

The Eyes of Winchester

Theresa Siclari

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Reincarnation, nightmares, and murder—this plot grabs hold and doesn't let go.

People want their dreams to come true, but never their nightmares, which is what happens in this attention-grabbing, short thrill ride of a novel. Theresa Siclari's *The Eyes of Winchester* is a quick-read thriller with an exciting plot and interesting characters. The suspense keeps readers questioning what will come next, and Siclari delivers answers.

Laura, a lawyer, has had a horrible nightmare in which she is a fourteen-year-old small-town girl who is raped and killed. The nightmare continues to haunt her until she and Amanda, her fourteen-year-old daughter, leave for a long weekend to try to discover if her nightmare actually happened. Not long after arriving in Winchester, Connecticut, Laura's nightmare is confirmed as true: a girl was raped and murdered there forty years earlier. Believing she is the dead girl reincarnated, Laura strikes out to discover the murderer, and horrible things start to happen: people she spoke to about the murder are killed, she is run off the road, and her room is ransacked. Eventually, the local sheriff begins to believe her, but will they find the culprit before another murder occurs?

The Eyes of Winchester is a gripping novel, though there are errors in grammar and punctuation, along with run-on sentences. In addition to editing, the reader might also welcome some more information on characters' backstories, as well as more detailed descriptions. A few characters could be more fleshed out, especially Laura's husband, as he comes off as a bit of a broken record in his dialogue. At one point, he says, "You're stubborn and I can't make you come home...And, keep Amanda away from all of this." Later, he says almost the same thing: "I accept the fact that you want to stay and I really can't do anything about that, but I do have something to say about our daughter." It would make him a much more interesting character if he had some emotional range.

A slightly more developed story, with more information and sensory descriptions (there are little, if any, descriptions of smell and touch, which can often bring a novel to life), could have brought this novel to a top level. However, the author clearly communicates the book's theme, that it is important in life to believe in oneself, be true to what one believes, and follow through on important beliefs.

While the front cover may catch the interest of thriller fans, the text on the back cover is almost too informative, not leaving enough for the reader to discover on his own; it is also too wordy, making the design appear cramped.

A nightmare come true, Siclari's *The Eyes of Winchester* will hold readers' attention from beginning to end. Just like the nightmare that demands to be solved, readers will devour this novel's rather strong plot.

BETH VANHOUTEN (January 18, 2014)

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