

Book Club Kit



TWISTED

A NOVEL

**MAGGIE
GILES**

Dear Reader,

Thank you for choosing Twisted for your Book Club.

Twisted follows Ryan, Mel and Brielle in a mystery that somehow ties them all together. The discovery of a new anti-anxiety medication sends a group of dedicated detectives reeling as they try to find the twisted connection.

Meanwhile, Mel, the unscrupulous leader of a less-than-legal high-end escort service, stumbles across the same medication. On top of protecting her "investment," she has her own reasons for attempting to unravel the mystery behind it.

Brielle has been lonely for as long as she can remember. Her drinking gets out of hand and an old friend returns. Could that be who's been driving the SUV she sees everywhere? She can't shake the feeling of being watched.

Reviewers have described Twisted as "suspenseful and cutting-edge" with "intrigue, action, and some really crazy twists!". I hope you'll enjoy Twisted and keep guessing until the very end!

Happy Reading!

Maggie Giles

Discussion Questions

1. Detective Ryan Boone has just had the case of his life. It's taken him on a wild ride, laying out evidence that didn't add up. He's obviously gotten invested in the crime. Did you question any of his choices when pursuing the case?
2. Did the twist about Solydextran surprise you?
3. Mental illness is a theme throughout the book. Do you feel that the women were innocent of the crimes their alters committed?
4. Blaine and Mel have a complex relationship. Did you ever question why Blaine was so dedicated to Mel and her operation?
5. What do you think happened to the women after their arrest?
6. Brielle is a very well-off heiress, yet seems to have a tragic home life, and has spent many years in and out of psychiatric care. Did you ever question her relationship with Jackie and why they may have cut ties?
7. Patsy and Brielle's connection is revealed early on, then you learn the truth about Mel and Jackie. Do you think this past played a role in their alters finding each other?
8. Were you surprised by the connection between Brennan, Lexi and Brielle?
9. Which character did you relate to the most?
10. Mel is clearly invested in her less than legal operation. Do you believe she cared about the girls in her employ or that she was only in it for the money?
11. What did you think of the ending knowing that a sequel is forthcoming? Did you feel the first mystery was wrapped up? Where do you think the next part of the story will go?

Q&A with Maggie Giles

Where did your inspiration come from for *Twisted*?

The inspiration behind *Twisted* is a funny one. Several years ago, one of my very best girlfriends concocted this idea that I write a story about the alternate personalities of our three person friend group. She was even the one who came up with the names, Jackie, Melanie and Candy. While she didn't give me the full idea, she help shape the first three characters and I built their story from there. The drug, Solydexran, didn't come in until a later draft when I realized what was happening to my characters. It was super fun to write.



© Captured by Kirsten

You like to give characters “an unexpected twist.” What’s your writing process like to ensure that this happens? Do you ever second guess yourself in these twists?

I tend to have the majority of my novels planned out before I start writing. I consider myself a hybrid of plotting (planning a novel) and pantsing (letting the words come to me as I write) because while I have a general idea of the over all plot and storyline, there are always bits and pieces throughout the writing process that come to me unexpectedly. This helps me craft more twists and turns in the novel. I’ve definitely second-guessed myself.

Where do you find the inspiration for you characters? Are they based off anyone you know?

I usually start with inspiration around me. I like to use my friends as starting points for description and style, then I pepper in the details depending on my character's need. Jackie, Mel and Candy, for example, began as a version of myself and two of my best friends. Obviously, they have changed a lot since the first draft and I find they have much less in common with us these days...

How was the title *Twisted* chosen?

I came up with the title when I honestly wasn't sure what to name the story. It had so many different things happening, that nothing I came up with seemed to fit. When I landed on *Twisted* it was like this aha moment, the perfect word and title to explain all the crazy that happened in the plot line. After all, all the evidence and the characters seemed to get twisted together in these various crimes. *Twisted* seemed like the perfect thing to call the book.

Tell us a bit more about Detective Ryan Boone. How did you come up with him as a character and what do you think of him?

