

HOW TO FIND A MISSING GIRL

by Victoria Wlosok

Published in 2023

Rating (0 stars is the absolute worst, 10 stars is the BEST BOOK EVER)



Genre(s):



Contemporary



Action/adventure



Science Fiction



Fantasy



Romance



Horror



Mystery



Nonfiction



Historical fiction



Other:

In this thrilling detective story that caters to fans of an LGBTQ+ characters and mystery-podcast lovers, the tale follows Louisiana resident Iris Blackthorn, an amateur sleuth deeply affected by the unsolved disappearance of her cheerleader sister, Stella, a year ago. Determined to uncover the truth, Iris forms an unusual detective team with Sammy Valdez-Taylor, a hacker, and Imani Turner, a costume designer. The stakes heighten when Iris's ex-girlfriend, Heather, goes missing after releasing a controversial podcast episode about Stella and after her boyfriend is revealed to have cheated on her. The detective agency, navigating Iris's complex relationships, delves into the secrets concealed within Heather's podcast, titled "How to Find a Missing Girl." Amid suspenseful twists, the characters, including the intriguing Lea Li Zhang, a student journalist with a complicated past with Iris, adds another layer of unusuality to the story. Beyond the excitement, the narrative explores realistic emotional challenges, offering a nuanced portrayal of personal struggles from various backgrounds and representations. The story concludes with a riveting finale, providing both satisfaction and room for contemplation.

This book was an easy read and I loved the representation from various cultures and sexualities. However, this book doesn't bring anything new to the table. It felt like it was trying too hard to be the next A Good Girl's Guide to Murder (AGGTM), and it went overboard, almost making Iris feel like a copy of Pippa, which was a bit uncomfortable to read and stand as it was like parts of AGGTM were just copied into this book. Iris's amateur detective skills were not that impressive – most of what she finds out is handed to her by others and almost common sense-making her claim of being a detective seem almost exaggerated. The podcast part of the story felt unnecessary; the episodes didn't really contribute to the mystery, and it was weird that the main character didn't even listen to them until halfway through the investigation because you would think that listening to the last time the victim spoken was important. But, to be fair, the author is still a full-time student at university and is therefore still learning her craft. I did like the romantic side of the story, though. Even the characters had a sweet connection, and I was happy with how their story ended. I do think the author has potential, and I would read Victoria's work again in the future.

By Monisha R, 11th grade, enjoys reading mystery, fantasy, horror, and romance