

A Fierce and Subtle Poison

Samantha Mabry

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With a dark, fairytale quality, *A Fierce and Subtle Poison* works like an ethereal spell, weaving together the story of a young man and a mysterious, cursed girl. “I met Marisol on a Sunday night,” the first chapter begins, “two days before her body washed up on Condado Beach.” Lucas, the narrator, is the seventeen-year-old son of a developer in Puerto Rico, who spends his summers on the island in a cocoon of privilege. Just days after beginning to date Marisol, she disappears, and Lucas begins receiving mysterious letters from Isabel—the cursed girl from the haunted house nearby. Soon, Lucas is drawn into a strange and magical world, one that it becomes increasingly hard to escape.

A Fierce and Subtle Poison is a young adult novel with elements of magical realism, romance, and even horror, which subtly touches on issues of wealth, race, and privilege even as it focuses on the haunting story of Isabel and Lucas. The work is for more mature audiences, with some cursing and mild explicit material.

With lyrical and evocative prose—author Samantha Mabry likens cracks in exterior plaster walls to “the veins in an old woman’s legs”—*A Fierce and Subtle Poison* is sure to appeal to readers who appreciate their romances with just a touch of magic ... and poison.

STEPHANIE BUCKLIN (Spring 2016)

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