I swear Ryan might be my soulmate. We do that as authors, right? Write people that we love into our work. I fell in love with Ryan the first moment I wrote him. He was kind, caring and straight to the point. He was also incredibly bland. With the help of my stellar editors, I was able to bring a bit of jovialness to his darker work. I wanted him to be someone who made awkward jokes when he didn't know what else to say and someone who, while he took his job seriously, was able to have some fun with it.

Mel is running a pretty intricate operation. What made you pick this career path for her?

I really wanted Mel to be this tough, yet caring woman. I wanted her to be ruthless, with a softer side that she keeps hidden away, even from those she loves the most. She is meant to have a tough shell and a thick armour. I thought the role of madam was perfectly encapsulated this. The idea that she got to control the situations and pick the clients, better that she could help and employ women in need. She saw it as a way to have these sometimes run down women take back their power.

"I really wanted Mel to be this tough, yet caring woman. I wanted her to be ruthless, with a softer side that she keeps hidden away, even from those she loves the most"

Can you comment on Blaine and Mel's relationship? Why did he stick around to help her and what is his role in the whole thing?

I can't say too much about Blaine and his motivation because that is really the plot behind the sequel to *Twisted*, *Wicked*. *Wicked* is set to release in October 2024 and picks up where *Twisted* ended with Blaine's story and the motivations behind his situation. Personally, Blaine is my favourite character and I was so excited to write his story. I can't wait until you get to learn more about him. Sometimes I wish he and Mel could have gotten the ending he'd always dreamed of.

For many readers the twist of Solydextran was the big WOW moment, yet it was clear Ryan knew what was happening before he revealed it to readers. Why did you choose to tell the story this way?

I wanted readers to keep guessing. Even though Ryan was pretty sure he'd solved the mysterious case, he still hadn't apprehended the suspects and couldn't be one hundred percent sure what he was looking at. Until he had them in custody, I wanted readers to follow along with his investigation and have readers wonder along side him. That said, once the suspects had run away, I started to sprinkle in the truth for readers to try and figure out!

What made you want to include a prescription medication like Solydextran?

I chose to include Solydextran for a few reasons, but one of them was the idea of, what if a drug went to market and it failed to do what it advertised? I got sucked into this idea of a conspiracy theory around the drug and its production. It ended up being a bigger story than I planned and was the starting point and the main plotline of the sequel to *Twisted*, *Wicked*. I can't wait to share more of the story with you!

Brielle is a rather tragic character. It feels like her story is very separate from the others. What inspired you to take this route?

I wanted Brielle's story to be relatable but also extreme. She comes from such a privileged world and her parents love her but their love is complicated. She is constantly ignored and when the very worst thing happened to her, it was too easy for everyone to not believe her. I constantly felt for her and wished she'd had a better support system. My goal with Brielle is to show that no matter how well off you are, without love and a proper support system, things can go terribly wrong.

"My goal with Brielle is to show that no matter how well off you are, without love and a proper support system, things can go terribly wrong."

What part of writing do you enjoy the most?

I love writing dialogue. I'm a talker (sorry for everyone who meets me in person), and I love seeing sassy dialogue come to life on a page. I have something called Aphantasia, which essentially means I am unable to visualize imagery. So description has always been a bit more of a struggle. I've also been told that dialogue is one of my strengths as a writer, so of course, I take that to heart!

Aphantasia is a unique term. What exactly is it and how does it affect your writing process?

Aphantasia is the inability to visualize. Otherwise known as image-free imagination. People with aphantasia don't create any images of familiar objects, people, or places in their mind's eye, not for thoughts, memories, or pictures of the future. We lack this visual system completely. This means that I am often a very "bare-bones" writer. My strength is dialogue and plot. The description, the things that make you visualize, I always have to add that in later. Often I am looking at pictures or listening to sounds to make sure I get the description down right.

Dirty Martini

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 ounces gin
- 1/2 ounce dry vermouth
- 1/2 ounce olive brine
- Garnish: 2 to 4 olives

Directions

1. Add the gin, vermouth and olive brine to a mixing glass filled with ice and stir until well-chilled.
2. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass.
3. Garnish with a skewer of olives.



*Dorian appeared at Mel's side with a martini in hand.
"Dirty, if I remember correctly."*

"You do." Mel took the drink from him.

