



These Things Hidden

Heather Gudenkauf

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When teenager Allison Glenn is sent to prison for a heinous crime, she leaves behind her reputation as Linden Falls' golden girl forever. Her parents deny the existence of their once-perfect child. Her former friends exult her downfall. Her sister, Brynn, faces whispered rumors every day in the hallways of their small Iowa high school. It's Brynn--shy, quiet Brynn--who carries the burden of what really happened that night. All she wants is to forget Allison and the past that haunts her. But then Allison is released to a halfway house, and is more determined than ever to speak with her estranged sister. Now their legacy of secrets is focused on one little boy. And if the truth is revealed, the consequences will be unimaginable for the adoptive mother who loves him, the girl who tried to protect him and the two sisters who hold the key to all that is hidden

These Things Hidden Details

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From Reader Review These Things Hidden for online ebook

Casey Hays says

I must admit, there were things I liked about the book, but more things I didn't. The author was able to paint some images in my head with her descriptions, and that worked. Some of those images I will not be able to erase. Every once in awhile, she said something profound and beautifully-written that made me sigh in satisfaction, but these were few and far between.

Many things bothered me about the book. Christopher was too vague. Grandma was too vague. I couldn't figure out the relationship Brynn and Allison had with their parents. Some of the things Allison feared her mom would do if she found out about the birth of the baby didn't seem to line up with the woman I believed the author had painted. Their parents seemed like people who would do anything to make sure Allison looked like the perfect daughter who would never make a mistake. So why would she fear that her mother would want to keep the baby for herself? Or have Allison raise it? It seems that her mom would have done everything she could to get things back to normal as if a baby had never been born. So Allison's reasoning there made no sense to me. I also didn't understand why they erased Brynn out of their lives. Why? They knew nothing of her involvement. This excuse that she just couldn't be the perfect daughter once they lost their precious Allison didn't quite vibe with me.

Brynn really made no sense. The author did a good job of portraying that Brynn had issues with depression; that she often drowned herself in alcohol and medication to overcome that depression; that she tried to kill herself right after the baby died, but we are with Brynn... in first person... for quite a bit of the story. And yet she never shows any signs of mental illness that would cause her to commit the heinous act in the bathtub. We are with her, inside her head, and we don't see it coming? We never even see her visiting her doctor, or having mental breakdowns or conversations that are incoherent until near the end. Instead, her doctor is only vaguely mentioned a couple of times. If Brynn was that messed up, we should have seen it. So the ending to her saga was very disappointing.

And something is clearly wrong with Joshua. Is he autistic? I didn't quite get his tantrums. I mean, there is no way he could have suffered some traumatic episode before he was adopted that he could have even remotely remembered. He was only three weeks old when he came to live with Claire and Jonathan. Nobody remembers anything from that young age. But that is the feeling I got--that we were supposed to believe his hardship before adoption had somehow tainted him. It just didn't work for me. I didn't fall in love with Joshua like every woman in this book seemed to because he didn't tug on my heartstrings like he should have. He just seemed spoiled, and everyone tried to walk on eggshells around him like they were afraid he would break if they did or said the wrong thing. It was all very weird.

Most of the main characters weren't fully fleshed out, and that always bothers me. Jonathan was too vague. He flitted in and out of the story with no real substance, although he was supposed to be important. Claire was very one-sided; wrapped up in fertility and adoption and the fear of losing another child. We don't know anything else about her. She didn't strike me as real. Joshua is five years old and she's still dwelling on the past. It was strange. The women at the halfway house were so underdeveloped that even Olene and Bea came off as superficial when they were supposed to be the voices of reason for Allison. They had one meaningful conversation, or maybe two. But I felt no connection between the women and Allison. I did not feel the ambiance of the halfway house like I wanted to, either. I wanted to see more of what Allison's life was like there. I would have liked to see scenes where she interacted more with the women. This was her home, after all, for the entire book.

The story was rushed, especially at the end--to the point that it began to feel like we were watching flash scenes rather than smoothly making our way through a good story. The action was so fast in certain parts. Dinner with Charm's mother didn't impress me. Charm was there, then she was gone in six pages flat. I wanted meat in that chapter. I wanted to see motives behind her mother. Her mom was again, a disappointment as far as character development. There were things I could see about her very well, and I thought "this character has potential." But then it was gone. She is a character I would have run with. The villainess is the most enjoyable character to create, and she was as close to a villainess as one got in this novel.

