



When We Go Missing

Kristen Twardowski

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Once, Alex Gardinier was a successful physical therapist and a happy wife. Now she is trapped in a crumbling hospital room. Seven years ago Alex's ex-husband, Nathan, was convicted of murdering five girls, and he has been rotting in prison ever since. Except the doctors say that Nathan isn't in prison. In fact, they don't believe that he is a criminal at all. According to them, Nathan is a devoted husband who visits her every week. But Alex can't recall ever seeing him at the hospital, and the last time they met he was holding her hostage on a boat.

Maybe the doctors are right – maybe these memories of his crimes are her own personal delusions – but if they are wrong, then Nathan somehow escaped from prison. If they are wrong, he has trapped Alex in a psychiatric ward.

If they are wrong, he is hunting her sister.

When We Go Missing Details

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Author : Kristen Twardowski

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From Reader Review When We Go Missing for online ebook

Betty says

I received a review copy of this book courtesy of the author.

Reading the blurb was enough to sell me on this book. I have long been fascinated (and disturbed) by the ease with which husbands were once able to commit their (sane) wives to insane asylums, so that angle of the story definitely got my attention and made me eager to read this novel.

The narrative is told from multiple points of view—Alex Gardinier (referred to as Alexandra Hallow in the psych hospital, which is set in the present day), Caroline Gardinier (her sister), Lucia Belo (a nurse at the hospital), and Sandra Jackson (mother of a missing young woman). With so many different points of view, it could easily have become confusing, but each character's particular voice was easily recognizable to me. I felt it enhanced the book to be able to see all parts of the story through the eyes of the character 'living it', so to speak, as well as enhancing the sense of danger and/or urgency of recent or impending actions.

I don't want to give anything away about the story, so I'll just say this: Several events take place in each character's story where the tension is painfully intense. I found myself holding my breath or gasping out loud more than a few times as I was reading. And that's a *very* good thing when you're reading a psychological thriller!

Twardowski's debut is a well-crafted thrill ride that will keep you on the edge of your seat, leading to an anxiety-inducing finale that, for me, felt like the perfect resolution for one of the four women in particular. It has earned her a well-deserved spot on my author radar, as well... I'll be on the lookout for Kristen Twardowski's next novel. I'm envisioning great things from her in the future.

Kate~Bibliophile Book Club says

This was only ok. I found the alternating chapters and names a little confusing at times, and I think on the whole it was a little bit of a muddled read for me.

The author has an interesting writing style. And I do think there is promise there for sure, I just didn't get on with this one!

Won't be reviewing on the blog!

Janel says

When We Go Missing is a super quick read, the story is told from multiple points of view and it is extremely enjoyable. As the plot moves at a whirlwind pace, we don't get too much detail and Twardowski doesn't linger on any one event for too long, but this works well to create a fun read. The plot isn't too deep, psychologically, despite Alex being in a psychiatric ward.

What I really loved about this book was the multiple points of view this story is narrated from – it never gets confusing, instead, it works to make the pace lightning fast as the chapters aren't that long and the

viewpoints are constantly changing. But mainly I liked that the viewpoints were all female – four (technically three as two are Alex) strong, determined females!

Once you start reading this book, I don't think it's that difficult to figure out where the plot is going but nonetheless, this was a fun, 'light-hearted' suspense thriller that I really enjoyed!

My thanks to the author for providing me with a digital copy of this book

Paul III says

This is a great story.

Rachel says

*Thank you to the author, Kristen Twardowski, for sending me a free digital copy of "When We Go Missing" in exchange for an honest review.

First Thoughts:

From the moment the author contacted me about her book, I was intrigued. The summary sounded exciting and I love a good mystery/thriller.

Characters:

I thought all of the characters were well-written and enjoyable to read about. Alex had a good head on her shoulders and I loved the dynamic between her and her sister, Carolyn. I originally thought this book was about Alex, the protagonist, and her crazy husband, Nathan, but as the book went on, I felt as though the story was no longer about Alex. But I'll talk about when I touch upon the writing style.

Nathan was a good antagonist to the story, but there wasn't enough background information on him. I would love to know what makes him tick, what makes him do the things he does. I want to know how he got this way in the first place. But, the main background we get on him is how he and Alex met and came to be.

Plot:

Nathan is a killer and Alex knows it. However, he kidnaps her and throws her into a foreign mental institution to get her out of the way making people believe he's the victim and Alex is just crazy. I thought it was different and awesome because I started going crazy for Alex since she couldn't understand anyone at the hospital and she didn't belong there in the first place. It was definitely an intriguing plot for a story.

Writing Style:

I liked how the author wrote the story. Each chapter was in the POV of someone else. Alex before finding out Nathan was crazy (the past), Alex after in the hospital (the present), Carolyn, and Alex's nurse at the hospital.

My only problem with this was, as I said earlier, I started to feel as though the story was no longer about

Alex towards the end. Her chapters became less frequent as we focused more on Carolyn and her "relationship" with Nathan. And, that's where all the action was since Alex was stuck in the hospital, but even the ending of the story was more closure for Carolyn than it was for Alex.

