

No One Left but You

Tash McAdam

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A party gone wrong leaves a community reeling in Tash McAdam's mystery novel *No One Left but You*.

Since coming out as trans, Max has been ostracized by his former friends, including his crush, Danny. A kind teacher takes notice and pairs Max with the rich, beautiful new girl, Gloss. She is enamored of Max, giving him a makeover and letting him sleep over at her always-empty penthouse apartment.

As the school year ends and relationships change, an end-of-year party meant to celebrate the students' accomplishments becomes a crime scene. But tragedy is a great silencer, and even Max is unsure of what happened—and why he's covered in blood.

Max is a thoughtful hero, and the close narration gives his feelings immediacy. It is claustrophobic, as if there is no space to think or reflect. But Max's internal world is also fertile ground for his songwriting. He uses his lyrics, peppered throughout the book, to help him process his feelings of doubt and rejection. They are not a panacea, but a tool. His friendship with Gloss, a confusing whirlwind, is also a tool that helps him understand the depths of secrets others can keep.

The narrative is split into alternating "before" and "after" chapters. When the book opens, on an "after" chapter in a police station, it is clear that something terrible has happened, but the magnitude is unknown. The incongruity between this chapter and the first "before" chapter, in a quiet classroom, is disorienting and intriguing. The tension is immediate, and the impetus to know what happened to land Max in a police station, and the surrounding context, sets the story on its breakneck pace toward disaster.

No One Left but You is a suspenseful mystery novel about grief and obsession.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (November / December 2023)

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