

**\* An Indie Next Pick and HarperCollins Fall 2021 Lead Read \***

# ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS

by Wanda M. Morris

On Sale: November 2, 2021

William Morrow | Trade Paperback Original | 9780063082465 | \$16.99

**Named a “Most Anticipated” read by AARP, Boston Globe, Los Angeles Times, Essence, CrimeReads, She Reads, and more!**

---

“[A] Tense and propulsive thriller... a page-turning tale dripping with suspense and intrigue.” —*Boston Globe*

“A fresh perspective on the legal thriller.” —*Los Angeles Times*

“Strong debut... John Grisham fans will be pleased.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“In her debut thriller, corporate attorney Morris deftly combines a creepy Nazi-esque sect with a murderous plot and rounds out the intrigue with a striking commentary on racism, sexual assault, and misogyny.” —*Library Journal*

“Morris builds an escalating thriller plot packed with convincing details about corporate politics and skullduggery. She also provides a knowledgeable portrait of Atlanta’s complex social structure... Corporate competition is not only racist and sexist, but deadly in this confident debut thriller.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“*All Her Little Secrets* is a brilliantly nuanced but powerhouse exploration of race, the legal system, and the crushing pressure of keeping secrets. Morris brings a vibrant and welcome new voice to the thriller space.”

—Karin Slaughter, *New York Times* and international bestselling author

“It’s hard to know just how far you might go to protect yourself *and* your secrets...but it’s remarkably easy to get swept up into this razor-sharp workplace thriller. At times deeply disturbing and all the while gripping, *All Her Little Secrets* is a refreshing whodunnit that will keep you guessing—and second-guessing—from start to finish.”

—Zakiya Harris, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Other Black Girl*

“Wanda M. Morris hits all the right notes in *All Her Little Secrets*, a taut, sleek thriller that’s also a searing story about the secrets we can never manage to leave behind. A stunning debut.” —Alafair Burke, *New York Times* bestselling author

“Wanda M. Morris’ *All Her Little Secrets* heralds the arrival of a new and necessary voice in thrillers. This debut is at turns heart-pounding and heart-breaking.”

—Lori Rader-Day, *Mary Higgins Clark Award*-winning author of *Under a Dark Sky*

---

## ***Everyone has something to hide...***

William Morrow is thrilled to publish **ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS** by **Wanda M. Morris** on November 2—a tour de force #OWNVoices debut (William Morrow; Paperback; ISBN: 9780063082465; \$16.99). In this fast-paced thriller, a Black lawyer finds herself caught in a dangerous conspiracy after the sudden death of her boss. Reminiscent of Shonda Rhimes’ *How to Get Away with Murder* and John Grisham’s *The Firm*, this novel is perfect for fans of Attica Locke, Alyssa Cole, Harlan Coben, and Celeste Ng.

In **ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS**, Ellice Littlejohn seemingly has it all: an Ivy League law degree, a well-paying job as a corporate attorney in midtown Atlanta, great friends, and a “for fun” relationship with a rich, charming executive—her white boss, Michael. But everything changes one cold January morning when Ellice goes to meet Michael in his office and finds him dead with a gunshot to his head.

And then she walks away like nothing happened. Ellice has been keeping a cache of dark secrets, including a small-town past and a kid brother who has spent time on the other side of the law. She can't be thrust into the spotlight—*again*. But instead of grieving this tragedy, the company moves forward without a hiccup, and Ellice, the company's lone Black attorney, is immediately promoted to replace Michael. While the opportunity is a dream-come-true, Ellice just can't shake the feeling that something is off, especially as the police start investigating Michael's death.

When Ellice uncovers shady dealings inside the company, she is trapped in an impossible ethical and moral dilemma. Suddenly, Ellice's past and present lives collide as she launches into a pulse-pounding race to protect the brother she tried to save years ago and stop a conspiracy far more sinister than she could have ever imagined...

Wanda Morris is perfectly poised to craft this novel. She previously served as President of the Georgia Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel and as the Chair of the Women's Initiative for female lawyers. She still is a practicing lawyer and holds memberships within the American and Georgia State Bar Associations.

Inspired by her years working as an attorney for top companies and law firms, Wanda has created a brilliantly layered mystery that brings the thrills while also addressing racism, sexism, the dynamics of family and other timely issues in past and present America. This story puts a distinct spotlight on Black women, focusing on unique experiences in the workplace and beyond. By splitting the timeline between the modern day and the 1970s and 80s, Wanda puts an emphasis on the lack of meaningful progression.

