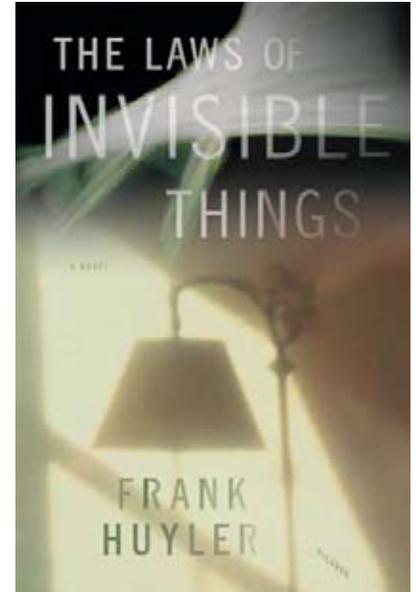




Reading Group Gold

The Laws of Invisible Things

by Frank Huyler



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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Laws of Invisible Things* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this novel. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *The Laws of Invisible Things*.

About the Book

When newly qualified doctor Michael Grant makes an error and a young girl dies unexpectedly in his care, a mysterious chain of events leads him to believe that he may have discovered an entirely new disease. Unable to convince his colleagues, he sets out to gather evidence but is quite unprepared for the direction his quest will take him—into the wilderness of disease, religion and mystery—a journey that will lead him to question not only his belief in the order of the world, but his own place and purpose within it. With real suspense and subtlety, Frank Huyler’s first novel is written with the spare precision and grace of his much praised collection about his medical experiences, *The Blood of Strangers*.

“This is no hospital horror tale, but an earnest inquiry into the ambiguities of illness and the morality of the medical profession....The intimate tone of Huyler’s elegiac voice invites us to...think again about the things we think we know.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

“A compelling, curious book with rewards on nearly every page.”—*The Economist*

“Gripping...Huyler writes such subtly forceful prose...that his novel takes on a cool, uniquely powerful sense of dread.”—*Chicago Tribune*

“[We] had better hope that our caretakers have meditated on the wisdom and compassion of books like *The Laws of Invisible Things*.”—*The Boston Globe*

“A cunning meditation on faith and its loss.”—*San Francisco Chronicle*



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“Chilling, subdued and scalpel sharp...deftly plotted, rich with psychological and ethical nuance.” —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

About the Author

Frank Huyler is an emergency physician in Albuquerque, New Mexico and the author of the essay collection *The Blood of Strangers* (Picador 0-312-42356-X).

Discussion Questions

1. What is the role of mystery in the story? How does the book differ from conventional mysteries?
2. Who is the girl running in the woods at the end of the novel? What does she represent? Why do you think the author chose to end the story in this way?
3. What is the relationship between faith and science in the book? Do they have anything in common?
4. What is the role of race in the book?
5. Is Reverend Williams a good man? Is Ronald Gass? Is Michael Grant? How does the novel deal with questions of morality?
6. Early in the novel, Michael Grant goes to the beach and sees a school of bluefish feeding on the surface. Why is this scene significant? What are its larger implications?
7. Does the story have any parallels with Christian theology? If so, what are they?
8. There are many images of mirrors in the novel. How are mirrors related to some of the larger themes of the book?
9. Late in the novel, the illness is referred to as “just another whisper in the corner, another match struck in the underworld.” What do you think the author means by this? What is the nature of the illness in the story? Is it real? Is it an allegory?
10. Ghosts appear in a number of places in the story. What purpose do they serve? What is their influence on Michael Grant?
11. In some ways the events of the story occur both in the everyday and in the underworld. Where is the cabin at the end of the book? Which world is it a part of, and why?