

BOOK CLUB KIT



THIS  
WRETCHED  
VALLEY

JENNY  
KIEFER

For more information on *This Wretched Valley*, please visit [quirkbooks.com](http://quirkbooks.com). Permission to reproduce and distribute this page has been granted by the publisher, Quirk Books. All rights reserved.

# DEAR READER . . .

I am so honored that you selected my book to read! It is my debut novel, and I'm very proud of it. This book combines many loves of mine: rock climbing, unsolved mysteries, Kentucky, body horror, and more.

It started with a simple question of how I could incorporate rock climbing, something I've been doing for over a decade now, into a horror novel. I've climbed mostly in gyms, but I've also taken many trips to Red River Gorge in the Daniel Boone National Forest in central Kentucky. If you're not a climber, don't worry—no prior knowledge is needed.

The story coalesced when I started to learn about the spooky true mystery of the Dyatlov Pass incident, in which a group of hikers trekked into the mountains in early 1959 and disappeared. Come spring, these hikers were discovered in odd ways that remain a mystery, though there have been many theories, ranging from the unlikely (aliens!) to a little odd (wind blowing through the trees at a frequency that drives people to madness!) to the more likely (a partial avalanche).

Similarly, this book opens with the gruesome discovery of mangled, odd remains that both investigators and online theorists can't make sense of. Join our hikers to discover what they encountered in the Kentucky woods. But beware: not all is what it seems in *This Wretched Valley* . . . Reader, do not be fooled by the sparkling promises it makes.

Jenny Kiefer

P.S. The dog lives!

P.P.S. Brave souls can dial 502-755-6381.

# SNACK

# MENU

**Dylan, Luke, Clay, and Sylvia might have had a limited menu out in the woods, but your book club doesn't have to!**

Cheeseburger Sliders

Trail Mix

Nuts and Berries

Stuffed Mushrooms

Beef Jerky

Banana Bread

W

Listen to the *This Wretched Valley* playlist, curated by Jenny Kiefer, at <https://rb.gy/dn6mvw> or use these tracks as a starting point for your own playlist!

R

**Murder by Death** - "The Curse of Elkhart"

**Steve Lacy** - "Dark Red"

**Ron Gallo** - "Am I Demon?"

**Murder by Death** - "True Dark"

**16 Horsepower** - "Black Soul Choir"

E

**O'Death** - "Mountain Shifts"

**Timber Timbre** - "It's Only Dark"

**Murder by Death** - "Ash"

**Castanets** - "You Are the Blood"

A

**Bonnie Prince Billy** - "Trees of Hell"

**Chelsea Wolfe** - "Appalachia"

**Murder by Death** - "Go to the Light"

**Handsome Family** - "Weightless Again"

R

**Wovenhand** - "Tin Finger"

**Chelsea Wolfe** - "Dragged Out"

**Timber Timbre** - "Lonesome Hunter"

**Murder by Death** - "Pillars of Salt"

I

**For King & Country** - "Out of the Woods"

**Mountain Goats** - "No Children"

S

**The Handsome Family** - "When That Helicopter Comes"

**Murder by Death** - "Spring Break 1899"

**The Handsome Family** - "I Know You Are There"

**Emma Ruth Rundle** - "Real Big Sky"

T

**Chelsea Wolfe** - "The Waves Have Come"

**Murder by Death** - "Only Time"

**Emma Ruth Rundle** - "The Valley"

# CLIMB AND HIKE KENTUCKY

(VIRTUALLY!)



Dylan got her start climbing the Red River Gorge in Kentucky. If you want to explore some beginner's climbs from home, scan the QR code above. This resource offers climbing routes, images, reviews, and even troubleshooting tips, so you can be an expert if you decide to go out on the rocks yourself.



Wondering what it's like to hike the same areas Dylan, Luke, Clay, and Sylvia do? Check out these Kentucky hiking spots by scanning the QR code above, and explore virtually.

# DISCUSS *THIS WRETCHED VALLEY*

Review the following questions to start a conversation about *This Wretched Valley*.

1. *This Wretched Valley* is inspired by the Dyatlov Pass incident, an event in which nine experienced Soviet hikers mysteriously disappeared and died in the northern Ural Mountains in February 1959. If you are familiar with the Dyatlov Pass incident, how do you see its inspiration present in this novel?
2. Survival/wilderness horror is a popular subgenre of horror. Why do you think readers find this particular kind of story appealing?
3. Within the first few pages of the book, we quickly learn that at least three of the four main characters die in inexplicable ways. How did that knowledge affect the way you read the rest of the book?
4. What were your first impressions of each of the four main characters? Did they surprise you in any way?
5. Interspersed with the points of view of Clay, Dylan, Sylvia, and Luke are flashbacks to how the ghosts in the valley were killed. How did those scenes impact the story? How did they impact you as the reader?
6. Dylan and Clay in particular are adamant about finishing their goals even as their trip takes a harrowing turn. If you were in their shoes, would you have wanted to stay and finish what you started, or would you have trusted your gut that something was wrong?
7. From bleeding rocks to ghostly apparitions, how do you think the supernatural elements of this book captured the real-life horror of the wilderness?
8. Dylan, Luke, Clay, and Sylvia all have different reasons for going on the trip and all meet their fate in different ways. Was there any one character that you felt more sympathy for compared to the others?
9. Luke's dog, Slade, plays a big role in the beginning of the story, even after he vanishes. How did Slade's inclusion in the novel affect your reading experience? Did you believe he would survive?
10. Our four main characters die in gruesome ways. Was there one in particular that struck you as most disturbing or unpleasant to read?