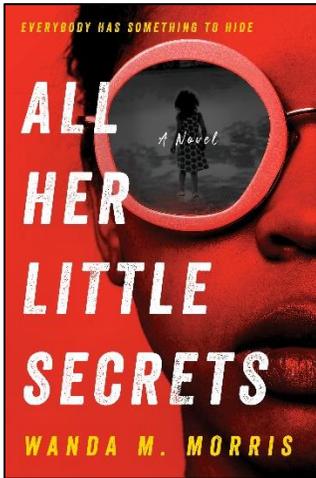
Wanda Morris was chosen as one of *Publisher Weekly's* Fall 2021 "Writers to Watch" and was featured on the cover of *Library Journal's* August 2021 issue. With razor-sharp writing and authentic yet complex characters, **ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS** is a stunning and exceptional debut. Readers who enjoyed *The Other Black Girl* and *When No One is Watching* will devour this page-turner.

### Talking Points for ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS

In an interview, Wanda can discuss the following themes/topics:

- **Current issues of racism, sexism, and more in America:** ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS addresses topics such as racism and microaggressions, sexism, abuse, and many other issues. It highlights how women—women of color, in particular—go through extraordinary lengths to prove their relevance and have a "seat at the table." Wanda can speak to the importance of incorporating these themes into her novel.
- **"Family" in the workplace:** Companies sometimes refer to the company culture/work environment as a "family." Wanda can dissect the toxicity of office politics and why the imagery of "family" is often misleading.
- **"New" South vs. the "Old" South:** ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS is set in Atlanta, Georgia and compares the idea of the "new" South to the "old" South. Wanda can speak to the lack of a significance difference between the two, and how little has changed for people of color, particularly in the workplace and in access to opportunity.
- **Utilizing her law background to help shape the story:** Wanda is a corporate attorney who has worked in the legal departments for several top Fortune 100 companies and can explain how her background in law helped craft ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS.
- **Advocating for POC & women:** Wanda is a strong advocate for empowering women and communities of color. While serving as Board President for the Atlanta Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, she founded the Women's Initiative, an empowerment program for in-house female lawyers. While working as Vice President for Business Diversity for Amtrak, she established programs and initiatives for the hiring, inclusion, and promotion of women, other-abled, and people of color. Wanda can speak to her experience advocating for these communities, and why her novel is a continuation of her advocacy.
- **Ageism/society's emphasis on being "accomplished" at a young age:** It took Wanda 13 years to write ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS, a story centered on a Black woman in her 40s who had lived long enough to be jaded but not so long that she had decided to give up. Society places emphasis on success in our youth and forgetting there is wisdom in the journey; but unless you are an extraordinary individual, wisdom comes through trial and error, loss and redemption, defeat and getting up to fight again.





#### **ABOUT THE BOOK:**

##### **ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS**

William Morrow | On sale: 11/2/2021

Trade Paperback | ISBN: 9780063082465 | \$16.99

Available in E-book | E-book ISBN: 9780063082472

Available in audiobook | Audiobook ISBN: 9780063082489



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

**Wanda M. Morris** is a corporate attorney who has worked in the legal departments for several Fortune 100 companies. An accomplished presenter and leader, Morris has previously served as President of the Georgia Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel and is the founder of its Women's Initiative, an empowerment program for female in-house lawyers. An alumna of the Yale Writers Workshop and Robert McKee's Story Seminar, she is a member of Sisters in Crime, Mystery Writers of America, and Crime Writers of Color. Morris is married, the mother of three, and lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

Learn more at [wandamorriswrites.com](http://wandamorriswrites.com) or follow Morris on social media:

Instagram: [@wandamowrites](https://www.instagram.com/wandamowrites)

Twitter: [@WandaMo14](https://twitter.com/WandaMo14)

---

### **Additional Praise for ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS:**

"Race, secrets, and the love of family are on a collision course in Morris's brilliant debut. Her protagonist, Ellice Littlejohn, is complicated and flawed in the best possible ways. I could have followed her for another 300 pages! Morris is a dynamic, essential new voice in fiction—one you don't want to miss."

—**Nancy Johnson, author of *The Kindest Lie***

"*All Her Little Secrets* is a truly remarkable debut—an expertly paced thriller with terrific twists, as well as depth, heart and conscience...not to mention the smart, complicated Ellice Littlejohn, a protagonist who kept me turning pages well into the night."

—**Alison Gaylin, USA Today bestselling author of *The Collective***

"*All Her Little Secrets* is teeming with passion, family, power, history, and heartbreak—it will provoke you, haunt you, and inspire you. Wanda M. Morris is the consummate storyteller, filling this riveting, relentless page-turner with her powerhouse talent and shattering insight... Morris has created an instant classic. Stop everything and read this."

—**Hank Phillippi Ryan, USA Today bestselling author of *Her Perfect Life***

"*All Her Little Secrets* by Wanda M. Morris is a terrific, timely thriller you won't be able to put down. I devoured this story faster than a plate of chicken and dumplings and the deeply satisfying conclusion made me cheer out loud!"