Amaretto Sour

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ ounces amaretto
- ½ ounce bourbon whiskey
- 1 ounce lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon simple syrup
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- Garnish: Cocktail cherry, lemon slice



Directions:

1. Add the amaretto, bourbon, lemon juice, syrup, and bitters to a cocktail shaker without ice. Shake for 15 seconds.
2. Add the ice to the cocktail shaker. Shake again for 30 seconds.
3. Strain the drink into a glass. Add garnish if you wish.

"I'm Brielle, by the way." She sat on one of the bar stools.

He'd moved around the bar, unclicking locks then mixing a drink. She hadn't even ordered anything. When he finished, he plopped the drink down in front of her. She knew it immediately—an amaretto sour.

"I know," the man said. "You told me. I told you I was Gary."

Brielle winced as her eyes were still fixed on the drink. She reached for it and scrunched her nose as the smell of the amaretto hit her. Then she set it back down.

MEET THE MAIN CHARACTERS

Melanie Parker

Melanie's Song: Maneater by Nelly Furtado

Melanie Parker is an unscrupulous leader of a less-than-legal high-end escort service with an attitude to match it. She works closely with her associate, Blaine, to keep the girls in their employ safe and willing. Mel specializes in finding the perfect group of girls for the best kind of dirty party. She takes no bullshit and expects the same from her employees. While she has a rigid exterior, she holds a special place in her heart for all the woman who join her operation and trust her to protect them.



Detective Ryan Boone

Ryan's Song: She's a Mystery to Me by Roy Orbison

Detective Ryan Boone is a workaholic, dad-joke enthusiast, investigator extraordinaire with a tragic history. He and his partner, Brad Archer, are the crime fighting duo featured in Twisted. Brought into a convoluted crime that started around a seemingly straight-forward jewelry-heist, Ryan finds himself in the middle of a twisted conspiracy that he struggles to make sense of. Ryan is met with cocky lawyers, difficult superiors and criminals he just can't locate. As he solves one clue, another threatens to unravel the mystery entirely. He's got a good idea who did it, but how exactly can one be found guilty when the evidence doesn't add up.



Brielle Jeffries

Brielle's Song: Absolutely (Story of a Girl) by Nine Days

Meet Brielle Jeffries an ignored heiress with too much free time, an addictive personality and stalker keeping too close an eye on her. Abducted when she was only six years old, Brielle has been in and out of care centers for most of her life. Clearly traumatized and poorly cared for, Brielle has been medicated and suffered a variety of break downs. Now determined to remain free from the confines of the clinic she'd frequented, Brielle keeps the strange happenings she notices under wraps. But even without the help of her therapist, Brielle knows that something is very wrong.





Twisted Playlist

Lover I Don't Have To Love.....BETTIE SERVEERT
Pills N Potions.....NICKI MINAJ
Mysterious Ways.....U2
6 Inch (Feat. The Weeknd).....BEYONCÉ
Bloodsteam.....ED SHEERAN
You're Somebody Else.....FLORA CASH
Redbone.....CHILDISH GAMBINO
Magnets.....DISCLOSURE FT. LORDE
Ulysses.....FRANZ FERDINAND
Youngblood.....5 SECONDS OF SUMMER
She's a Mystery to Me.....ROY ORBISON
Maneater.....NELLY FURTADO
Bad at Love.....HALSEY
Absolutely (Story of a Girl).....NINE DAYS
Far From Any Road.....THE HANDSOME FAMILY
Hush Little Voices.....SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR
Working Girl.....LITTLE BOOTS
In Love With A Girl.....GAVIN DEGRAW

Playlist available on Spotify [here](#). Or scan the code below.



