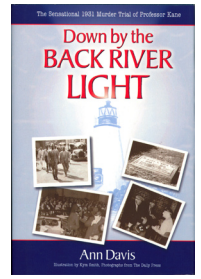


DOWN BY THE BACK RIVER LIGHT

by Ann Davis

READING GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
from www.annsdustjacket.com



1. Justice – can it be?
2. Is a person who stood trial vindicated when found not guilty? Or is it more likely they will be thought of as getting away with the crime?
3. Does our system allow a guilty person to go free because he can afford the best defense? And punish a man unfairly because he can't afford a good lawyer?
4. Can a trial be properly conducted when news people are vying for an exclusive story? Can justice be done if news people aren't there?
5. Is a highly publicized trial fair to the victim? Is it right that all the victim's idiosyncrasies be exposed in the effort to pin the blame for their death on a defendant? The prosecution often tries to prove the victim enticed the murderer – the victim wouldn't give him a divorce, or complained too much, or whatever. The prosecution must convince the jury the defendant had reason to kill. Isn't the victim being slandered by the very side that is there to right the wrong done to the victim?
6. Is it possible for the jurors to consider the defendant innocent until proven guilty? Wouldn't they be inclined to think the defendant was most likely guilty, or he wouldn't have been brought to trial?
7. For every seven executions, there is one prisoner on death row who is found to be innocent of the crime he, or she was convicted of. We say our system is better than others. That is not the way the falsely convicted feel. The ones who have been rescued from the death chamber just before their scheduled executions, might not be the only ones who were not guilty.
8. Not all of the convicted are innocent. Those who have been found guilty of murder, but later get released because of "good behavior," often kill again.
9. Perhaps an attorney who is supposed to try to get his client off no matter what he thinks of him, a prosecutor who is supposed to pin the crime on the person who was brought to trial, a jury who isn't supposed to have a clue about anything other than what the court allows them to hear and a judge who may force his own instructions on the jury... isn't quite as just as we think.