— **Hannah Mary McKinnon, internationally bestselling author of *Sister Dear* and *You Will Remember Me***

"Talk about toxic work environments... A thriller with a heart, this novel had me turning pages late at night. It's a fast-paced journey into the haunting secrets we keep and the lengths we'll go to protect our family—even at the expense of ourselves."

—**Tara Laskowski, Agatha Award-winning author of *One Night Gone* and *The Mother Next Door***

"A heartbreaking, heart-bursting page-turner of a book! Wanda Morris's debut is a refreshing read -- both entertaining and wise."

—**Rachel Howzell Hall, Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist for *And Now She's Gone***

"Secrets have a way of coming to light. The deadlier the secret, the higher the price it exacts. In *All Her Little Secrets*, the trap tightens deftly around Ellice Littlejohn, boxing her in, cutting off all means of escape, and you'll want to be there for every well-written, tension-filled minute of it. Buckle up. It's a wild ride. If this is Morris's debut, I cannot wait for her follow-up. Brava!"

—**Tracy Clark, Sue Grafton Memorial Award-winning author of the Cass Raines Chicago Mystery Series**

*"All Her Little Secrets* is a stunning Atlanta thriller, pulling us into a mind-bending mystery in the executive suite of a corporation with questionable ethics. Perfect for fans of Alyssa Cole and *How to Get Away With Murder*, this book deftly carves out a new space on the shelf as surely as its conflicted, finely-wrought protagonist makes a space for herself on the twentieth floor. Wanda M. Morris is an unforgettable new voice, and we've only seen the beginning!"

—Wendy Heard, author of *Too Pretty to Burn* and *Hunting Annabelle*

"Tense, taut, and relentlessly suspenseful, Wanda Morris's riproaring debut *All Her Little Secrets* delivers full-throttle twists reminiscent of *The Firm* with the winning characters and nuanced social justice commentary of an Attica Locke. A paranoid thriller with a wrenching family drama at its heart, *All Her Little Secrets* plumbs the depths of American racism and greed as it asks whether one woman, however righteous, can outrun her—or our country's—past. Wanda Morris is the sharpest new voice in thrillers today."

—Amy Gentry, bestselling author of *Bad Habits* and *Good as Gone*

---

## A Conversation with Wanda M. Morris, author of ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS

**Q: What inspired you to write ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS?**

**WM:** There were a couple things that inspired me to write this book. First, my own lived experiences working in toxic offices that underestimated the value that women and people of color can bring to the workplace. Also, I once worked for an organization where company management considered its employees "family." Someone in my department died unexpectedly. There was nothing sinister about the death, but I was mortified by how quickly everyone went back to normal after the person died. That incident stayed with me for a long time and served as the motivating idea for the theme of family that I explored in the book—specifically, who do we call family and why?

**Q: The story primarily takes places in Atlanta, Georgia. What's the significance of the setting? How does setting play a role in the overall themes of the book?**

**WM:** I've always been intrigued by the fact that this city was once the epicenter of the Confederacy's military operations and also the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement. To this day, you can still find landmarks and monuments of both eras standing throughout the city. Atlanta has a Black population of over 50% and there are still places called Dixie Hills and Plantation Drive as well as John Lewis Parkway. There are statues of Confederate soldiers right down the street from buildings like the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once preached. I thought the city of Atlanta, with all its dichotomies, would provide the perfect backdrop for a Black woman's story of survival and perseverance in the "new South."

But I also think you can find Ellice Littlejohn's story anywhere in America. A story about strong women who are underestimated can be found throughout this country.

**Q: You were a corporate attorney who has worked in the legal departments for many top Fortune 100 companies—how did you utilize your background in law to shape this story?**

**WM:** Being a Black female lawyer in corporate America, particularly in the executive suite, is not always an easy road and I think my experiences helped me shape the story and bring authenticity to Ellice's characterization. I tapped into my experiences of sitting in meetings and getting dismissed for an idea I suggested that a man repeats verbatim five minutes later and is praised for, or times I was marginalized simply because I was born Black and female. Also, I know how in-house legal departments work, the demands on its employees, the budgetary constraints and liberties as well as knowing where the "bodies can be buried" so to speak.

**Q: What is your writing/research process? Do you come up with the plot first? And were you ever surprised by where the story took you?**

**WM:** For me, it all starts when a character and/or scenes come to me. I build the plot around those characters and scenes. Like many writers, I like to explore the question, "what would happen if ...?" For *All Her Little Secrets*, I always knew what the opening scene in the executive suite would be, along with a pivotal scene that occurs in the middle of the book. And through an incalculable number of revisions of this book, those two scenes never changed. I draft a loose outline of the plot, but I don't always know how the book will end and I like that feeling of writing toward an unknown conclusion.

