

The Marriage of Silence and Sin

Jacqueline M. Lyon

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Author Jacqueline M. Lyon has combined art therapy theory and the words of John Keats, William Blake, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Wordsworth, and others to create a contemporary mystery-thriller, a spellbinding journey of familial love gone too far and the bonds of friendship tested.

Best friends Dicey Carmichael and Gale Knightly are shocked to hear of the death of one of Dicey's former students, Elle Pandion, an artist with a quietly aloof personality and more secrets than her former professor ever guessed. The two women worked hard to befriend the young woman, and neither suspected that Elle Pandion was suicidal. Gale sees Elle's death as a tragedy. But Dicey, who blames herself for not seeing the signs of suicide, begins to see clues of something else in the artwork that Elle willed to her. She comes to believe that there's a message in those canvases, and she won't rest until she's able to understand it.

Gale has her own obstacles to overcome: a boyfriend of eight years who won't commit to a serious relationship and an unnerving, unwanted suitor. Her surprise pregnancy forces her to examine her feelings about motherhood, which are complicated by her own mother's attitude toward unwed mothers. And her relationship with Dicey is stretched to the breaking point by her friend's growing suspicions.

Lyon slowly reveals what's hiding in some of her characters' closets. Human curiosity is all that's needed to propel the story onward, as Dicey searches for information about her departed student and Gale confronts the truth of her own life. The pace ebbs and flows like the tide. Using the words of Keats, Blake, and the others adds to the surreal yet romantic tone of the story.

Many of the secrets revealed in *The Marriage of Silence and Sin* are dark indeed, yet Lyon never wallows in them nor uses them for gratuitous purposes. They serve the story and are treated that way, without saccharine melodrama or stilted prose. The characters are vibrant, believable, and relevant to the contemporary world.

Mystery lovers should be drawn to this story, especially fans of Andrew Vacchs and Johnathan Kellerman. Lyon's debut novel is well worth reading. She is a writer to watch for in the future.

J. G. STINSON (June 6, 2011)

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