

## The Surgeon Discussion Questions

by Tess Gerritsen

**Author Bio:** (Wikipedia & <http://www.tessgerritsen.com/bio>)

**Tess Gerritsen** was a doctor who wrote her first story while on maternity leave. Her first name is actually Terry; she decided to feminize it when she became a romance writer. She has retired from medicine to become a full time writer.



Her most popular series features homicide detective Jane Rizzoli and medical examiner Maura Isles. This series inspired the TNT television series “Rizzoli & Isles” starring Angie Harmon and Sasha Alexander.

The Surgeon received a RITA award Romance Writers of America in 2002 for Best Romantic Suspense Novel.

### Characters:

- **The Surgeon:** The name given to the Boston serial killer featured in this story.
- **Thomas Moore:** Homicide detective known as “Saint Moore” to his coworkers. In charge of the Surgeon case. Widowed; late wife’s name is Mary.
- **Jane Rizzoli:** Homicide detective. Only female on the squad.
- **Catherine Cordell:** Trauma doctor in Boston. Former rape victim from Savannah. Killed her attacker Andrew Capra.
- **Diana Sterling:** Surgeon victim #1
- **Elena Ortiz:** Surgeon victim #2.
- **Nina Peyton:** Surgeon victim #3. Survived attack. Was operated on by Cordell.
- **Andrew Capra:** Surgical intern. Rapist and serial killer in Savannah. Killed by Cordell.
- **Dorra Ciccone:** Capra’s first victim.
- **Detective Crowe:** Homicide detective. Misogynist.
- **Peter Falco:** Cordell’s surgical partner.
- **Barry Frost:** Homicide detective. Happily married. Rizzoli’s partner.
- **Herman Gwadowski:** Older hit and run victim. Cordell’s patient.
- **Warran Hoyt:** Diagnostic blood lab technician.
- **Karl Pacheco:** Raped Nina Peyton a few months previous. Shot and killed by Rizzoli.
- **Alex Polochek:** Forensic hypnotist.
- **Mark Singer:** Savannah detective in charge of the Capra/Cordell case.
- **Dr Lawrence Zucker:** Criminal psychologist.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Who is the main character in this book?
3. This story is told from a number of different characters' point of view (i.e. Moore, Cordell, Rizzoli). Did you like that story telling device? Did it help or hinder the story?
4. There are a number of vignettes written from the Surgeon's point of view. What did you think of them? Did they help or harm the story?
5. Why does the Surgeon keep referring to Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia at the beginning of the Greek-Troy war? What do you think of the other historic scenes of murder/sacrifice?
6. This book has a lot of medical jargon. Did it enhance the story or detract from it?
7. Do you believe that hypnotism can recover memories? Advantages? Disadvantages?
8. Rizzoli is the only woman in the homicide department. How does she handle it? Does her reaction help or hurt her detecting skills? What would you do in a similar situation?
9. What do you think about the relationship between Moore and Cordell? Does it help or hurt the storyline? What do you think about the way it ended?
10. Did you know who the killer was before it was revealed?
11. Hoyt claims he is sane and no different from anyone else. What do you think?
12. Who is the hero at the end of the book? Rizzoli? Cordell? Frost? Moore?
13. The Surgeon has a number of unfavorable descriptions of women (i.e. as victims, as coworkers, saying the uterus is what makes a woman a woman). Why do you think a female writer wrote about women in this manner? Does it help or hurt the book/story?
14. The Surgeon received a RITA award (Romance Writers of America) in 2002 for Best Romantic Suspense Novel. Do you think of this book as a romantic suspense novel?
15. Gerritsen has said that when she was writing The Surgeon her initial idea was to kill off Jane Rizzoli in the climatic scene, but then she changed her mind at the last minute because the character "grew on her" and had "such heart." What do you think about authors killing off main characters in books?
16. For those of you who have seen the TV show based on the Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles book series, did the TV show help or hinder your enjoyment of the novel?
17. There are 11 books in the Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles series. Will you read more books in this series? Gerritsen has a number of other books. Will you read any of those?

## References:

- Fantastic Fiction - <http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/g/tess-gerritsen/>
- Goodreads - [http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32263.The\\_Surgeon](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32263.The_Surgeon)
- Tess Gerritsen - <http://www.tessgerritsen.com/bio/>
- Wikipedia - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tess\\_Gerritsen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tess_Gerritsen)

## If you liked The Surgeon, try...

- Blindsight – Robin Cook
- Postmortem – Patricia Cornwell
- Blindsighted – Karin Slaughter
- Mutant – Peter Clement
- The Cove – Catherine Coulter

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### *Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles Series*

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. The Surgeon (2001)       | 8. The Killing Place (2010) |
| 2. The Apprentice (2002)    | 8.5 Freaks (2011)           |
| 3. The Sinner (2003)        | 9. The Silent Girl (2010)   |
| 4. Body Double (2004)       | 9.5 John Doe (2012)         |
| 5. Vanish (2005)            | 10. Last to Die (2012)      |
| 6. The Mephisto Club (2006) | 11. Die Again (2014)        |
| 7. The Keepsake (2008)      |                             |

### **Gerritsen's Stand Alone Novels**

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Adventure's Mistress (1985) | • Girl Missing (1994)    |
| • Love's Masquerade (1986)    | • Harvest (1996)         |
| • Call After Midnight (1987)  | • Life Support (1997)    |
| • Under the Knife (1990)      | • Bloodstream (1998)     |
| • Whistleblower (1992)        | • Gravity (1999)         |
| • Never Say Die (1992)        | • The Bone Garden (2007) |
| • Presumed Guilty (1993)      |                          |