Twisted Word Search

C Y L I J O D V U X P M N K Z L Y E
C M W M C M N K A D L I B A E E R Y
B X Q Y G R G U L G E W L K X V Y B
C R A S B Q I H B A O T N L Q J A Y
Z I I T H R Y M O N M X E G S G N R
Q T N E N E X C E D A A A C E Q V M
Z H O R L Y I Q P P E M R T T W H U
A F P Y R L J S D N Z W F T E I T R
P T W I S T E D T C A A W C I E V D
I M P G Z P M E L A N I E R H N Y E
S O G Q T H A U R L K K C C V N I R
K C K B G W L P O E K Z P P O W F K

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden horizontal, vertical and diagonal

BRIELLE

MARTINI

PILLS

CRIME

MELANIE

RYAN

DETECTIVE

MURDER

TWISTED

HEIST

MYSTERY



***Wicked is the upcoming sequel to Twisted.
Check out a sneak peek at the first chapter below.***

1

BLAINE ROCHE

The article on the local news page of the Ottawa Citizen beckoned him, trying to draw his attention away from surveillance. Blaine drummed his fingers against the glass table in the quaint corner café, eyes darting from the headline to the front door of the office building across the road.

He'd kept an eye on the door for nearly twenty minutes now, having finished his coffee after only ten. She was taking her time today. He had been about to leave, thinking perhaps he'd missed her when the server sauntered by with a refill and the local news page.

Blaine had declined both, but the young woman didn't acknowledge him. He wasn't surprised, having spotted the two white earbuds nearly hidden beneath her messy, purple hair. The paper wouldn't have been of interest to him if not for that one little word sticking out.

Giving in to the temptation, he reached and grabbed the newspaper, flipping it flat and laying the article in front of him.

HERON MAN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH SANDY HILL MURDER

A suspect has been charged with first-degree murder after top ACE Pharmaceutical investor was found dead in Sandy Hill condo.

Police said Julie Kanner, 28, was found dead the morning of September 5 by her roommate. Rickie Hastings, 34, was arrested yesterday morning (September 9) at 11:50 a.m. Police won't say at this time how, or if, these two people are related.

The investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Ottawa Police or Crime Stoppers.

Blaine placed the paper down and reached for his phone, Googling Julie Kanner. Her LinkedIn page confirmed his suspicions. Julie wasn't just an investor; she was an employee of ACE pharmaceuticals. She had a connection to Solydextran.

He put his phone away and looked back at the article, wondering if the infamous drug would make an appearance in this case or if it was all just a terrible coincidence.

Wicked - Chapter 1 - cont.

Before he could consider it further, the office door swung open and Doctor Miranda Konch emerged from within. Abandoning his coffee and leaving a crisp bill on the table, Blaine exited the café, quickly crossed the road, and fell into step behind her. He slipped his hood over his head.

Miranda had disappeared after Blaine's girls were arrested. In fear, perhaps, though Blaine couldn't be sure. She abandoned her downtown Toronto office and vanished into the depths of Ottawa, starting a new, quiet practice in the suburb of Orléans.

Blaine had expected the doctor to come out with the truth, to reveal that she'd been paid off to distribute a new and seemingly flawless medication. In fact, Blaine had counted on it. But the good doctor surprised him. She didn't try to save herself, as she had so many times before—instead, she slipped away silently. Blaine couldn't understand why.

He'd been watching her for two weeks now, noting where she went, who she met, and who was also keeping an eye on her. It was the only way he could conceal himself under the radar.

Blaine had been desperate to confront her since the day he found out about her involvement with Solydextran, but after she went to the police, Blaine had to be careful.

Now, several months later, Blaine was sure it was safe. It didn't appear she was under police surveillance or protection, and she lived alone.

When Miranda turned off the main street for the alleyway shortcut she often took, Blaine considered nabbing her then, pulling her aside, and drilling her for all the answers he needed. But that wouldn't be discreet. He needed her to trust that he wasn't there to hurt her, despite what she'd told the police.

When they neared her apartment complex, Blaine stayed at a comfortable distance, slipping into the building behind her just as the door was closing. He followed her to the elevator. The once-paranoid doctor seemed unaware of his presence behind her as she waited for the lift, or her guard had lowered after months of nothing.

When the elevator doors slid open, Blaine followed behind her and pressed a button on the floor above hers. Blaine was careful to keep his face hidden beneath the oversized hood.

The doors opened on her floor, and she stepped out without so much as a nod in his direction. Blaine waited only a few moments and slipped out before the doors closed. She was at her apartment door now, sliding the key into the lock, then she disappeared behind the door.

