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As I Descended



Synopsis

From the acclaimed author of *Lies We Tell Ourselves*, Robin Talley, comes a Shakespeare-inspired story of revenge and redemption, where fair is foul, and foul is fair. Maria Lyon and Lily Boiten are their school's ultimate power couple—but one thing stands between them and their perfect future: campus superstar Delilah Dufrey. Golden child Delilah is a legend at exclusive Acheron Academy, and the presumptive winner of the distinguished Cawdor Kingsley Prize. But Delilah doesn't know that Lily and Maria are willing to do anything—absolutely anything—to unseat Delilah for the scholarship. After all, it would lock in Maria's attendance at Stanford—and assure her and Lily four more years in a shared dorm room. Together, Maria and Lily harness the dark power long rumored to be present on the former plantation that houses their school. But when feuds turn to fatalities, and madness begins to blur the distinction between what's real and what's imagined, the girls must attempt to put a stop to the chilling series of events they've accidentally set in motion.

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Customer Reviews

This book is amazing. It is indeed very much Shakespeare inspired and I love it. It was creepy and dramatic with cute pieces sprinkled in. What I liked most was that the characters weren't perfect. They all had rather jarring flaws that made the reading even better. I cried when a certain character died and whooped when another did... so all in all very good rollercoaster of a book.

This was the book chosen by my students for our book club. They can not stop talking about it! They love the other-worldly, supernatural themes, but what they love the most, is recognizing themselves and friends in the broad spectrum of characters and relationships. There are characters of all genders, races and sexual orientations. Very entertaining.

A teenage re-imagining of Macbeth that was so very good. I loved the characters, they were diverse, they were fully fleshed out, and they were weird. I loved the back ground setting even though it is horrible in history I liked how it was used. I loved the diversity even in the supernatural ghost, it was something I wasn't expecting and I loved how it was incorporated. I loved the supernatural side of it. I was honestly so freaked out at some points. I work third and at night in an old building that tends to go bump anytime the air comes on made for a freaky reading experience. The few things I didn't like is I wish the characters had been older, more adult. The school seemed to have a weird policy about rooming and it wasn't in any way realistic for a high school setting. Also no one really wants to think about teenagers out to hurt each other, even if it is a remaking of Shakespeare, I think it would have been better set with new adults. I didn't like the fact that it was set in a high school and there never actually seemed to be an adult around. There had to be teachers and they only seemed to be there after the fact, the only person who kept showing up was Ross, and I never figured out who he was aside from dorm monitor maybe. Overall the book was very good, Maria was super weird and she made an awesome protag, Lily her girlfriend ended up on the wrong end of that deal. Really though it was a creepy fun read perfect for a cold night wrapped in a blanket with a hot chocolate ready to be scared half to death.

Another great book by Robyn Talley! It was a hard to put down page turner. I'm looking forward to the next one!

Wonderful book.

I absolutely loved this book. It made me want to re-read Macbeth and then read AS I DESCENDED

again, because I suspect there are even more layers and echoes than I realized reading. But it's beautifully done, very creepy, an excellent fall read. One of my favorite books all year.

I'd been wanting to read *As I Descended* since it came out the previous year, and I came to it fresh off a back-to-back Dickens binge of *Little Dorrit* and *Bleak House*, all of which is to say my body was ready for a YA lesbian *Macbeth* set in a Southern gothic boarding school. Unfortunately this is one of the rare cases where the flesh is willing but the spirits were weak. Robin Talley brilliantly recasts the classic Shakespearean tale of ambition, madness, and betrayal in an elite high school housed on an old plantation in Virginia where students compete for the Cawdor Kingsley Prize, a scholarship whose prestige opens as many doors as the dollars it comes with. Maria Lyon needs to win that prize if she's going to follow her roommate, and secret girlfriend, Lily to Stanford in the fall; all that stands between her and her dreams is the reigning queen of Archeron Academy, Delilah Dufrey. And then one night Lily suggests a way to remove that last obstacle, and suddenly there's nothing stopping Maria from taking everything she's ever wanted, if she and Lily can only keep it together until the end of the year. *Descended* opens promisingly enough, with Maria and friends consulting a Ouija board rather than stumbling into three witches on a battlefield. It's a smart update that allows for a frisson of horror without trafficking too heavily on the supernatural. Unfortunately, this brilliant and delicate balance is quickly overthrown, and the novel gets sucked into a veritable whirlwind of spirits, which - despite one pointed comment to the contrary at the climax which I suspect an editor of insisting on - have the effect of reducing Maria and Lily's agency in their crimes by providing the possible excuse of possession. I want my badass lesbian murderers in my Dickensian palate cleansers to own their deeds, thanks very much. Talley gets full points for one of the best concepts I've ever heard, and I can only hope someone picks up the idea for a staging of *Macbeth*. Unfortunately, *Descended* reads like the author bit off a bit more concept than she could chew - either that or she and I just really, really disagree about the role of the supernatural in the original play. So despite its high points and its value for washing the self-indulgence of 19th century white Englishmen from one's brain, *As I Descended* is nothing to prick one's thumbs about.

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