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THE CHEERLEADERS by Kara Thomas **Discussion Questions**

1. What makes a great thriller? Do you have a favorite mystery trope—a commonly occurring character or plot device like “the girl next door” or “the butler did it”—that you love to read, or do you prefer to be surprised with new twists each time?
2. Red herrings, or false clues and leads designed to throw the reader off guard, are staples of any good mystery, and *THE CHEERLEADERS* has more than a few. Were you fooled? If so, which one tricked you the most?
3. Discussing her involvement with Brandon, Monica says, “I am a victim, whether or not I feel like one.” What do you think she means by this? Is there a difference between knowing you're a victim and feeling like one?
4. Do you agree with Monica’s decision about Brandon at the end of the book? Would you have done anything differently?
5. The final chapter of *THE CHEERLEADERS* introduces a new perspective to deliver the final twist of the novel. Did you like this device? Did reading from this perspective change how you felt about the character at all?
6. There isn’t really a love interest in this story. Instead, Monica and Ginny’s friendship lies at its heart. What do you think this choice says about the importance of close friendships? How could Ginny and Monica support each other in ways that a boyfriend or girlfriend might not?
7. Do you think Ginny will ever tell Monica the truth about the car accident? If not, why? Do you think Monica knows, regardless?
8. Monica struggles with blaming herself for her relationship with Brandon and everything that came after. What would you say to her, if you had the chance to help her change her mind?
9. Kara Thomas has said that she takes a lot of her writing inspiration from true crime. Do you have a favorite cold case (or true crime story) that you can't stop thinking about? What is it?
10. After reading this book, would you still be a cheerleader?