

Silver Girl

Leslie Pietrzyk

The Unnamed Press (Feb 27, 2018)

Softcover \$17.00 (272pp)

978-1-944700-51-5

Leslie Pietrzyk's haunting *Silver Girl* begins in 1980, with a nameless narrator starting her freshman year at a prestigious Chicago-area university. The narrator escaped her economically depressed Iowa hometown, but the emotional baggage of a grim childhood and dysfunctional family continue to weigh her down like the bulky, cheaply made trunk that holds her belongings.

Silver Girl's heroine, though nameless, is compellingly flawed. Forced into a poverty mindset, with constant anxieties about paying for food and rent, her situation is made even more difficult by the wealth of her fellow students. She feels shadowy and mousy, and like she must be morally shadowy as well in order to attract men. Her close friend Jess exudes confidence and has her pick of boyfriends, along with the heedlessness that tends to come from being born into a rich family.

Shifting from freshman year forward to 1982 and then back again, *Silver Girl* centers around the unusual friendship between the narrator and Jess, as well as the notorious Chicago Tylenol murders—Jess's father's mistress dies after ingesting a tampered capsule. The couple's longtime affair is exposed, along with the existence of their illegitimate daughter.

The novel's layered complexity distinguishes its anonymous protagonist and offers reasons behind her occasional lying or petty thievery. There are dark memories from the recent past, and nagging concerns about her younger sister, Grace, still back in Iowa and vulnerable to the same toxic environment. Sexually manipulated by Jess's arrogant fiancé, she is also treated with careless concern by Jess and her parents, and ultimately learns to use them as they use her.

Though the journey isn't easy, *Silver Girl* concludes with a surge of hope, like the spring thaw after an icebound Chicago winter. The troubled narrator ultimately finds a new sense of purpose and self-worth.

MEG NOLA (January/February 2018)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.