was your favorite character in the story? Least favorite character? Why?

8. Fremont, where the majority of *Twenty-Five Years Ago Today* takes place, is a fictional town in Massachusetts. Why do you think the author created a fictitious community rather than using a real Massachusetts town? Does it matter to you whether the setting of a book is real or fictional? Did you like that the author set a few scenes in real places, such as Boston, Cape Cod and Hyde Park, NY?

9. How do you feel about Kris's relationship with her parents? Was her relationship with her father any healthier than her relationship with her mother? Compare and contrast the mothers in the book – Kris's mother, Irene, Cheryl and Aunt Susan. Which of these characters did you like best? Least?

10. What are the similarities and differences between the two sets of sisters in the novel – Holly and Kris, and Diana and Cheryl? Did you like Holly or dislike her, and why? Did it bother you that Kris's conflict with her sister and mother wasn't neatly tied up at the end?

11. Kris tells several lies during the course of her investigation. For example, she lies to Cheryl about the reason for their first interview. What other instances can you find of Kris "fudging the truth?" Did her lying bother you, or did her good intentions make up for her mistruths? Was it ethical for Dex and Kris to go behind their coworkers' backs and publish a rewritten version of the Diana Ferguson story?

12. How did the author use setting to evoke the mood of the book? Would setting the story in the summer, rather than winter, be as effective? Why do you think the epilogue took place in May?

13. What did you think of the romance between Kris and Eric? Do you think the relationship can last?

14. What were the clues that led to the discovery of the killer's identity? Did you figure out the puzzle, or did the identity of Diana's killer come as a surprise? Did the author play fair, showing enough clues for the reader to solve the crime alongside the protagonist?

15. How plausible did you find the killer's motive? Who would you classify as the villain of the book?

16. The last line of the book indicates that maybe Pandora's Box wasn't empty after all and that maybe they had replaced the lid just in time. How has Kris changed by the end of the book? Do you think she has found her niche with journalism?