SPOILERS BELOW:

I think if the author had slowed her pace a bit and really allowed us time to get to know Christopher, for example-- to see the relationship between him and Allison blossom into love-- then I would have felt more of a connection to Joshua. I would have seen the Allison that the author merely told us about, but never let us meet. The scene with Allison and Brynn delivering that baby would have been moving in a different and personal kind of way. The author spent a lot of time telling us about Allison and what she was like before the pregnancy, but we didn't really know her, so it was hard to connect with who she was now.

All in all, this book had a lot of potential, and I really did like the first half better than the second. I was disappointed when it all became predictable, and then unreasonable. And my one question still is how in the world does a thin, 17-year old girl hide the fact that she's having twins? It's just not realistic. One baby, maybe. Twins? Hmm... Not sure that could be pulled off as easily.

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

This won't be a long review. I can't find enough words to say about this drawn-out book. I suffered to the halfway point with this book, bored to tears wondering what the point of it all was.

Not all books are thrilling page turners but both the plot and the characters fell flat in this for me in this one completely. It's put me off her other books although I know she has her fans and many loved this too.

It failed to capture raw emotion that should have been there in this story and in a nutshell I found it tedious and gave up halfway through.

Next.... Moving on.

You can check out my reviews at:

<https://www.facebook.com/BookloverCat...>

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

DNF at 46%, read the last 4 chapters.

To show how utterly stupid this book is (trying to be discreet in case someone wants to read this but sorry if there are slight spoilers): an extremely sporty and active teenager somehow hides a pregnancy with twins and gives birth with a family member helping. Instead of, I don't know, using birth control in the first place or perhaps checking out an abortion, she goes through with THE ENTIRE pregnancy and chuck one baby into the water to die. Because THAT is preferable to an abortion.

Also to be found: The Mom, the woman whose entire life is defined solely by the fact she wants a baby. Somehow also owns a bookstore, even though her every POV is about her adopted son. (Also feels that being a foster parent is just holding a child until the biological parent is responsible enough based on ONE experience.)

The good daughter whose flighty Mom is just terrible (she has had more than one boyfriend!) and whose 50-year old step-Dad is described as if he's 100.

(view spoiler)

Lifetime TV garbage. Should not have kept this one from all the cullings.

Full Review:

Allison used to be the Golden Girl in high school, constantly busy with sports and keeping up her perfect grades. But she did something that sent her to jail; now, at 21/22, 5 years later, she is free and ready for redemption.

Joining Allison along are her sister, Brynn, bookstore owner and mother of Joshua, Claire (but really, the latter one is the most important one to Claire), and nursing student, Charm. How do these women all relate to one another? Well, it depends on how much Lifetime moves you've watched to how easy it will be for you to guess this one.

I'm kinda mad, more at myself, because this is a book that passed through several moves and cullings, ended up being purchased as a Kindle Daily Deal, and at the end of the day, was NOT worth me keeping nor reading for reasons we are about to dive straight into.

Reasons Why I Should Never Have Kept This Book:

1) This isn't a mystery; it's a Lifetime movie. The book blurb reads as a mystery, but that's hardly what it is. It's a schlocky, cheesy Lifetime movie. Mysterious pregnancies. Abandoned babies. Women who are grouped as either whores or virgins. Women whose lives revolve around children to the point where every one of their POVs are about their babies. Stereotypes, caricatures, and cliches from your favorite Hallmark schlock fest appear in here - including the person dying from cancer! YIPPEE!

2) None of the women have a unique voice. It's a good thing every POV change has the character's name because otherwise, I'd never be able to distinguish Allison from Brynn from Charm from Claire.

3) (view spoiler)

4) The way the women act towards Allison at the halfway house is bullying and abusive - and Olene DOES

NOTHING. Her advice is, "Suck it up, bitch, it'll go away." WTF!!!! How in the hell is this place court-mandated with behavior like that?!

5) (view spoiler)

6) Once again, we have an adult male taking advantage of an underage girl. Christopher is 22, Allison was 16. Yes, in many states/countries that is legal age of consent, but if you don't think there is a power dynamic going on, you are very naive.

7) Claire believes that foster parenting is only taking care of a child until his/her parents are ready to take the kids back - based on one experience. Um, no. In many cases, foster parenting is the best/only way to adopt a child!

