

PICADOR

Reading Group Gold

Monday, Monday

A Novel

by Elizabeth Crook

ABOUT THE BOOK

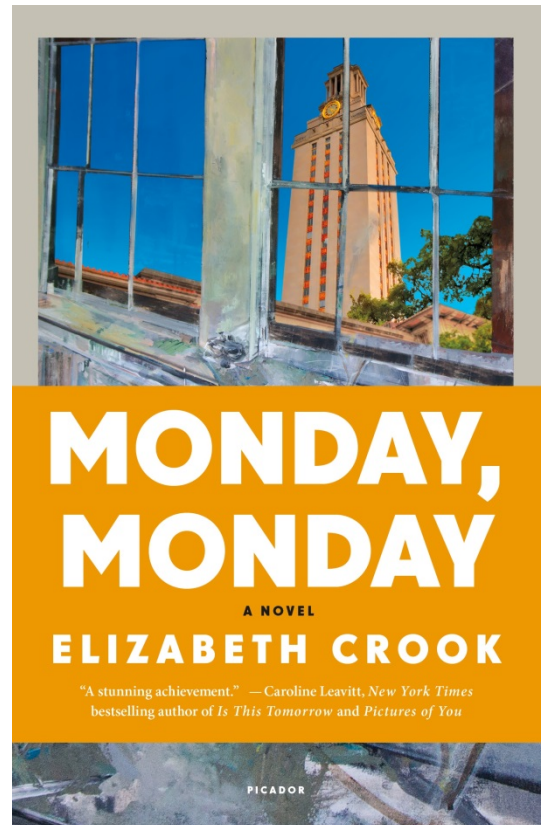
Winner of the Texas Institute of Letters' Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction, one of *Kirkus Reviews*' Best Fiction Books of the Year and a *Wall Street Journal* Favorite Book of the Year

On an oppressively hot Monday in August of 1966, a student and former marine named Charles Whitman hauled a footlocker of guns to the top of the University of Texas tower and began firing on pedestrians below. *Monday, Monday* follows three students caught up in the massacre: Shelly, who leaves class and walks directly into the path of the bullets, and two cousins, Wyatt and Jack, who heroically rush from their classrooms to help the victims.

This searing day marks the beginning of a relationship that will entangle these three young people in a forbidden love affair, an illicit pregnancy, and a vow of silence that will span forty years. Reunited decades after the tragedy, Shelly, Wyatt, and Jack will be thrown back once more to the event that changed their lives, and confronted with the lingering power of a secret none of them are ready to reveal. With *Monday, Monday*, "Elizabeth Crook has written an extraordinary novel—an eloquent love story born from an act of random violence, a tale of destruction and redemption" (Sarah Bird).

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Before reading the book did you know about the incident of the UT sniper in 1966? Do you know anyone who was personally affected by the tragedy?
2. When you hear of mass shootings in the news today, do you consider how you would react if you were there? Under what circumstances do you think you might put yourself in harm's way to help others, as Jack and Wyatt did?
3. Why do you think there was such a long span of time between the UT Tower shootings in 1966 and the tragedy at Columbine in 1999, and then, after Columbine, such a rapid escalation in school shootings?



ISBN: 9781250069221

4. Shelly and Wyatt both suffer from feelings of guilt about their love affair. Do you feel that the powerful and unique circumstance of their meeting justifies the affair, or merely explains it?
5. Are there any characters who might have been happier at the end of the story if Wyatt had initially divorced Elaine, married Shelly, and together they had raised Carlotta?
6. Was Shelly wrong to try to keep Carlotta in her life? Was the request she made of Jack and Delia a selfish one, given that she could not see how it would turn out? Would you have made the same request?
7. If you were either Jack or Delia, would you have granted that request?
8. In Carlotta's place, would you have wanted to search for your biological parents earlier than she chose to? Or perhaps not at all?
9. Which scene in the book did you find the most emotional?
10. Each character evolves dramatically in the course of the story. With whom did you most identify by the end?
11. Is there an overall theme of the book? What is the commentary on life?
12. Does the ending scene, in which Shelly goes up into the tower and reflects on the events that took place there, and on the life she has built from that moment on, seem to you sad, or uplifting?

About the Author

Elizabeth Crook is the author of three novels, *The Raven's Bride*, *Promised Lands*, and *The Night Journal*. She has written for anthologies and periodicals, including *Texas Monthly* and the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, and has served on the council of the Texas Institute of Letters. Currently, she is a member of the board of directors of the Texas Book Festival. She lives in Austin with her husband and two children.

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