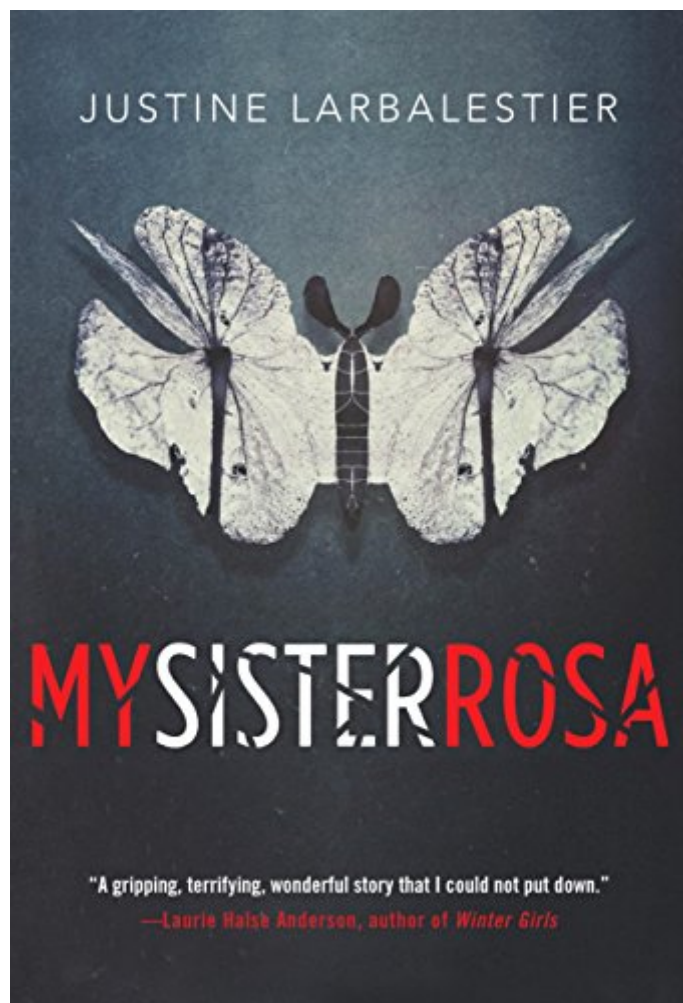


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My Sister Rosa



Synopsis

"Beats *The Silence of the Lambs* for suspense—it's the kind of book that had me literally gasping aloud as it rattled to its incredible conclusion." —Cory Doctorow, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Homeland*

What if the most terrifying person you know is your ten-year-old sister? Seventeen-year-old Aussie Che Taylor loves his younger sister, Rosa. But he's also certain that she's a psychopath—clinically, threateningly, dangerously. Recently Rosa has been making trouble, hurting things. Che is the only one who knows; he's the only one his sister trusts. Rosa is smart, talented, pretty, and very good at hiding what she is and the manipulation she's capable of. Their parents, whose business takes the family from place to place, brush off the warning signs as Rosa "acting out." Now that they have moved again—from Bangkok to New York City—their new hometown provides far too many opportunities for Rosa to play her increasingly complex and disturbing games. Che's always been Rosa's rock, protecting her from the world. Now, the world might need protection from her.

From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One thing I can say after finishing *My Sister Rosa* is that I have never read a book like this before. It was well-written, delightfully creepy and discussed a unique and interesting concept in YA literature. When I picked up this book, I was expecting what I usually find in most psychological thrillers- a fast-paced plot with underdeveloped characters. I was pleasantly surprised to find a well-paced story with some great character depth from our narrator, Che. We start the story with Che and Rosa moving to New York. They have moved around most of their lives, due to their parents starting and failing multiple businesses. Originally from Australia, Che has a hard time adjusting. He misses his friends, his gym and his old life. On top of that, Che's first priority is taking care of his younger sister, Rosa. Except Rosa is not a normal younger sister, she is a sociopath. Che and Rosa have creepy private conversations where he makes her promise to not do "bad things" because Rosa has no empathy and does not fully understand the difference between right and wrong. Che realizes the truth even though the rest of the family does not understand: Rosa is a ticking bomb and it is only a matter of time before she does something unforgivable. However it is also realistic because despite what Che knows about Rosa, he still loves her. As twisted as that may be, she is still his baby sister. "Didn't anyone ask you where your parents are?" "They asked. Especially about my parents." "What did you tell them?" "I said I ate them." "Jesus, Rosa." "What I really enjoyed about this book is that it was more than Che and Rosa's creepy conversations, and more than Rosa doing morally questionable things. There was Che's dysfunctional parents and infuriating mother who was constantly in denial about their situation. Che's life revolved around boxing, although his parents never wanted him to spar because it was considered violent. There was also Che's budding relationship with fellow boxer Sojourner, and how he balanced that while keeping Rosa a secret. There was a colorful cast of characters aside from Che and Rosa, including Leilani, Elon, Maya and Seimone. They all contributed to the plot- Che trying to adjust to life as a teenage boy while carrying this burden of his psychopath sister. Rosa's condition was not overdone and actually very believable. She was creepy, unfeeling and incredibly intelligent. She never did anything *too* bad- she stole things, lied, manipulated and Che felt responsible for keeping her in line, always fearing the worst.