8) (view spoiler)

9) Based on what Allison did and who she was/came from, how did more people (such as Claire) NOT know about her or her sister? They live in a small town and her actions would have been HUGE! Some people (such as the horrid women in the halfway house) know, while others (most of Brynn's classmates) don't.

And just to round out to 10:

10) How is it legally possible for Charm to live with Gus when he is not her biological father nor did he adopt her? I know Charm's mom is bad because *GASP* she has more than one boyfriend, but I don't see how her mom would have been totes okay with Gus parenting Charm full time.

I guess I was just also so floored at how mediocre and overly complicated this book was. The writing was bleh, the characters were bleh, the story tried too hard to have Meaning and be Deep and have a Moral. These are all things I hate in reading. I don't mind a moral, but don't preach to me. Make characters more complex than, "I want a baby at any and all cost!" or consistent (Allison's parents are just so bizarre and then there's the small town that doesn't recognize the release of what would have been a mega-media frenzy story). I mentally kick myself for keeping this book, but also applaud myself for pulling the plug. It wasn't worth my time, I wouldn't have suddenly loved it and so I leave with this review.

Maybe you will not be as annoyed with the aspects I found annoying and good for you! Read what you enjoy, enjoy what you read. I'll do the same and move on to the next book.

Carole says

This is a must read. I LOVED this book! I couldn't put it down and I was just speechless upon completion.

I was surprised at so many points while reading These Things Hidden and that doesn't happen often for me when reading a book. The author did an incredible job of slowly revealing secrets, piece by piece, and from various points of view.

My heart broke for many of the characters. I truly felt for them all, although my feelings changed toward the end and I had the deepest compassion for one of the characters. Just couldn't believe it...

Tania says

This was a nice easy-reading book, and although I thought I figured out the ending quite early on, I was wrong. The reason it only gets a three star rating from me, is that I never felt that much empathy with any of the characters. If you want to try a book by the author, which was brilliant and reminded me a lot of Jodi Picoult's writing, I highly recommend One Breath Away

The story: When her sister Allison, convicted of a heinous crime, is released from prison to a halfway house and is desperate to speak with her, Brynn, unable to forget the past that haunts her, must keep the truth from being revealed due to unimaginable consequences

Farfished9 says

Got this book for some mindless entertainment...To me, that's just what it was. It wasn't good...it wasn't bad...Won't tell you what it is about because you can read any other review or the book's jacket for that...

It's like...you know...when you're flipping through the channels on the tellie and there is nada on...and you settle on some lifetime movie or something that's already been on for however long (who cares anyway?) just because you're tired of flipping and you know you can just keep flipping at any moment if ya want--no gain, no loss...just...ehhhh whaaaatever...You might keep watching for the heck of it...it's the same old story you've heard a dozen times...the same cliches...same characters that don't need any figuring out...the ones you could care less about...More than anything you notice something like--Hey, I have those running shoes...

and you'll follow just enough to keep your eyes open a little longer...'cause...well, yeah--there's nothing else on and you need the TV noise to lull you to sleep...That's this book.

?Susan? says

A tragic mystery that slowly reveals it self like peeling an onion. In the beginning I thought I had a handle on what was going on in the lives of the three young girls at the center of the story. Wrong... Needless to say, there are twists and turns that make you keep changing your feelings toward each character.

Choices and fate seem to run along in the same lane for two sisters, an innocent bystander and a very lonely couple. The characters were believable and the narration was very good. This is not a feel good book and includes some very graphic situations.

Shannon says

Trying to come up with words is almost impossible. I read The Weight of Silence quite awhile ago but I still think about it and talk about it. This one will be the same. I read different genres and enjoy them all, but I love fiction that could easily be fact.

Allison's character was one of the biggest reasons why I enjoyed this book so much. Throughout the book I wanted to hate her, but something told me to be patient. It's rare that there is a character I hate to love, it's usually the other way around.

There were twists and surprises that caught me a little off guard, which I appreciate. I tend to figure things out quickly and that can be disappointing. I was on my toes throughout and that is another reason why this book will be memorable for me.

Again I will be thinking and talking about this story. I was recommending it before I even got fifty pages. Heather Gudenkauf has easily become one of my favorite authors.