Overall:

This was an enticing thriller that made sense and was easy and fun to follow with a great cast of characters. I would read more of Kristen Twardowski's books and recommend this to people who love a good thriller.

Favorite Quote:

"His bark of laughter curdled the air." --Kristen Twardowski, When We Go Missing

*This review was originally posted on RachelPoli.com

Yecheilyah Ysrayl says

I received this book as a gift from the author

The moment Alex fell for Nathan Radcliffe, I knew that something wasn't right. I imagine he saw her from a distance, watching her confused and lost, and knew she was easy prey. Whatever the reason, I knew something was slightly off kilter because she trusted him too quickly.

When We Go Missing is the debut novel of Kristen Twardowski and tells the story of one woman's struggle to convince a psychiatric hospital that she is not crazy and that her husband is in fact, a killer. We first meet Alex on a boat. She has been kidnapped and is being taken to an undisclosed location. It is soon that Alex realizes she's been taken to a psychiatric hospital and that the story concerning her mental well-being is in question. She is being told that her husband is a good guy who visits her every week. Her last name is even different from what she remembers.

Alex even screams in the night like the other patients and experiences delusions and paranoia. This leads her to question her own sanity and although I knew more than Alex did, from a reader's perspective there were moments where I wondered if I knew what I thought I knew! I found myself questioning Alex's state of mind. Was she really kidnapped? Is her husband really a killer? Or did she make this all up? What really happened to Alex Gardinier? I love books like these! They make me think.

Though Alex is the woman to which the story primarily surrounds, this is not the story of one woman but a group of women who go missing every day. This book lets the reader in on some of the things that could happen and do happen when we go missing. I couldn't help but to imagine myself in the women's shoes and to contemplate the importance of women knowing how to fight (includes using weapons), understanding our surroundings and getting to know the men we are with! It takes time to truly get to know someone and there are red flags that should never be ignored. We all have flaws and marriage provides a lifetime platform to work those flaws out. However, some things are beyond "normal" issues and are just weird. Don't ignore the weird stuff.

I loved the "six degrees of separation" type feel that Kristen gave to the women involved as well and how this would all tie into the truth concerning Alex's fate.

Lynn says

Excellent book for a first time author. I was drawn in immediately and couldn't wait to find out the truth. Great mystery.

The Library Ladies says

(originally reviewed at thelibraryladies.com)

During my time studying psychology in my high school and college careers, there were a number of case studies that freaked me out. Be it because of ethical problems (The Milgram Experiment), animal cruelty (Harlow Monkey Experiment), or just flat out human terribleness (The Stanford Prison Experiment), many studies have told us a lot, but have ridiculous messed up connotations. But one that seems perfect for a horror story is the Rosenhan Experiment, where non-mentally ill people faked symptoms to get inside mental institutions... and then found it pretty near impossible to get out, even when they stopped reporting symptoms. So when "When We Go Missing" ended up in the blog email box, and seemed to touch on exactly that, I thought "Oh yes. This could work." And on top of that, it was written by fellow book and literature blogger Kristen Twardowski! So of course I gotta give a shout out of solidarity to her!

And there may be mild spoilers here, but I promise that I won't give too much away, nor will I give away anything that I don't think isn't established pretty early on, and therefore fair game.

Though the description makes it sound like it's going to be mostly from Alex's point of view, "When We Go Missing" actually follows the experiences and points of view of a number of women, all of whom are connected to Alex in one way or another. All of them have their own unique perspectives and experiences, and I appreciated the pieces of the larger, overarching puzzle that they provided. I do think that the description may be a little misleading in some ways, as I feel that through these multiple perspectives we find out quite early that Alex is not necessarily crazy, and that Nathan has somehow gotten away with sticking her into a Portuguese mental institution after he escaped from prison. But this still works, because now the mystery is how did he do this, how is Alex going to escape when she has been diagnosed as insane, and is Nathan going to get away with it. I am far more interested in figuring this out as opposed to 'is Alex an unreliable narrator?', a trope that I am pretty much well and over at this point.

Besides Alex's story, be it before her time in the asylum or during it, we get the stories of Carolyn, Sandra, and Lucia. Carolyn is Alex's sister, a woman who has never felt comfortable or trusting around Nathan, but doesn't know how to say so. I really appreciated how her character progressed, and I totally believed her choices when it came to her sister and her sister's marriage. While some may wonder how Carolyn couldn't tell Alex her reservations, I found it to be pretty realistic that she may not feel it her place, or that she doesn't have a leg to stand on. I'm someone who isn't terribly close to her sister, and while the girl has a great head on her shoulders and has yet to make a terrible decision in regards to her personal life, I wonder if I'd have the courage to say if she had. So that resonated with me. Another character, Sandra, is actually the character I was most intrigued by, and found to be the most tragic. Sandra's daughter disappeared, and she is trying to make sense of what happened to her. This journey takes her to the realization that a lot of women, many whom society may not miss, have gone missing, and that they may be connected. Her story was the one that I most looked forward to in terms of plotting, as it was definitely the saddest and the one that made me feel the most of all of the threads. And finally there was Lucia, a nurse at the asylum that Alex was being held in. She was another very interesting device for the story, acting as detective for the reader as we followed the hospital storyline through her eyes as well as Alex's. I liked seeing Lucia try to figure out if the woman