Wicked - Chapter 1 - cont.

Blaine strode towards it and knocked three times. She couldn't have gone far into the unit. When the door swung open, Miranda looked around with wide eyes. When they fell on Blaine's face and registered who stood at her door, she quickly tried to close it.

"Miranda, wait," Blaine said, placing his palm on the door and holding it open. He was too strong for her to fight him off. "I just want to talk to you."

Miranda seemed to struggle for a moment longer before admitting defeat. The fear in her eyes said she didn't trust him but also conceded she couldn't stop him from entering her apartment. As Blaine slipped through the door, he saw her eye the discarded cell phone on her counter.

"I'd rather you didn't," Blaine said, putting himself between her and the phone.

"What do you want, Dr. Wright?" Miranda backed herself away from him, though the wall behind her stopped her from going too far. The way her eyes darted around the apartment told him she was considering any escape possible. Still, she didn't scream, which meant that despite being frightened, she was curious. That would work to his advantage.

"I just have some questions for you." Blaine glanced to the couches beyond the open kitchen, ignoring the formality. "I promise, I'm not here to hurt you. I just need you to tell me some things."

"I don't believe you," Miranda said. "You called me and threatened me."

Blaine frowned. He'd done no such thing. The most he'd done was keep an eye on the doctor; he'd never made contact before today.

"Then you tried to break into my house," Miranda snapped. "Why do you think I left Toronto?"

Slowly, he raised his hands. "I didn't call you and I didn't try to break in, but I think I know who did. If you could talk to me for a minute, maybe I can help you out too." He waved to the couches.

Her raised shoulders didn't lower as she cautiously stepped around him and moved to the couches. Her eyes found the phone again as she passed him by. He followed her steps, keeping the distance between them. She was an older woman, with grey hair and a frail frame. He could overpower her any day, and Blaine knew his stature didn't instill much confidence in his assertion of meaning her no harm.

Wicked - Chapter 1 - cont.

"What do you want to know?" Miranda moved to fold her hands in her lap but instead she fidgeted and threaded her fingers together.

"Were you paid off to distribute Solydextran?" Blaine asked.

For a moment, the doctor seemed taken aback by the questioning. "You want to know about the drug?"

"Yes," Blaine said. "Were you offered something to start prescribing it?"

"Yes, of course," Miranda said. "It came with a selling bonus. I was deterred at first, as it's important my clients only receive the best care, but after I refused a few weeks later, the gentleman returned with substantial results and an increased incentive."

"So, you took it," Blaine said, trying to keep the judgment from his tone. It was difficult to see past the falsified testing and understand how professionals could have classified such a new medication as effective and safe.

"I saw no reason not to," Miranda said. "I started prescribing it to my clients who showed increased anxiety and began to see substantial results."

"You treated Brielle Jeffries for many years, correct?" Blaine asked, referring to one of the women he'd taken into his care.

Miranda nodded. "Since she was a child."

"And you knew about her second personality." Blaine paused, remembering the person that had lived inside Brielle. Though he'd known the truth about her from the beginning, Blaine struggled not to find the alter, Jackie, endearing. Like Mel, he'd let her in when he should have kept them at arm's length.

Again, Miranda nodded. "Yes, she sought treatment at my facility for several years as an attempt to recover from drug use and to help quell the voice inside her."

"And did you help her?" Blaine asked though he knew that whatever aid Miranda had given failed years later when Solydextran came into the mix.

"For a time. Until Jackie surfaced again only a year after her departure."

Wicked - Chapter 1 - cont.

"You realize now why that was?" Blaine asked. He'd seen the results; he knew the consequences. It was only a matter of time before everyone else did too. He hoped.

Miranda looked away. "Look, before Brielle began on Solydextran, things were looking up and the results with the drug had been as flawless as the original testing implied. I saw no reason to not start her on it. If anything, I hoped it would alleviate some of the pressures of her home life."

Blaine didn't answer, as they both knew how poorly that turned out. Solydextran had only worked to amplify Brielle's childhood traumas and bring life to the other being that lived hidden within in her subconscious. The one Blaine had come to know.

