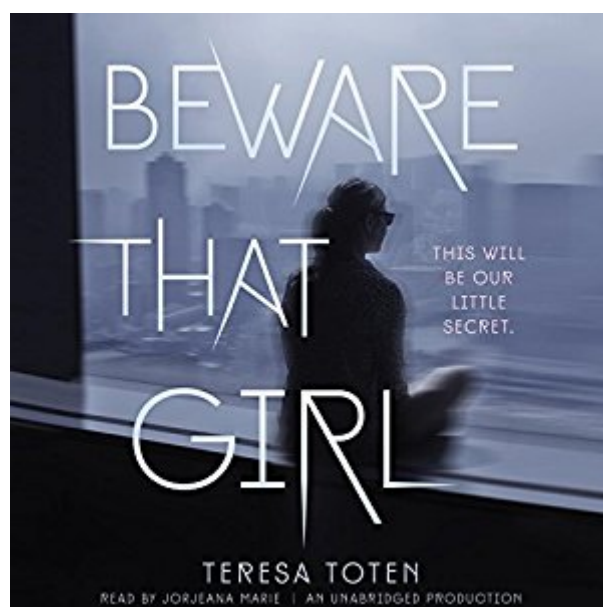


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Beware That Girl



Synopsis

For fans of *We Were Liars*, *The Girl on the Train*, and *Gone Girl*, this powerful psychological thriller with multiple mysteries is set against the backdrop of the megawealthy elite of New York City. Tóten delves into the mesmerizing yet dysfunctional world of those who manipulate but seem ever so charming. With its gripping pace and Hitchcockian twists, *Beware That Girl* will keep listeners guessing until the very last minute. The Haves. The Have-Nots. Kate O'Brien appears to be a Have-Not. Her whole life has been a series of setbacks she's had to snake her way out of - some more sinister than others. But she's determined to change that. She's book smart. She's street-smart. Oh, and she's also a masterful liar. As the scholarship student at the Waverly School in NYC, Kate has her work cut out for her: Her plan is to climb the social ladder and land a spot at Yale. She's already found her "people" among the senior class "it" girls - specifically in the cosseted, megawealthy, yet deeply damaged Olivia Sumner. As for Olivia, she considers Kate the best friend she's always needed, the sister she never had. When the handsome and whip-smart Mark Redkin joins the Waverly administration, he immediately charms his way into the faculty's and students' lives - becoming especially close to Olivia, a fact she's intent on keeping to herself. It becomes increasingly obvious that Redkin poses a threat to Kate, too, in a way she can't reveal - and can't afford to ignore. How close can Kate and Olivia get to Mark without having to share their dark pasts?

Book Information

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Suspense #432 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Friendship

Customer Reviews

GRADE: A-ONE WORD: creepy (not scary creepy, psychologically creepy)Once upon a midnight dreary,while I pondered weak and wearyBEWARE THAT GIRL evokes the same chills I experience whenever I hear the first lines of Poe's The Raven. Although the stories are in no way similar, Teresa Toten's latest YA novel is that creepy good.Two damaged girls, the wealthy Olivia, returning for her senior year after an extended psychiatric hospitalization and scholarship student Kate, a self professed liar (and possibly worse) are a perfect storm of a dysfunctional friendship that can only end in tragedy. Add a creepy teacher/fundraiser and you've got a recipe for disaster.Told in Kate's first person POV and Olivia's third person, BEWARE THAT GIRL begins with one girl hospitalized, the other holding vigil and a cop with questions about the teacher. But which girl? And to which girl does the title refer?Toten pulled me in and didn't let go with her luscious prose. Can an admitted liar be a reliable narrator? I didn't know. Certainly Kate appeared sincere in her calculating, manipulative plans to achieve the prize, admission to Yale via a friendship with the fragile Olivia. I couldn't help to like and cheer for this unapologetic character. The cracks in her stoic facade and that she genuinely cared for Olivia made her rootable.I never got a true sense of Olivia until the last 10% of the story, but for the ending to work, that was planned. Do wish Toten had given more of each girl's psychiatric history, other than snippets and Olivia's brief report in the beginning. Seeing Kate's, even at the end would have been interesting. My favorite minor characters were Anka and Mrs Chen, and I also wish they had been more fleshed out.Although the plot was implausible, I was still drawn into the story and often felt as if the story could have been possible, due to Toten's writing. The end felt a bit rushed and confusing, which prevented me from giving BEWARE THAT GIRL five stars.This isn't a novel for everyone, judging by the reviews. I wasn't even certain I'd like it based on some of my favorite reviewers' lackluster comments. I'm going to reread BEWARE THAT GIRL this weekend, after I finish an ARC and I only reread books I truly enjoyed.

