



Minus

Lisa Naffziger

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Twists and turns abound in Lisa Naffziger's teen suspense thriller *Minus*, in which a college bound heroine finds her life unraveling around her.

Beck is driving to the University of Chicago with her father, Gill. He seems like a typical dad, if overprotective of his homeschooled daughter. But then a police car appears and he draws a gun from the glove compartment.

The moment passes, but when Beck and Gill stop at a convenience store, Beck goes to the bathroom and hears violence erupt. She emerges to a scene of death, with her father nowhere to be found. With help from a former police officer, Beck falls into a mystery involving her family and her origins, one complex enough to keep the surprises coming throughout.

Minus—which refers to Beck's stuffed toy of the same name—is a unique blend of elements. It has the excitement, mystery, and violence of a thriller, but it is also a fish-out-of-water coming-of-age story as sheltered Beck figures out who she can trust while also learning how to navigate a coffee shop menu and the in-person complexities of a relationship forged through social media.

Naffziger's art is appealing and enhances the storytelling. Her choices are tasteful, and never gratuitous with depicting the story's more violent aspects. Along with a satisfying climax and concluding chapter, the art makes *Minus* entertaining for any reader, and perhaps a perfect selection for adolescents transitioning to books with more adult themes or teens looking for an adventure set in a realistic world.

PETER DABBENE (July/August 2019)

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