Suzanne Barrett says

Heather Gudenkauf's second novel deals with a difficult subject: murder. Told in first and third person by a quartet of female protagonists, it opens with Allison Glenn, the main protagonist who is getting out of prison after serving half of a ten-year sentence. Her lawyer, Devin, escorts her to a halfway house run by pragmatic-but tender-hearted Oleta. Allison wants desperately to put the past behind her and start anew but finds obstacles at every turn. Her sister, once a confidant, won't answer the letters she's written; her parents want nothing to do with her, and it seems her reputation has preceded her because the other house residents taunt her with cruel notes and even more graphic reminders.

Younger sister, Brynn, has struggled to get on with her life, but she has never measured up to the perfect older sister, the straight A student and athletic champion on a fast track to a stellar career as an attorney. In fact, Brynn finds getting on in school following her sister's imprisonment so traumatic that she tries to overdose on sleeping pills and is sent packing to her grandmother's. She's not the scholar her sister was, but she seeks a career working with companion animals.

Claire Kelby runs a bookshop. With husband Jonathan, the infertile couple have adopted a baby boy five years earlier—an infant abandoned at their local fire station. Joshua is a special little boy, loving, but with social issues. Attending kindergarten is a hard task for him, made even more difficult when the bookstore is robbed and his adoptive mother injured.

Charm Tullia, just twenty years old, lives with her stepfather Gus, a retired fireman in the final stages of lung cancer. Charm cares deeply for Gus while juggling a nurses' training course at the local college and working part-time for Claire at the bookshop. Charm's mother is a love-em-and-leave-em woman living with one of a long succession of men, and her brother disappeared years ago. Gus is Charm's family and she nurtures him as best she can.

Ms. Gudenkauf's story switches viewpoints between all four women. Each character has a voice and both good and bad traits that make them real to the reader. I identified less with Brynn, because she seemed the least capable of dealing with issues. The other three are strong, even in their weaknesses. Ms. Gudenkauf has a wonderful way of humanizing each of them to the point that I felt compelled to read on past my bedtime to see what would happen next. The connection of the women is best left to the reader to discover.

Even when you unravel all the threads, the ending will surprise you. This is a skillfully crafted story with many threads, all neatly woven into an exciting and dramatic conclusion. Ms. Gudenkauf's present tense third person use is highly effective in this tale of loss and redemption.

I look for more powerful stories from this clearly qualified new author.

Jennifer says

These Things Hidden is all about secrets. As the story progresses, the past is revealed piece by piece. The story falls into place easily while offering shocking things, long hidden, yet never expected.

The book is written in alternating viewpoints between four different women all linked in some way to a little boy named Joshua. Each woman wants to ensure Joshua is safe and taken care of, even if they have different ideas and motives driving them.

The book begins with Allison being released from prison. She committed an unforgivable crime, the nature of which we don't learn until later in the book. Every bit of Allison's past is revealed at the perfect moment. Her story is traumatically heart-wrenching and you can't help but feel for her while at the same time hating her actions.

The story is scarily realistic for the world we live in today. Bad choices ruin lives. Good choices can just as easily take their toll. Love for family and the secrets we keep can lead down a road we aren't prepared to travel. These Things Hidden is a moving, beautifully written, absolutely compelling novel you won't want to miss.

David says

Why was this on my TBR list? I must have read some review that made it sound interesting, and so I picked it at random at the library. At least I didn't pay money for it.

This is a book about secrets and babies and mommy-love and bad parents and crazy.

Perfect college-bound athlete Allison gets knocked up by a summer fling, manages to keep this secret from her parents, because they are caricatures of Bad and Superficial Parenting, and when she gives birth, with her flaky sister Brynn present, she ends up throwing her newborn baby into an ice-cold river to drown. The police find the infant's body, and Allison spends five years in prison before being released to a town that now hates her and parents and a sister that will have nothing to do with her. Though somehow hardly anyone in the small town recognizes the notorious baby-killing popular girl five years later.

Yeah, right, like I totally believe this golden girl actually chucked her baby in a river. The author tries to play cagey with what really happened, but I could see the "Big Reveal" by the end of chapter two. I never made it past the first third of the book, but skimming other reviews, I can see that I was right.

I can deal with a story about babies and mommy-love and teen secrets and so on, if it's actually suspenseful or well-written or has some twist that isn't branded Jodi Picoult or Oprah. *These Things Hidden* is pure breathless angst about baaaaayybeeeezez.