being detained in room 203 is insane, or if there is a larger conspiracy going on around her, and just how high up it goes. Because really, while the Rosenhan Experiment was upsetting in how it exposed the ineptitude of psychiatric hospitals diagnostic practices, wouldn't it have been so much worse if it had all been one big conspiracy to keep the 'patients' in? And THAT is the thing about this book that freaked me out the most.

There was a fair amount of jumping around in this book, timeline wise, which was a little confusing at first. Once I got the hang out it, however, it went a lot smoother, and I didn't feel as lost as when I started. I think that it's just a matter of getting used to the pacing and the jumping, which took a little bit of patience from me, a girl with ADD and a need for instant gratification.

"When We Go Missing" was an entertaining read that kept me guessing in a number of ways up through the last pages. It definitely hits a number of original themes and plot points, and I think that it would appeal to those of us who want something fresh from our psychological thrillers.

Beth (bibliobeth) says

First of all, a huge thank you to the author Kristen Twardowski for getting in touch with me, asking me if I'd like to read her novel and providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review. I've got to say, I'm being very strict about which review copies I'm accepting at the moment as I have a huge backlog but after reading the synopsis of Kristen's novel, I simply couldn't resist. This book is a fascinating and very promising debut that is not only thrilling but intensely disturbing at points.

You want unreliable narrators? You have them in the form of main character Alex Gardinier who has been admitted to a psychiatric hospital by her loving husband, Nathan for her own safety. Alex has been placed on strong medication and is undergoing paranoia, delusions and hallucinations but there is one thing she is certain of. She is demonstrably not mad, should not be institutionalised and her husband is dangerous. However, because of the language barrier and the Portuguese hospital staff's beliefs that she is insane she cannot convince them that she is telling the truth.

At first, I thought this was going to be a novel all about Alex and the terrible situation she found herself in and I was delighted to discover that with each new chapter came a new, fresh point of view from another female character that is in some (sometimes tenuous way) connected to Alex or her husband, Nathan. We hear from Lucia, a Portuguese nurse at the hospital, Alex's sister Carolyn who has always been suspicious of Nathan ever since their early relationship and a woman called Sandra Jackson who is the mother of a missing woman and is desperate to find out what happened to her daughter.

I don't really want to say too much about the plot but it all comes together beautifully to form a fascinating portrait of a troubled marriage, horrific events and psychological distress that was gripping and compelling to read. I loved how we got to hear from a number of different women who were all written so perfectly that I could instantly picture each one in my mind's eye and appreciate their individual voice. It's a convoluted plot introducing many potential heroines and villains but one I highly enjoyed untangling and I predict great things in the future for Kristen Twardowski.

For my full review and many more please visit my blog at <http://www.bibliobeth.com>

Shannon Hollinger says

The plot of this debut release from indie author Kristen Twardowski was fresh and exciting. The characters were realistic and well developed, and the voice was interesting. The suspense was intense, with a twisty, psychological, underneath the skin kind of tension. Can't wait to see what else this author has in store! 4 stars!

Annabel Marks says

When We Go Missing is a psychological thriller that is a quick read. The book deals with Alex Gardinier, a woman whose husband may or may not be a murderer. If he is one, then she is desperately afraid that he will kill again.

Though the description makes it sound like book is told entirely from Alex's perspective, it actually follows several different women's stories. There are some time jumps that were a little confusing to me at first, but I got the hang of it eventually. I really like the characters though even if I wanted to strangle Alex sometimes.

This type of story has gained a lot of popularity recently with *Gone Girl* and *Girl on the Train*, but *When We Go Missing* is a good addition to the genre. I really enjoyed it! Four stars.

I got this book as an ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Marian Thorpe says

When We Go Missing by Kristen Twardowski is a competently crafted thriller and a promising debut. A young woman, Alex, falls for a charming man, Nathan; her sister's antipathy towards him is dismissed. But Nathan is not what he seems...and Alex slowly realizes this.

Told from the viewpoints of several characters over time, the author handles the various voices well and threads the related stories together effectively, creating sympathetic characters without letting their individual stories overwhelm the direction of the narrative. Tension and conflict are created, and mount throughout the story, well-paced until the denouement. Here, I felt the story faltered: the related stories have woven together to create two narratives both heading for a climax, and in both cases the climax disappoints: the solution in both cases is just a little too simple.

But *When We Go Missing* was an enjoyable read, keeping my attention and making me wonder how the story would unfold. Definitely, it's worth considering as a beach or plane book! Four stars for a debut novel that strongly suggests there will be more to look forward to by Kristen Twardowski.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.
