FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Snapshot
Garry Disher
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"On Saturday she watched Robert have sex with four women." With this startling opening sentence, the reader follows one jolting image after another in a tale of distorted lust and twisted emotions.

Janine, an impatient and insensitive psychologist who is married to the son of the local police superintendent, finally gives in to her husband's pressure to attend a swingers' party in the small Australian town of Waterloo. At the party, she surreptitiously photographs with her cell phone four prominent men having sex with women who are not their wives. One is her husband.

Disturbingly, when Janine is killed, her seven-year-old daughter uses the same cell phone to report her mother's murder. Upon questioning the child, investigator Hal Challis locates the missing phone, and its stored photos, and suddenly Janine's husband—the son of Challis's boss—is a strong suspect.

From personal experience, Challis knows that usually "murder, manslaughter—are committed by someone known to the victim, and about five in ten are direct family members." His own wife killed herself in prison after failing to kill him.

The reader soon finds that nothing here will be black and white—for the investigation or the investigator. Challis struggles with this case and with his growing attraction to his sergeant, whose marriage is falling apart. He walks a careful line between boss and employee, investigator and suspect, as the superintendent tries to control the case and protect his son.

This story is not just about lust but also about how lust can distort, betray, and lead to insanity. The author adds secondary images and story lines that all link to and affect the main story, creating a complex yet captivating structure. For example, a string of robberies in the neighborhood leads to another death and blackmail about the photos; and a missing federal protection witness is last seen in the house where Janine's murder occurred. The case is further complicated when newspaper journalist and Challis's former lover, Tessa Kane, is endangered.

Disher has written more than forty books for adults and children; his awards and honors include a Booker Prize nomination. He first introduced Challis in *The Dragon Man*, which won the German Crime Fiction Critics Prize. When this book ends, the investigator is still not clear about who hired the killer, but the reader knows. The reader also knows that Challis will eventually know, because the killer leaves a dying message in an ironic twist) on a cell phone: "He had a few moves of his own. Dying moves. He'd barely been able to operate the keys of his mobile phone, barely able to spell it out … given that his own hands were slippery with the last of his blood.

But able enough.

From shocking beginning to shocking ending, Disher intrigues and hustles the reader with one vivid snapshot of action after another, creating a multi-layered mystery whose images linger.