



Some Laney's Died: A Skipping Sideways Thriller

Brooke Skipstone

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Some Laney's Died is a young adult novel whose heroine learns that choices are endless, and that no matter the sorrows, love intervenes.

In Brooke Skipstone's spellbinding psychological thriller *Some Laney's Died*, alternate lives spiral out from roads untaken.

Sixteen-year-old Delaney, who is traumatized after witnessing her father's infidelity in the woods, blames herself for her parents' divorce. She rewrites stories from that period, telling herself "I couldn't go back in time, but maybe I could skip sideways." When her mother, a physicist, explains the Many Worlds Theory—in which a separate universe exists for each possible choice a person could have made, including consequences that branch out from them—Delaney is shaken.

Enticing because of its eerie implications and gradual in its execution, the theory unfolds through Delaney's anxious perspective. As she retraces conversations and alternative scenarios, raking over whether they happened, or even if her other selves experienced them, her confusion is suspenseful. The stakes climb when she discovers that universes can interfere with each other. The book is at its most visceral when Delaney spies her doppelgängers. Their ability to "skip" between universes plays a key role, though its triggers and mechanics are mysterious.

The book's visions include dark extremes, like a near assault, suicide, and torture. Delaney is also fascinated with the discovery of human remains, feeling that she heard a murder happen, though the hows and whys of this are submerged for long stretches of the book.

Delaney's sanity is unquestioned when she reveals the horrors that have been happening inside of her head, raising questions: how familiar are the people around her with the theory? Why is her new love interest so quick to meet her and bring the requested weapon with him? That others accept Delaney's dangerous goings-on at face value is unusual and convenient.

The book's emphasis on the abuse of beautiful young teenagers is familiar, though refreshed through paranormal twists that allow the victims to survive in one universe, even if they died in another. This all leads to a complicated climax whose sensational situation results in a rescue from another universe.

Laced with malevolence, yet finding hope through sisterly bonds, this first in the Skipping Sideways series introduces an unusual, resilient heroine. *Some Laney's Died* is a young adult novel whose heroine learns that choices are endless, and that no matter the sorrows, love intervenes.

KAREN RIGBY (July 1, 2020)

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