The point where I gave up because I couldn't stand the Oxygen Network voice anymore was the second chapter dealing with the B plot, a Perfect Couple (in contrast to Allison and Brynn's shitty parents) who tried and failed to conceive, then had to give up an adopted child to a birth mother who changed her mind. Oh woe

and heartbreak! Then perfect, cherubic, beatific perfect little bright-eyed lovely perfect (did I mention perfect?) Joshua came into their lives, and thus I endured two solid chapters of flowing saccharine mommy-love and angst and cooing about wee precious little fingerprints and gods just shoot me now I could not take any more.

The POV characters in this book are either angst teen girl or angst mommy. The plot was obviously heading straight into Jodi Picoult territory, with a dramatic and improbable twist that nonetheless anyone can see coming. I'm sorry, maybe one star is unfair because I'm just not the target audience and this was a **did-not-finish**, but honestly, it wasn't very well written, plot contrivances were already striking me as silly, and it's so very girly-girly that I had to go fondle some power tools and scratch inappropriately to erase the breathless histrionic narrator's voice from my head.

Li'l Owl says

"Her heart is pounding, fearful of what they're going to find when they reach the top."

Audiobook

These Things Hidden by Heather Gudenkauf, narrated by Angela Goethals.

Allison -

Perfect, seventeen year old Allison Glynn. Smart. Straight A student. Competitive athlete. Pretty. Everything her parents want her to be. Her life is all mapped out ahead of her. Finish highschool then on to an Ivy league college, study to be a lawyer, work at a top law firm. For all her accomplishments what Allison doesn't have is happiness, love or affection. She's never known any of it growing up so she doesn't know what she's missing. Until...

Then, she meets 22 year old Christopher. Completely smitten, Allison finally feels happy, finally understands what it's like to give and receive affection and love. Something she's never experienced before. Ever. And she's soaking it up as much and as fast as she can.

She's spending every second she can with Christopher. Even as her grades fall, sports suffer, and teachers begin asking questions, she can't let anyone find out about her boyfriend. Not even her younger sister, Brynn, whom she is closest to. Especially not her parents, though they are so selfish and self-centered, they don't even notice something's amiss.

Then, Allison gets pregnant and her carefully planned out life is in danger of unraveling completely. No one must find out. Her first mistake is thinking she can get through it unscathed, without anyone discovering the truth. Then she makes her second mistake. A horrible, unforgivable, heinous mistake. Now she's in prison for ten years and her whole life is in ruins. Forever.

Brynn -

With her older sister in prison and labeled as a monster, a baby killer, Brynn takes the brunt of the abuse. As she walks the halls of her highschool she can't miss the whispers, the taunts, the cruelty that's relentlessly dolled out on her by the other students. Wanting nothing to do with her sister ever again, Brynn escapes to her grandmother's house. The only place she finds love and support. Despite the love from her grandmother Brynn falls into a deep depression. Now, after surviving a suicide attempt, she's seeing a counselor, on medication, and is beginning to put her life back together.

For five years Brynn and Allison have been trying to leave the mistakes from the past behind them. Slowly,

piece by piece, they're starting over, putting their lives back together, moving forward to a new and better future.

Then, Allison is released from prison.

Allison wants desperately to talk to Brynn, maybe become friends again. But Brynn wants nothing to do with Allison. But Allison prevails. Of course she does. She's always gotten what she wants after all. Now everything both girls have worked so hard for threaten to come crumbling down around them. All over again. It's starting all over again.

I love Heather Gudenkauf!

She has such a talented gift of drawing you in, like a moth to a flame, enveloping you like a blanket, in rapt anticipation, allowing you to *feel* the weight of emotion deep within your mind and soul!

I think my friend, Crumb, said it best; "Her writing is beautiful, 'wonderful, lyrical way with words."

I've read one novel and have listened to three *audiobooks of hers, including this one, and have been enthralled with every one!

The *audiobook Little Mercies, narrated by Kate Rudd & Tanya Eby Sirois was my favorite but this is only a few heartbeats behind.!

Author Heather Gudenkauf & narrator Angela Goethals made me feel as if I was there, in living color, in the same space, breathing the same air.

"Her heart is pounding, fearful of what their going to find when they reach the top."

My heart galloping double time, my breath ragged, terrified of what is waiting for them at the top of the stairs!

