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A Madness So Discreet



Synopsis

Edgar Award for Best Young Adult MysteryMindy McGinnis, the acclaimed author of Not a Drop to Drink and In a Handful of Dust, combines murder, madness, and mystery in a beautifully twisted gothic historical thriller perfect for fans of novels such as Asylum and The Diviners as well as television's True Detective and American Horror Story. Grace Mae is already familiar with madness when family secrets and the bulge in her belly send her to an insane asylum—but it is in the darkness that she finds a new lease on life. When a visiting doctor interested in criminal psychology recognizes Grace's brilliant mind beneath her rage, he recruits her as his assistant. Continuing to operate under the cloak of madness at crime scenes allows her to gather clues from bystanders who believe her less than human. Now comfortable in an ethical asylum, Grace finds friends—and hope. But gruesome nights bring Grace and the doctor into the circle of a killer who will bring her shaky sanity and the demons in her past dangerously close to the surface.

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Customer Reviews

Why this book is AWESOME:-Strong female protagonist overcoming legit trauma in her past. She worked through it in such a real and raw way. She has a dark side and makes some bad choices but she was such an empowering character.-Healthy portrayal of friendships. There were some really strong female friendships in this book, but Grace also had wonderful friendships with men as well. HECK YES. It's so nice to see friendships between both sexes. The characters did not start drama with each other, the friendships were not plot devices, they put their friends in their place when needed but always accepted each other.-There is no romance in this book! Don't get me wrong, I love a good romance, but it is SO refreshing to see a book, especially in YA, that stands on its own without needing a romantic angle. There is one very minor character that has a crush on Grace, and some characters make assumptions about a romantic relationship between Grace and another character. There is definitely enough delicious tension there that you can ship the heck out of one relationship (I sure did), but it was never developed and was so lowkey and just ugh, BLESS. Honestly, a breath of fresh air.-It showed respect for mental illness while still exploring the wrongdoings in history. We see 2 different insane asylums in this book. One is a very bad place where the patients are mistreated, and the other is a safe place for them. Many female characters have been placed in the asylum by their family members because they were more sexually promiscuous or outspoken than women "should be" at the time. It's an accurate portrayal of the time period, but every character, whether truly insane or not, was treated as an actual person. Mental illness was not villainized or used as a plot device. Something I didn't love, but why it didn't lower my rating:-I struggled with the way things wrapped up. It's a very gray area in terms of the motives and morality of these characters. HOWEVER, as I was having these thoughts about the rightness of it, the characters were too. They explained their reasoning so well that even though it wasn't the approach I wanted, I could see in the end how we still got to the same conclusion. I appreciated that it wasn't brushed over, that one of the characters acted as a moral compass, and that it did challenge my thoughts about what was happening. I think you'll enjoy this book if you like any of these:-Sherlock Holmes - There was this awesome Sherlock, crime scene murder mystery, clue deducing vibe to this book that I think Sherlock fans will enjoy.-The Cormoran Strike series - It has that private investigator and amateur-but-whip-smart assistant dynamic, PLUS the amazing non romantic working relationship with enough chemistry that you still want them to get together.-XFiles - Same as above. The mystery solving duo with a platonic working relationship that you hope turns romanticContent that some readers may want to know of before reading:-Suicide.-Pedophilia.-Incest/child abuse.-Rape.-Miscarriage.

My 20 year-old granddaughter was really moved by this book and it's depiction of the struggles of a thinking woman who lived in a time when women were the lesser sex and had no right to an opinion. The concept of having value only as a man's possession and really just being a slave to her husband's whim blew her mind. I've heard her discussing the book with her teen sister and cousins and saying that she hoped it would have a sequel. A great read for women of any age.

Wow! At first I thought this was going to be a story about an autistic girl who was maltreated by her family and society. I wasn't completely certain of the time frame, historically or even about the locale. The need to get to the bottom of the story was so compelling that I had to finish the book in one sitting. The story was brutal starting out and horrific. There are constant references as to what is sanity vs. insanity. Societal mores and laws are slipped into the story and help to establish the plot. The characters seem so real. This is a novel that deserves to be made into a movie. And I am hoping that there might be additional stories by the author. Please read this book...

I enjoyed this book very much, the characters were easy to remember, and very unique. At one point in the beginning of the book I almost quit reading it because of the horrible things that were done to her in the asylum. It turned into a great story though. I was disappointed in the ending though as it didn't let us know what she and the Dr. ended up doing, or if they got married, or if she married someone else.

Mindy McGinnis's *A Darkness So Discreet* is so beautifully written that it immediately transports the reader to a different time and place. Grace bears the marks of cruelty, from the unspeakable things a close family member did to her to the abuse she endures at the asylum where she has been temporarily committed. Pushed to her limits, Grace has given up hope, ready to embrace the darkness for good. But fate has something else in store for her when she crosses paths with the young, ambitious Dr. Thornhollow. Unsure if she is ready to embrace this new life, Grace has little choice in accepting this new apprenticeship with Thornhollow, helping him investigate and aid the authorities in catching murderers. As much as Grace would like to forget the painful past, especially when she finally feels like she belongs amongst the patients at the asylum Thornhollow oversees, Grace's own darkness begins to surface as their investigation brings them closer to a serial killer. McGinnis writes some of the most beautiful and descriptive prose. From the dank language used to describe the Wayburne Lunatic Asylum of Boston, where Grace is first committed, to the melancholy and detached diction used to describe

Grace's growing detachment from the horrors around her, McGinnis astounds at every turn of the page. The abuse Grace endures is sometimes hard to read, her pain heart-wrenching and her circumstances cruel, yet she shows a strength that is unparalleled. Her relationship with Thornhollow gives her purpose as the two try to climb deeper into the mind of a killer in order to catch him or her. I really liked that this relationship wasn't necessarily romantic, even when other characters assumed as much, but both Thornhollow and Grace need the other. In all honesty, they complimented each other so much that there were times when I wouldn't have complained had the author gone in that direction. Grace has been suffocating her whole life, surrounded by those unwilling to listen. Thornhollow isn't the only one who opens up a new life to her. Grace's relationship with the other women at the asylum, particularly Elizabeth and Nell, provides her with the kind of family she's always wanted but never had. A Darkness So Discreet also deals with the ethics of vigilantism, of dispensing justice when evil goes unpunished. This was probably the most interesting theme and I would have liked it to have been explored more deeply. Despite this, Mindy McGinnis's novel is dark, haunting, and one of the most memorable books I've read this year.

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