



## Karin Slaughter

**Blindsighted**  
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### The Story Behind the Book

The inspiration for *Blindsighted* came to me when a friend told me about a man who had been raping women in Buckhead, which is a suburb of Atlanta. The rapist was hiding in the bathrooms of public office buildings and attacking women as they used the restroom. That sort of violence in a seemingly safe environment is terrifying, and hearing the story made me wonder how the women working in those office buildings still managed to get up and go to their jobs every day. An office building is somewhat like a small community. They must have known some of the victims. At the very least, they knew OF them. How did they live with the fear?

I created the small town of Grant County, Georgia, to explore this theme. Grant is much like Jonesboro, Georgia, where I grew up. There is a lake and a small college, and a sense of community that comes from everybody knowing everybody else. That anonymity is lost seems a small price to pay for being able to sleep with your windows open and your front door unlocked.

What I needed next was something that would throw this safe, quiet community into turmoil. In the opening chapter of *Blindsighted*, Sibyl Adams, a professor at the college, is brutally raped and murdered. She is found by Sara Linton, the town's pediatrician and part-time coroner. Sara has lived in Grant all her life, and she feels a responsibility toward Sibyl not only because she could not save the young woman's life, but because she knows that the murderer is probably one of their own. Jeffrey Tolliver, chief of police and Sara's ex-husband, left Birmingham to get away from this type of violent crime. He thinks that working as fast as he can to solve the case will help staunch the violence flowing into town. Lena Adams, the victim's sister as well as the only female detective on the police force, feels trapped between mourning the death of her sister and proving to the all-male detective squad that she is tough enough to be one of them.

Sara, Jeffrey and Lena trade the narrative of the story, and through them, we get to see how different their reactions are to what is happening to their town. Central to the characters is what the death of Sibyl Adams cost them: Sara's sense of safety, Jeffrey's complacency, and Lena's loss of the only person with whom she connected. In the end, the question becomes not how they will conquer their fears, but how they will learn to live with them.