

# THE PERFECT PLACE TO DIE

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### About the Book

*Stalking Jack the Ripper* meets a YA *Devil in the White City* in this terrifying story of a girl trying to save her sister from one of the most notorious mass murderers in history

When Zuretta's sister, Ruby, travels to Chicago, and disappears, Zuretta leaves home to find her. She has a little bit of money from her Utah church, an abiding fandom of the legendary Pinkertons, and a deep hope and faith in finding Ruby soon.

After a series of mishaps, she claws her way forward, taking a job in the very place her sister Ruby last worked—a hotel owned by notorious serial killer Dr. H. H. Holmes.

But Zuretta's efforts to find out what happened to her sister don't go unnoticed, and before long, she finds herself up against one of the most infamous mass murderers in American history—and his custom-built death trap.

### About the Author

**BRYCE MOORE** is the author of *The Memory Thief* and *Vodnik*. When he's not authoring, he's a librarian in Western Maine and a past president of the Maine Library Association. And when he's not up to his nose in library work, he's watching movies, playing board games, and paying ridiculous amounts of money feeding his Magic: The Gathering addiction. Check out his daily blog for writing tips, movie reviews, and general rantings over at [brycemoore.com](http://brycemoore.com)

### Praise for *The Perfect Place to Die*

★ “Fans of true-crime murder mysteries won't want to miss this one.” —*Booklist*, starred review

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### Discussion Questions

1. If you had been in Etta's shoes, what would you have done differently to try to find Ruby? What mistakes do you think she made?
2. What was it about Etta that made her able to succeed in finding Ruby's killer where so many others—including trained detectives—failed?
3. What were the most important steps for Etta in her change from who she is at the beginning of the book—nothing more than a constant victim—to who she became at the end?
4. Do you believe Ruby's ghost really appeared to Etta in her nightmares? Why or why not?
5. What do you think Etta would do next? Where will she be five years from the end of the book? Twenty years?
6. If you already knew who H. H. Holmes was and what he had done before you read the book, how did that knowledge influence how you viewed Etta?
7. This book is inspired by historical events, but veers away from history in many different ways. What other books or movies do you know that do that? What about ones that stay true to history? Which do you prefer, and why?
8. If you were going to write a book using "the hunt for H. H. Holmes" as the plotline, how would you go about doing it?
9. What role did the setting play in the book? How did it influence who Etta was and who she became?

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### *Discussion Questions continued...*

10. What role does religion play in the book? If you were to ask Etta if she still believes in God at the end of the novel, what do you think she'd say?
11. H. H. Holmes murdered possibly hundreds of people in cold blood, and yet he was still able to convince many people to trust him, right up until he was caught. Evil is often portrayed in books and film as being ugly or visibly different, but in real life, so often people will remark that truly evil people seemed "just like anyone else." What signs should the other people in the castle have looked for to be more aware of what was going on? Why didn't they see those signs?
12. What could the people around Holmes have done differently to be able to be more on guard against him? Were they at all responsible for some of the guilt for his crimes?
13. H. H. Holmes has been called "America's first serial killer." Do you think that's true? Are serial killers a fairly recent phenomenon, or do you think they've always been in society, just undetected?
14. In what ways are Holmes and Etta similar? How did those traits help Etta end up victorious?