Yet, I can't stop listening!

If I were watching a movie I'd have my hands covering my eyes, peeking through narrow slits between my fingers!

These Things Hidden is a must read for Heather Gudenkauf fans and anyone who loves a powerful, heart thudding, breath holding, psychological suspense thriller that will shake you to your core!

Narrator Angela Goethals gets a full 5★'s from me! The whole kit and caboodle!

I Loved every minute!!

Sharon says

Allison Glenn has just been released from prison after serving five years for a terrible crime. Before Allison was sent to prison, she and her sister, Brynn were very close, but that all ended the night Allison was sent away as Brynn wanted nothing more to do with her sister. If dealing with what happened that night wasn't enough, Brynn also had to deal with kids staring and whispering behind her back. It was all becoming too much for Brynn, so her parents sent her to live with her grandmother where she could complete her schooling.

Brynn has tried to forget about what happened to her sister five years ago, but now that her sister was out of prison, she knew all too well that it was about to haunt her all over again.

These Things Hidden was a brilliant read and I found it difficult to put down. I found it to be fast paced, absorbing and emotional. A definite must read, in my opinion. Highly recommended.

Lisa says

All i can say is i absolutely recommend this book to all my lady friends you wont be disappointed this made me have mixed emotions Characters were dealing with real situations we all deal with every day will be reading more of this Author

Kaceey - Traveling Sister says

This book has been collecting dust on my shelf for far too long.

Like a dental appointment, I kept putting it off, not sure why. Now I am sorry I waited so long for such a great read.

Upon release from prison for a devastating crime, Allison attempts to reunite with her family and get her life back on track. This book unfolds from several points of view. Each character telling their own intriguing story, until the inevitable collision in the end. Love that!!

Really enjoyed this book. Will definitely read more from this author!

Erin says

A contemporary family drama narrated by four different women-Allison, her sister Brynn, nursing student Charm, and bookseller Claire. At first, I was thinking "Yikes, quite a number of characters for a short book." But quite quickly the connection between the four women becomes clear. I won't say too much about the plot because it was quite easy to figure out, it is perhaps the ending that is most surprising(tragic too).

Myrna says

Another great book by Heather Gudenkauf. She's quickly becoming one of my top authors. *These Things Hidden* felt very real, builds suspense and includes sympathetic characters. A page-turner for sure! 4.5 stars!

Becky says

This is another Audible gem. They were having a "Buy One, Get One" sale, and *These Things Hidden* was my "Get One" book, chosen on a whim. But for that sale, I probably never would have read this. (I've been

kind of unofficially avoiding YA lately, being sick of the love triangles and the YAPNR and the blah blah blah.) But had I missed this one, it would have been a shame, because this book is fantastic.

I almost don't want to talk about the plot of the story at all, because I'm afraid of ruining it. The way this is written, from four different perspectives, is perfect, and the story evolves in just the right way, at just the right pace. Each chapter reveals just a little more about what happened to land Allison in prison, and each chapter reveals just a little bit more about how one mistake in an otherwise perfect life can cause ever widening effect ripples in Allison's life, and her family's and community's lives.

At the point when the crime was revealed, I was shocked and dismayed. Not only for the nature of the crime, but for how early in the story the revelation came. I remember thinking, "Oh no... This is too early! The rest of the story is going to flop now that there's nothing left to wonder about."

I was so wrong.

Not only did those ripples keep widening and showing us more of the story of That Night, but the story was so compelling, so heartbreakingly honest that I couldn't stop listening. I had to know what happened, and what would happen next.

This is a relevant and gut-wrenching story about mistakes and their consequences, about decisions we make, and how they affect us and everyone around us. It's a story of second chances, responsibility, and how sometimes things go horribly, horribly wrong just when we think that everything is going perfectly, but that life goes on anyway.

I feel like this is a book that needs to be read and re-read to really feel the full impact. My perceptions of the characters in the story kept shifting constantly, like mercury, but I never felt manipulated, which is the mark of a great writer, in my opinion. For an author to move me around like a chess piece but make me believe it's the board moving rather than my feet, they've made themselves a fan. This girl, right here.

If I had anything to complain about, it was that the readers sometimes sounded a little stiff and choppy, but I'm not holding that against the book, because almost as soon as I'd notice the reader, she'd be gone again and I'd be drowning in the story.

