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A Line In The Dark



Synopsis

“Mesmerizing.” —Kirkus, starred review. The line between best friend and something more is a line always crossed in the dark. Jess Wong is Angie Redmond’s best friend. And that’s the most important thing, even if Angie can’t see how Jess truly feels. Being the girl no one quite notices is OK with Jess anyway. If nobody notices her, she’s free to watch everyone else. But when Angie begins to fall for Margot Adams, a girl from the nearby boarding school, Jess can see it coming a mile away. Suddenly her powers of observation are more a curse than a gift. As Angie drags Jess further into Margot’s circle, Jess discovers more than her friend’s growing crush. Secrets and cruelty lie just beneath the carefree surface of this world of wealth and privilege, and when they come out, Jess knows Angie won’t be able to handle the consequences. When the inevitable darkness finally descends, Angie will need her best friend.

“It doesn’t even matter that she probably doesn’t understand how much she means to me. It’s purer this way. She can take whatever she wants from me, whenever she wants it, because I’m her best friend.”

A Line in the Dark is a story of love, loyalty, and murder.

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Customer Reviews

A Line in the Dark is a dark, lyrical thriller that held me rapt from the first page. This is a brilliantly paced novel, dripping with suspense that features characters that are wonderfully complex and real. This psychological thriller features a truly memorable love triangle and delivers on a surprise ending that I didn't see coming. Jessica and Angie are best friends, and perhaps something more. When Angie draws the attention of the beautiful and rich Margot, Jess's world explodes and she is forced to examine her true feelings for Angie. She struggles with her own self image, and with finding a path for herself independent of her parent's expectations. Margot's privileged world collides with Angie and Jessica's world of public school and part time jobs with disastrous results. It's a story that's incredibly compelling and dark that will resonate with older teen and adult readers. This novel exhibits a dark lyricism that is rare in YA fiction. The writing is simply superb. The brilliant combination of class issues, coming of age, developing sexuality and the nature of love and friendship make this a must read and an enthusiastic recommend.

Jessica Wong is a high-school girl in love with her best friend. She is shy and her parents--especially her mom, who is kind of a tiger mother--don't really get her. Isn't she lucky she has her friend Angie? When Angie starts going out with Margot, she expects Jess to be happy for her. Margot is a rich kid from a local private school. Their drama--Jess, Angie and Margot's--is reflected in the comic book art that Jess draws and writes. I thought Jess's comic book art and story were the most interesting part of the book. I liked Jess a lot. The other characters are more difficult. Angie sort of knows how Jess feels, yet she thinks Jess should just be happy for her when she flaunts her new relationship with Margot. Jess had more patience with her than I did. There seemed like there was a dark side to Margot, but it isn't really explained--there are rumors. There are rumors about Ryan, too (Margot's friend) which are more substantiated. I was a little disappointed in the ending. It seemed like it was trying to end in a good twist but it didn't quite get there. On the other hand, the author is really good with description and Jess is a very sympathetic character. I read it quickly, in gulps, until the end.

I loved everything about this book except for two things. 1. The switch up between first and third person. 2. The ending. Okay so the switch up really bugged me. I liked being in Jess' head and I felt like it gave the book a stronger voice hearing from Jess. When things switched I lost the personal

connection and it felt a bit cold. I don't quite know why the author chose to switch it up, but it didn't work for me. The ending really bothered me. It didn't make any sense as far as actual time line goes. I have read books with great misdirection, but the author did not do a good job with this one. The facts were laid out throughout the story and we actually got to read them first hand for the most part so when the author decided to throw everything to the wind things didn't add up. Plus I can't figure out why a certain person would do what she did. Like I said the ending didn't make sense. Overall though I did enjoy the story and it was pretty dark which was fun. If I were given a different ending this would have been a 5 star read.

Malinda Lo's *A LINE IN THE DARK* is a dark, edgy psychological thriller about a love triangle between three teenage girls. Sixteen-year-olds Jess Wong and Angie Redmond have been best friends since grade school. But after Angie comes out to Jess as gay, the dynamic between them changes. Jess begins to have feelings for Angie she can't quite explain, and when Angie falls for rich girl Margot Adams, Jess feels her world falling apart. Ultimately the disappearance of Margot's friend Ryan Dupree pulls all four girls into a twisted mystery full of secrets and lies. The first half of this novel is narrated by Jess, which allows the reader to get inside this girl's head. Jess is a bit of an outsider she's not as outgoing as Angie, and she lacks Margot's beauty and self-confidence. She's an artist who is working on a graphic novel that gradually begins to parallel her own life. She's also torn between her growing feelings for Angie (which are decidedly sexual) and her parents' expectations for her future. She can't bring herself to tell Angie how she really feels, but she also can't accept Angie's relationship with Margot (who is portrayed as an entitled "mean girl" who uses other people to her own ends). Once Ryan disappears, the novel's narration shifts from Jess's first-person account to a third-person omniscient narrator (mixed in with transcripts of police interviews as part of their investigation). I found this shift a bit distracting as I missed Jess's voice and our close link to her inner thoughts. And we learn little more about the other characters, leaving us wondering why they do the things they do. Things happen between Jess and Angie, between Angie and Margot, and between Jess and Margot that are never fully explained. As for the ending, it's going to make you want to go back and read the book again! Twisty endings are pretty much par for the course these days, but this one really had me scratching my head (and it explains why Lo

decided to switch from 1st person to 3rd person narration in the second half of the book). That said, I would have liked more at the end of this novel *À la recherche* – more about what was really going on between these four girls and why things descended into darkness so quickly. Bottom line, this is a well-written novel that sheds light on female sexuality in a fairly accepting environment (none of the parents in the novel are particularly bothered by their daughters' sexual experiments). The best part of the book is Jess, who is an interesting and believable character with the kinds of doubts and desires you expect in a teenage girl. I do think the ending lacked development, and the twist didn't really make all that much sense (the police in this small New England town are pretty easily manipulated!). But it's a good read, with a solid story and interesting characters. Read it for Jess, and for the dark, twisty mood of the story.

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