

She Lies Close

Sharon Doering

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In Sharon Doering's thriller *She Lies Close*, a neurotic mother experiences increasing paranoia and psychosis related to the kidnapping of a young girl.

Grace is capable but exhausted on the heels of her difficult divorce from her cheating husband. She's moved with her two children in the hopes of a starting new life, but her fresh start is soured when it's revealed that her next door neighbor is the suspect in a kidnapping case that's shaken the community. Grace obsesses over the case, trying to unravel the mind of a murderer, only to find that she may understand such minds all too well.

The book's descriptions of Grace's everyday life are illustrative, relatable, and often humorous: her children bicker with each other, eat Chapstick, and remain mostly oblivious to the dangers that Grace perceives. Internally, Grace descends into mental confusion, experiencing fatigue and hallucinations; her feelings toward her neighbor are spurred by her instinct to protect her children. Her honesty about her failings makes her more endearing, even though she makes increasingly risky decisions.

Tense because of the kidnapping and because of Grace's strange next-door neighbor, the novel tracks circumstantial evidence against the neighbor as it piles up. But Grace's mental state calls her ability to distinguish between reality and dreamlike states of disorientation into question. Her burgeoning relationship with a detective adds excitement; sexy scenes couple with constant suspense regarding how much he knows about Grace's secrets.

The truth is revealed in gradual increments, and possible resolutions grow in number as Grace becomes a more unreliable narrator. Spurred on by a local kidnapping, *She Lies Close* is a darkly comedic psychological thriller.

DELIA STANLEY (July / August 2020)

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