This book may not be for everyone, but for me, it was just what I didn't know I needed to pull me out of a summer long reading slump. This book reminded me why I love reading, and why sometimes the best things show up when we least expect them.

TL says

Confession: I saw this on the shelf at work a couple years ago and thought it sounded interesting. Put it on my paperbackswap list and forgot about until I got the notification my request came in. Was in a bit of funk yesterday and grabbed this off my shelves on a whim, hoping it would bring me out of it. Didn't read reviews of it before I started, just plunged in.

It reminded me of 'Reconstructing Amelia' and 'Girl on the train' (both I loved) in the fact that the suspense and characters are well done and the story is told by multiple narrators.

Like those, this one draws you in slowly and feeds you the answers bit by bit. At one point, I actually guessed right part of the story but it didn't bother me. I had a feeling though that the whole picture hadn't been painted quite yet.

Gus, Charm's step-father touched my heart... such a good man. Charm I warmed up to, doing her best to take care of him and go to nursing school. Claire and Jonathan were sweethearts, Allison I didn't warm up to till later in the story.

Joshua... that kid was adorable! How can your heart not melt for him?:)

Each of these people is surrounded in a web of secrets and know only pieces of the puzzle. You can feel the web closing in on everyone as the story goes on, even if some of the players don't quite know why.

Sometimes the dialogue was a bit stiff but the I never lost interest or wanted to throw the book at the wall. This one sucked me in from the start and made it hard for me to put down. (I even forgot to eat haha and only stopped to grab a snack when I felt dizzy).

The ending with (view spoiler) Wow, that final piece clicking into place... what happened with this person wasn't a surprise I guess and who knows if it could have been prevented? I didn't feel sad exactly but not pity either... if that makes sense.

I'm not sure what to say here, it's a well crafted tale though and I would recommend it :). I don't know about it being for fans of 'gone girl' (that one wasn't for me) but if you loved the two books I mentioned at the beginning of my review and 'dangerous girls' by abigail haas this'll probably be right up your alley.

Happy reading!

3.5-4 stars

Limonessa says

I have been debating whether to give this book one or two stars for a while now but, in all honesty, I did not like this book. I wanted to like this book, I struggled to get to the end to see if there was some redeeming last minute revelation but, alas, it never came.

The story rotates around 4 women, - Allison, an ex convict, Brynn, her sister, Charm, a nurse to-be and Claire, a bookshop owner - a little boy and a terrible secret that seems to connect them all. I didn't see the terrible secret. Not because it wasn't terrible but because it didn't seem that much of a secret to me. I know this novel was meant to address the issue of newborn children abandonment and promote Safe Haven program but I honestly think it could have been dealt much better in a pamphlet. Or something.

This is what I'd call a book of stereotypes.

All characters are so cut out from some pre-printed cliché that this book gives a whole new nuance to the meaning bi-dimensional. As in made of paper. All characters are pushed to the excess, all black and white with no shades of grey. This is so not realistic. Allison is the monster who is secretly a saint, Brynn is the psycho, Claire is Perfect Mom, Charm is just plain St. Charm, Gus is the dying martyr. Charm's mother is the Bad mother and even Allison and Brynn's parents come out like "the source of all evil". This is less feasible than Urban Fantasy, for god's sake. Other characters like Christopher and the girl's Grandma are so barely

sketched and superficially introduced that I didn't even understand their reason for being in the book.

Aside from the stereotyping factor, there were some major inconsistencies in the book that had me in brow furrowing mode repeatedly.(view spoiler)

Furthermore, stylistically, the alternating 1st/3rd person POV didn't work for me. I'm not referring to the difficulty of keeping track of who was telling what because that was made pretty clear by the heading of each chapter. I'm referring to the continuous 1st/3rd person switching. First of all.... WHY? Why tell all Allison and Brynn's parts in 1st person and Claire and Charm's in 3rd? Was there some recondite meaning I totally didn't get? Second, it didn't work. The 1st person parts were ok but the 3rd person parts were awful, flat, devoid of personality.... pretty much like the characters. It was like reading a bad newspaper article.

Finally, this book was just not for me. There was too much drama, too many people with issues crammed together in a single space, their greek drama was all over the place. Actually, it just dawned on me that, in a way, they all had their kind of psychosis going on. Even Perfect Mom.
