

The Little Liar

Pascale Robert-Diard

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In Pascale Robert-Diard's novel *The Little Liar*, a weary small-town lawyer takes a professionally and emotionally challenging case.

When Alice agrees to represent Lisa, a woman who was raped as a minor, the case seems cut-and-dried. But the truth is far more explosive than Alice could ever have imagined. She finds herself struggling with how to handle the upcoming hearing and the larger consequences it may have both for Lisa's future and for other rape cases.

As an attorney who has always put her job above all else, Alice is used to hearing disturbing stories and receiving a lack of sympathy from distant loved ones. But Lisa's story gives even her pause: as an awkward, self-hating teenager from a dysfunctional family, Lisa was willing to do whatever it took to make her peers like her, only to find circumstances spiraling out of control in the worst possible way. By the time she regained command of her narrative, the damage had been done. Alice's devoted efforts may not be enough to protect her from the jury's wrath.

The revelation of the truth leads to a tense, disquieting courtroom standoff between an unlikable defendant and his insufferable, over-the-hill attorney and Alice and her frightened yet determined client. Even Alice must temper her own feelings—anger and betrayal mixed with sympathy—to do her job. In such a muddy case, only one fact remains clear: victims do not have to be angels to deserve justice. But with so much controversy and so many emotions swirling around this case, justice might no longer be an option for everyone.

The Little Liar is a complex novel about the overlap between perpetrator and victim and between guilt and innocence.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (March / April 2024)

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