As for surprises, I am always surprised by the capacity of where my characters can take the story. When I opened up Ellice's backstory, I was enthralled by her character and I knew immediately, this is what Black female strength looks like.

**Q: You are a big advocate for women, and while serving as President of the Georgia Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel founded its Women's Initiative, an empowerment program for female in-house lawyers. ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS features a strong, black female lead. Can you speak about why depicting strong, yet complex women is important to you, and why you choose to do it in the context of a thriller?**

**WM:** I love the fast pace of the thriller genre. I've also been an advocate for women and people of color for my entire legal career. Why not combine them both? I've worked as a vice president for diversity for an organization. In that role, I oversaw a myriad of initiatives including hiring and promoting people of color and other-abled employees. I also supervised supplier diversity and internal investigations into complaints of discrimination. While serving as the President of the Atlanta Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, I founded the Women's Initiative, a mentoring and empowerment program for female lawyers working inside corporations. In my capacity as a corporate employment lawyer, I've helped to resolve a multitude of claims to ensure a fair and equitable workplace. I think I've been fighting some sort of fight for the disenfranchised for the bulk of my legal career.

Personally, I feel a responsibility to pay back all the women before me like my mother, my grandmothers and every other woman who was oppressed and marginalized but still got up each day and worked hard so that I can enjoy a life they never knew was possible for them. And if we're smart and stay the progress we've made so far, my daughter and granddaughters won't see a return to those days of our female ancestors. Read the book and you'll know what I'm talking about!

**Q: ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS addresses topics such as racism and microaggressions, sexism, abuse, and many other issues. What were you hoping to accomplish by addressing such difficult themes?**

**WM:** When I set out to write *All Her Little Secrets*, I wanted to write about one woman's experience living a dual life of sorts – that of a successful professional woman and that of a Black woman in America. Ellice Littlejohn's experiences are an amalgam of what many women experience in the workplace and in their everyday lives. Think about it. You are the only woman working in a predominantly white male space and your colleagues despise you simply because of your race and/or gender and place obstacles in your way at every turn. Or imagine you are a fourteen-year-old girl living in bleak poverty and abuse with just one shot at escape, but systems of oppression threaten to block that shot. What would you do?

I wrapped the mystery of the story in a legal setting to heighten the threat of the ethical dilemma Ellice faces. However, Ellice's story could be the story of any woman who has ever felt unseen, marginalized or gaslighted. I've heard some reviewers compare the book to John Grisham's *The Firm* as a pulse-pounding legal thriller. That is an incredibly wonderful compliment. But I'd like people to know that I didn't set out to write legal stories. I want to write women's stories.

**Q: This book is a thriller, but at the heart, it is a story of family, love, loss and resilience. Can you speak to the importance of including these ideas into the overall plot?**

**WM:** That's a great question and leads me to believe you understood exactly what I was trying to accomplish with this book. While *All Her Little Secrets* is a thriller, it is also a story of love, loss, resilience, and hope. Ellice and her brother, Sam, are caught in this horrific situation while growing up, but they each take a different path of escape. I wanted to show that despite coming from a terribly devastating environment, there is still an opportunity to succeed. But it requires giving everyone an equal shot at opportunity. Sam didn't get that and because of it, he became caught up in a legal system that would set the course for his life. Ellice always felt some responsibility for creating Sam's problems. But Sam eventually comes to realize that there is a better path for him despite his past mistakes. Ellice's deep and abiding love for Sam never wavered.

**Q: How do you see Ellice? Is she a victim before she becomes the hero of her own story?**

**WM:** I think Ellice was always a hero—she just didn't know it. Think of how she devises a plan to escape poverty and protect her brother in the process. It might not have been a plan that you or I would have chosen, but a fourteen-year-old who decides she will not take the abuse anymore and does something about it is a hero. Even though she elicited some help, this was always her plan, a plan to save herself and protect her little brother. I think a lot of women are a lot stronger than they realize. For many of us, it's a matter of tapping into that strength regardless of what others may tell you or how they try to define you.

**Q: What do you hope readers will take away from ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS?**

**WM:** I hope readers will get a fresh take on what a thriller book can look like, and the unique perspective Black female writers can bring to this genre.

Personally, I've always enjoyed books by other thriller authors like John Grisham and Joseph Finder, but I couldn't find many books like theirs on the shelves with female protagonists who looked like me. Black women should be able to see themselves in all kinds of books, including thrillers with smart, sophisticated Black women speeding through traffic or chasing down bad guys through dark office towers at night without a gun or an ounce of regret!