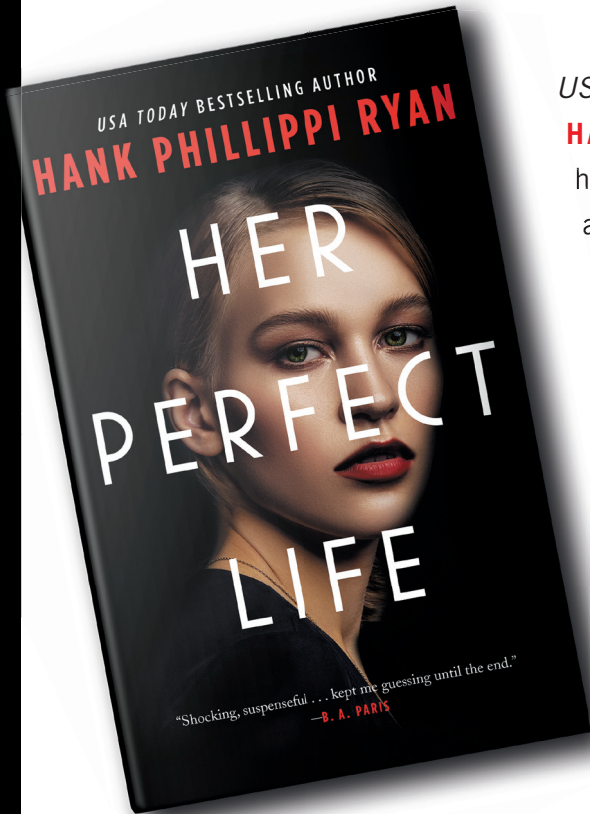


Reading Group Guide



USA Today bestselling author

HANK PHILLIPPI RYAN

has won six Agatha Awards in addition to Anthony, Macavity, Daphne du Maurier, and Mary Higgins Clark Awards. As an on-air

investigative reporter for Boston's WHDH-TV, she's won 37 Emmys and many more journalism honors. A past president of National Sisters in Crime and founder of MWA University, Ryan lives in Boston with her husband, a nationally renowned civil rights and criminal defense attorney.



1. What does Lily's quest for perfection say about her state of mind? How does her success empower her for further achievements? How does her success make her vulnerable?
2. What were your initial theories about Cassie's disappearance? How did your impressions of the characters shift as new details were revealed?
3. What was it like to read Greer's point of view? What is at the root of her occasional resentment? How do her observations differ from Lily's?
4. Lily uses story tips from the anonymous Mr. Smith to unearth her award-winning news reports. Do you think about where reporters get their information, and how they have to decide which sources to trust? Do you think Lily's desire for a good story affected her decision-making?

5. Even with Petra's help, Lily naturally experiences stress as she manages her career along with her role as a single parent. What are the best traits that she brings to motherhood? Did the loss of Cassie make her overprotective or exceptionally skilled at keeping her child safe?
6. What is special about Rowen's view of the world? How does it compare to the perceptions young Lily had when she was a little girl? What truths appear with clarity through the eyes of a child?
7. The author of the novel is an award-winning investigative reporter herself. How does this enhance the way she tells a story and the way she delivers startling yet all-too-human clues?
8. When Banning comes into Lily's life, she doesn't trust him from the very beginning. But she thinks he may have information she needs, and as a result, she takes some personal risks in order to get answers about the people she cares about. What would you have done?
9. Does Cassie's path become entwined with Jem Duggan's because she is naïve or because she is more mature than the other college freshmen in her circle (including her roommate)? Was her disappearance simply an unavoidable consequence of her fate?
10. If you were a judge deciding whether Lily should share joint custody of Rowen with Sam, how would you rule? Which factors should matter the most when determining what will be best for Rowen?
11. How did you react when the truth was revealed? What would you have done in Cassie's situation? What did you think when you learned how the detective had manipulated the young woman—and used her guilt—for his own benefit?
12. Though Lily is much younger than Cassie, she experiences a powerful bond with her big sister through memories of their shared past. What is special about relationships between sisters? Which family members played a part in your most important childhood memories?

Guide written by Amy Root Clements