"You said you knew who was threatening me," Miranda said.

Blaine nodded. "The same people who have been after me for years. A lot of shady shit went down when the drug came into creation, and someone is trying hard to keep it hidden."

Miranda shook her head. "What does that have to do with me?"

"You know the truth," Blaine said. "You've seen the original reports, you've seen the damage it has done, and it's already destroyed you. You have nothing left to do but come clean about Solydextran and the conspiracy around it. But you haven't. Which means you're scared and someone is keeping you scared."

"I'm scared of you," Miranda said, straightening her back as if to show her strength in the words.

"That's probably what they want," Blaine said. Fear had been their tactic in the past. If they knew he was still working against them, then it was only a matter of time before they got to the doctor or perhaps the detective. Anyone and everyone to clean up their tracks. "Tell me about the guy who brought you the drug. Do you have his contact or a card?"

Miranda shook her head. "It was years ago. I had a sales rep come into my office, he was new to the area and new to the drug trade. He was looking to break into the market with a breakthrough drug."

Blaine couldn't stop his grimace at her response. He'd hoped she would give him more to go on.

"What about names?" Blaine asked. "Do you have information on who you have provided the drug to? Others who could have suffered?"

Wicked - Chapter 1 - cont.

"That's confidential," Miranda said stiffly. "I could lose my license."

Blaine raised an eyebrow at her. "Are you really worried about that now? The best thing that can happen for you is that the truth comes out and you're far away when it does."

Miranda seemed to consider his words but didn't respond.

"I am trying to fix all of this. Solydexran should have never been created for mass distribution." Blaine shifted, remembering when he'd first discovered the forged reports and the mayhem that followed: the payoffs, the denial, the deaths. "If you give me the names of those who have used then I can trace how far and deep the damage goes. I can get closer to revealing the truth, and you may survive."

Miranda still didn't answer him, but she stood and retreated from the room. For a moment Blaine worried she'd call the police, but when she returned with a folder in hand, he forgot his concerns.

"This is what I gave the cops months ago," Miranda said. "I'm sure they looked into it, so I'm not sure what you'll be able to find."

Blaine nodded his thanks and took the folder.

"Should I be worried?" Miranda asked. "About my safety?"

Blaine hesitated. "You should be cautious. Continue to keep your profile low and I think you'll be fine. You aren't the biggest player in this, and you don't have the evidence to be a major threat to them."

For a moment, he pondered the report he'd so willingly given Detective Ryan Boone back in Toronto. It was the first officer of the law that he'd felt confident in trusting. Now, he realized his mistake as the reports stayed buried and Boone's work on the case had all but vanished.

Blaine turned and headed for the door.

"You surprised me," Miranda called after him.

Blaine stopped but didn't turn back to her. "Why, you really thought I'd hurt you?"

Wicked - Chapter 1 - cont.

"I suppose I always thought that was inevitable, considering what I'd done to someone you loved. But no, I am surprised you didn't ask about her or where she is."

Blaine looked over his shoulder at the doctor. He'd tried not to think about Mel in the months that had passed since their separation, but it had been futile.

"She isn't who I thought she was," Blaine said.

Miranda nodded. "You're right about that. But you're not who she thought you were either, are you?"

Blaine stiffened at the question and looked away from her. "You don't know what you're talking about."

"I know more than you think," Miranda said.

"Then I'd be careful to keep your mouth shut." Blaine didn't give her a chance to respond before he dashed out the door. He gripped the folder tightly as he returned to where he'd parked his car and didn't risk a look inside at the contents until he was parked at a motel outside of the city.

When he flipped it open, stuck to the list of names was a yellow post-it note. Patsy's name. The hospital where he could find her and a phone number to reach her.

Mel had been Patsy's alternate personality brought on by abuse and the use of Solydextran. Blaine met her when he'd hoped to help her through her struggles, only to fall head over heels for the woman that was Mel. After her arrest, Blaine couldn't be sure that the woman he loved still existed.

As he stared over the nine digits, his heart fluttered with hope for the first time in months. He really could hear her voice again; the only question was if he really wanted to.

Find out more in *Wicked* coming October 2024.