**The Dry
by Jane Harper**

**About the Book**

After getting a note demanding his presence, Federal Agent Aaron Falk arrives in his hometown for the first time in decades to attend the funeral of his best friend, Luke. Twenty years ago when Falk was accused of murder, Luke was his alibi. Falk and his father fled under a cloud of suspicion, saved from prosecution only because of Luke’s steadfast claim that the boys had been together at the time of the crime. But now more than one person knows they didn’t tell the truth back then, and Luke is dead.

Amid the worst drought in a century, Falk and the local detective question what really happened to Luke. As Falk reluctantly investigates to see if there’s more to Luke’s death than there seems to be, long-buried mysteries resurface, as do the lies that have haunted them. And Falk will find that small towns have *always*hidden big secrets.

**About the Author**:

Jane Harper's debut novel The Dry is an atmospheric thriller set in regional Australia.
The novel won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for an Unpublished Manuscript in 2015 and rights have since been sold in more than 20 territories.
The Dry was a No.1 bestseller in Australia and has been optioned for a film by Reese Witherspoon and Bruna Papandrea's production company, Pacific Standard.
Jane worked as a print journalist for 13 years both in Australia and the UK and lives in Melbourne with her family.

**If you enjoyed this book*:***

* The Woman in Cabin 10 by Ruth Ware
* The Woman in the Window by A. J. Finn
* Crimson Lake by Candice Fox
* Beartwon by Frederik Backman
* Luckiest Girl Alive by Jessica Knoll

**Discussion Questions**

1. The drought overshadows everything that happens in The Dry. In some ways it could almost be said to be a character in its own right. What is it about the drought and its effects on the town that make people less likely to question what happened to the Hadlers?

2. How does the drought color our impressions of Kiewarra, its residents, and the Australian bush throughout the novel?

3. Secrets and lies and the reasons why people keep them are the core of this novel. Luke and Gretchen both keep the secret about their whereabouts on the day Ellie died, even from Falk, but for different reasons. How does the keeping of this secret affect their relationship with each other and with Falk? How does it impact the way the truth comes out about Ellie's death?

4. Why do you think Gretchen is so reluctant to tell Falk who Lachie's real father is? Who do you think it is?

5. Jamie Sullivan's secret needlessly hinders the investigation into the Hadlers' deaths, and yet his fears about what people in a small town might do if they found out about his—and Dr. Leigh's—homosexuality are understandable. Similarly, Ellie Deacon keeps the secret of her father's abuse, with tragic consequences. What does this tell us about the nature of secrets, and the need for truth? Is it better for some secrets to be kept?

6. "Why couldn't he let her in? Why wouldn't he let her in? Did he not trust her? Or did he not love her enough?" (p. 140). Falk's adult relationships have not been what he hoped. How have the events surrounding Ellie's death and his relationship with Ellie in life affected Falk and his ability to engage with people?

7. Do you think that leaving town was the right way for Erik Falk to deal with the situation he and Aaron were facing? How did his father's doubts about him affect Aaron?

8. Luke is revealed to us as someone who had both good and not so good qualities. In spite of their long friendship, Falk cannot quite rule out that Luke might have committed the murders of his wife and son. In what ways did Luke differ from Grant Dow? What was it about Luke that made people think him capable of murder?

9. The bush, the rock tree, and the Kiewarra River are the scenes of several major events in the novel. Why do you think Aaron is drawn to these places? What does the contrast between the wild places in the novel and those tamed by human habitation show us?

10. Jane Harper has chosen to tell this story in the past tense and third person, from Aaron Falk's point of view, and with flashbacks from various characters threaded throughout. What is the effect of this? How does it shape the reader's understanding of Aaron himself, as well as of the other characters in the novel?

11. Some of the flashback scenes are shown to the reader a second time in a more expanded form as the novel progresses. What does this device show us about the reliability of the assumptions we make about the events and the characters?