Beware That Girl is a YA psychological thriller by Teresa Toten. Kate O'Connell is a girl with a past. When we first meet Kate, she's living in a hovel, but preparing to start her senior year at Waverly, a Manhattan girls' school. Kate is confident, and Kate has aspirations for greatness. Part of Kate's plan involves befriending Olivia Sumner, a former elite girl who is now only a fragile shell of what she used to be.It seems clear that Kate plans to use Olivia to further her own agenda, but that's not quite what's happening at all. As Kate becomes comfortable moving in Olivia's circle, there is a dangerous new staff member whose obsession with the girls might ruin everything Kate has worked so hard to achieve.The story alternates between Kate and Olivia's points of view, and it was an interesting choice to have

Kate's story told from a first person viewpoint, and Olivia's in third person. The most obvious choice is that Toten wants to remind us that Kate is someone who makes things happen, and Olivia is someone that things happen to. The villain of the piece is something else. Mark Redkin is Christian Grey, except that instead of being the protagonist of a romance novel (we're using that classification so loosely), he is the antagonist of a thriller. Mark's mannerisms and predilections were over the top, as was the eventual confrontation with him. I did enjoy reading *Beware That Girl*, although I think it doesn't really transcend beyond the target audience and fans of the genre. I would recommend this for older YA readers and fans of the genre. I'm looking forward to reading more from Teresa Toten. I received a copy of this book from Netgalley/the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Teresa Toten's *BEWARE THAT GIRL* is a cleverly conceived YA thriller about two teenage girls, apparent opposites, who become entangled with a psychopathic predator. Scholarship student Kate is a self-described consummate liar "she's a skilled con artist who has used her manipulative talents to worm her way into a posh prep school which she hopes will pave the way for a full ride at Yale. Olivia, on the other hand, is super rich with a penthouse apartment, unlimited funds, and a future paved in gold. Both girls are blond and beautiful "of course! And Kate sets out to con Olivia, who she masterfully manipulates into becoming her BFF and inviting her to live in her gorgeous penthouse. The thing is, both Kate and Olivia have secrets, so it isn't really clear which of the two is actually the one referred to in the title. Their relationship is all very interesting (reminiscent of the two women in the Bridget Fonda film *Single White Female*), but the central plot strains credulity and detracts from what could have been a masterful psychological thriller. This central plot revolves around 34-year-old Mark Redkin, an administrator at the girls' private school. He's gorgeous and sexy and "he exude[s] raw masculinity." When he begins working with Kate, Olivia, and three of their friends on a fundraising project for the school, things get creepy. Is Mark really as charming as he seems, or is something much darker going on? Olivia is crazy about him; Kate, not so much. And what ultimately happens between the three of them becomes so ludicrous that I kept asking myself, "Why did he/she do that?" Over and over again. There is a twist in the final chapter, one I predicted from early on, but that twist is obscured by the ridiculously frenzied denouement that comes before. Things happen that make no sense. And things don't happen that clearly should have. I can't say much more without giving things away "and for this novel to work, its secrets need to remain hidden. What I liked best about this novel is the relationship

between Kate and Mrs. Chen, a quirky Chinese woman who owns a market in Chinatown. Kate works for Mrs. Chen and lives in her basement “ at least until Olivia invites her to move into that fabulous penthouse. Mrs. Chen is gruff and dismissive at times, and Kate is convinced she hates her. But it’s pretty clear Mrs. Chen is Kate’s biggest fan, and she’s also the one who sees the truth before anyone else does. A big part of this book is about the difference between the “ (like Olivia) and the “ (like Kate), and for a long time Kate just wants what Olivia has. Gradually, she does come to see that Mrs. Chen and her very down-to-earth world in Chinatown are more real and more meaningful than anything money can buy. Not that it matters much by the end of this novel, but it is the one part I will most clearly remember. Ultimately, this could have been a really fabulous thriller about the twisted relationship between two teenage girls. But the Lifetime movie-of-the-week ending gets in the way. This is being marketed to the 14-and-up crowd, but be forewarned that the subject matter is more adult “ and more edgy “ than is found in most YA novels. There is no explicit language or graphic sexual content, but disturbing things definitely happen. I’d give it five stars for the first half, and two for the second half. Overall, three seems fair.

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