As the reader, I absolutely bought into Che's worries and also feared the worst from Rosa. Che's depiction as a teenage boy was incredibly realistic and normal that I found myself following the story and hoping everything would turn out okay. However, the entire story has this overshadowing sense of foreboding, and I just knew something was going to happen. I was not expecting the ending at all but in retrospect it was really fitting with the overall feel of the story. Rosa's depiction of a sociopath was frighteningly realistic (not that I'm an expert, but I definitely bought into the story) and Larbalstier did an excellent job of creating a cohesive, well-developed psychological thriller.

I found this book absolutely fascinating. The story is told from the perspective of Che, a lovely, thoughtful, gorgeous young man, with a sense of responsibility way beyond his years. His younger sister, Rosa, is deeply disturbed, yet seemingly to those who first meet her, a delightful little girl. Che's parents are either deluded or in denial, possibly both. If you're into the darker side of the psyche, this book is absolutely fabulous, with well drawn and relatable characters. (Hopefully Justine is planning another book about Rosa.)

This book is absolutely riveting. There isn't a boring page in it. I read it in one sitting. The protagonist, Che, is very realistically created with a plight that's both fascinating and heartwrenchingly frightening. His plight is written in first person format and he nearly jumps off the pages in his telling of his tale. I found all of the characters and varying dynamics to be exceptionally compelling. There is real dimension and creative finesse that puts one in Che's shoes and weaves a brilliantly conceived tale. I admire the way that the author demonstrates the lack of true black and white. His sister Rosa is the terrifying reality that 1 in 25 people are sociopaths. Her relationship with her brother is an glimpse into the mind of those who mask their true lack of humanity. She is deftly rendered and her unpredictability is chillingly in control of Che's entire life. There are a great many twists and turns in the novel. I was caught off guard by a goodly amount. The whole book is a great idea for a story that is put together admirably and meticulously, much to the benefit of the reader. I love to read. However, what I love even more is finding a book that truly stands out. "My Sister Rosa" is, in my humble opinion, a truly unique and stand-out book that I recommend wholeheartedly to both teen and adult readers. Two thumbs, way up!

This is a slow burn type book. More like a slice of life book for most of it, not like a thriller at all. Kind of like a "Still Life with Psychopath". Che is a typical seventeen year old who wants a normal teen's

life: a girlfriend, to box, to be with his friends. His life is complicated by unstable parents, and a sister, Rosa, who is a psychopath. We follow along with him and his goals, as he meets new people, tries to cope with life in NYC and his sister. Without explaining anything, this book devastated me, honestly. The author is so careful about leaving bread crumbs and hints as to what's going on. I can not recommend this book enough and I really don't like YA.

I hate how much some authors and/or publishing houses dumb down a young adult book. Teen age people are capable of complex thought and it should be rewarded in their media instead of cookie cutter plots with unrealistic representation of love. This novel did an excellent job showing how many teenagers crave a romantic bond but that one teenage romance will never save the world. The realistic representation of the relationships made the love feel sweeter and the pain hurt so much more. Not to mention the creep factor in this story was perfectly done. The ending was also wonderfully crafted. I was worried around the 90% that it was going to take a turn that gave us an unreliable narrator or spit in the truths we were told throughout the story but it did not. Everything that happens in the end is subtly explained earlier on it just happens in the background. I enjoyed it so much it is easy to say the story shouldn't be only limited to the young adult audience, an adult audience could be well entertained and I recommend them giving it a try.

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