

Stillhouse Lake Discussion Questions

by Rachel Caine

Author Bio: (from Fantastic Fiction & Website)

Rachel Caine is a pen name of Roxanne Longstreet Conrad, an American writer of science fiction, fantasy, mystery, suspense, teen, and horror novels. Conrad also publishes media tie-in novels as Julie Fortune. Rachel Caine has been publishing novels and short stories since 1991. She is a former professional musician who has the distinction of having played with such musical legends as Henry Mancini, Peter Nero, and John Williams. She lives in north Texas with her husband, artist Cat Conrad.



She is the winner of several national awards, and most recently was a finalist in both the International Thriller Writers awards and the Killer Nashville awards for her debut thriller novel Stillhouse Lake.

Characters:

- **Gina Royal** – Housewife. Married to Melvin (Mel) Royal. Has two kids, Lily 10 and Brady (7). Comes home to find out that her husband is a serial killer.
- **Gwen Proctor** – Web designer. Was formerly Gina Royal. Has 2 kids Connor (11) and Atlanta (14). Family is in hiding due to threats and hate groups from her ex-husband's actions. Proctor is her 4th identity. Her mother lives in Rhode Island.
- **Atlanta “Lanny” Proctor** – (14) – Gwen's daughter. Formerly Lily Royal. Rebellious. In a goth phase in school.
- **Connor Proctor** – (11) – Gwen's daughter. Formerly Brady Royal. Nerdy. Likes D&D.
- **Absalom** – Hacker. Initially against Gina/Gwen but becomes her Internet defender after threats to her children become virulent. Helps build new identities, find new homes, etc.
- **Dahlia Brown** – Lanny's new female friend.
- **Sam Cade** – Gwen's neighbor. Very calm man. Former Air Force helicopter pilot. Is writing a book. Helps with repairs of the Proctor house.
- **Ezekiel “Easy” Claremont** – Old man who lives on top the hill in Stillhouse Lake. Has a bad hip and cane.
- **Officer Kezia “Kez” Claremont** – Female officer. Graham's partner. Easy Claremont's granddaughter.
- **Javier “Javi” Esparza** – Shooting range attendant. Former marine. Reserve police officer.
- **Carl Getts** – Angry and volatile man in Stillhouse Lake. Gwen encounters him at the gun range.
- **Officer Lancel “Lance” Graham** – Gwen's neighbor. Police officer. Has two sons – Kyle (14) and Lee (younger).
- **The Johansen's** – The Proctor's nearest neighbors.
- **Melvin Royal** – Killed 12 woman. Disposed of bodies in lakes. In prison in Kansas. His last victim's name was Callie.

- **Sicko Patrol** – Gwen monitors the comments and people harassing her and her children through the Internet and in newspapers. She calls monitoring the Internet trolls the Sicko patrol.
- **Stillhouse Lake** – Former gated community surrounding a lake. In Norton, Tennessee. House the Proctor's own has a safe room.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Did you like the way **Stillhouse Lake** focused, not on the serial killer, but on the repercussions to the family he left behind? How do you feel about the way the family was portrayed? Have you read any other books with a similar theme?
3. Gwen talks about Gina as if she was a different person. Do you think that is a reasonable response? Are there some events in life that are so life altering that it can culminate in a new person/personality?
4. The people on the Internet are especially virulent in their hatred of the Royal family. What is it about the Internet that makes people more belligerent/willing to express their hatred and threats?
5. Gwen is very careful when talking to her mother to not give a hint of where she and the kids are located. Do you think it is something Gwen needs to do or is she being paranoid? Why or why not? How hard do you think it is to keep that type of operational security up at all times?
6. Do you think Gwen/Gina's paranoia added to the suspense or took away from it?
7. How would your life change if you trusted no one?
8. Why do you think Gwen trusted Absalom even knowing that the people on the Internet were so hateful to her?
9. If you had a family member who committed a horrible crime, would you look it up to learn more about it? Do you think hiding the scope of the atrocities help or harm the younger member of the family? How old should a person be before they are told the truth? Is it realistic to think that teenagers would not do research on the crime away from home?
10. If you were in Gwen's situation, what would you do to help protect your kids from judgmental people IRL (in real life) and on the internet?
11. Gwen keeps a large number of guns in the house. Is she being excessive? How do you feel about her decision?
12. What do you think about why Sam was in Stillhouse Lake? Is his reasoning believable?
13. Did you figure out who the killer was before it was revealed in the book? How did you know?
14. Were you satisfied with the ending of the story? If you could change it, what would you do to make it better?
15. One of the big complaints about this book is that it ends on a cliffhanger. Do you think that statement is true? Does the story resolve itself or are you left with questions?
16. Caine has written several other books and series. Will you read any of them?

References:

- Rachel Caine -- <https://www.rachelcaine.com/>
- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/c/rachel-caine/>
- GoodReads – https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/33128934-stillhouse-lake?from_search=true
- Novelist – <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.clevnet.org/novp/detail?vid=2&sid=459d0fac-bd9d-4678-ba9b-97f2468b0e89%40pdc-v-sessmgr05&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92cC1saXZl#U=10573407&db=neh>

Rachel Caine Books

Weather Warden

1. Ill Wind (2003)
2. Heat Stroke (2004)
3. Chill Factor (2005)
4. Windfall (2005)
5. Firestorm (2006)
6. Thin Air (2007)
7. Gale Force (2008)
8. Cape Storm (2009)
9. Total Eclipse (2010)
- Shiny (2011) (in Chicks Kick Butt)

Morganville Vampires

1. Glass Houses (2006)
2. Dead Girl's Dance (2007)
3. Midnight Alley (2007)
4. Feast of Fools (2008)
5. Lord of Misrule (2008)
6. Carpe Corpus (2009)
7. Fade Out (2009)
8. Kiss of Death (2010)
9. Ghost Town (2010)
10. Bite Club (2011)
11. Last Breath (2011)
12. Black Dawn (2012)
13. Bitter Blood (2012)
14. Fall of Night (2013)
15. Daylighters (2013)
- Midnight Bites (2016)

Red Letter Days

1. Devil's Bargain (2005)
2. Devil's Due (2006)

Outcast Season

1. Undone (2008)
2. Unknown (2010)
3. Unseen (2011)
4. Unbroken (2012)

Revivalist

1. Working Stiff (2011)
2. Two Weeks Notice (2012)
3. Terminated (2013)

Great Library

1. Ink and Bone (2015)
2. Paper and Fire (2016)
3. Ash and Quill (2017)
4. Smoke and Iron (2018)
5. Sword and Pen (2019)

Stillhouse Lake

1. Stillhouse Lake (2017)
2. Killman Creek (2017)
3. Wolfhunter River (2019)
4. Bitter Falls (2020)

Honors (with Ann Aguirre)

1. Honor Among Thieves (2018)
2. Honor Bound (2019)
3. Honor Lost (2020)

If you liked **Stillhouse Lake**, try...

- [Then She was Gone](#) – Lisa Jewell
- [Into the Darkest Corner](#) – Elizabeth Haynes
- [The Woman in the Window](#) – AJ Finn
- [All the Wrong Places](#) – Joy Fielding
- [The Wife Between Us](#) – Greer Hendricks