



Damage Done

Amanda Panitch

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"In the vein of E. Lockhart's *We Were Liars* and Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, Panitch's novel delivers a heart-pounding, emotionally charged story." --SLJ

22 minutes separate Julia Vann's before and after.

Before: Julia had a twin brother, a boyfriend, and a best friend.

After: She has a new identity, a new hometown, and memories of those twenty-two minutes that refuse to come into focus. At least, that's what she tells the police.

Now that she's Lucy Black, her fresh start has attracted the attention of one of the hottest guys in school, a boy who will do anything to protect her. But when someone much more dangerous also takes notice, Lucy's forced to confront the dark secrets she thought were safely left behind. How far will Julia go to keep her slate clean?

One thing is clear: The damage done can never be erased. It's only just beginning. . . .

In this deliciously twisted contemporary YA, family can be a real killer. For fans of *We Were Liars* and readers who love unique multiple perspectives that leave clues like breadcrumbs until they reach this thriller's stunning conclusion.

"The closest we're going to get to a YA *Gone Girl*. . . . I was shocked and delightfully appalled by the twist and what followed. (Just read it; it's disturbingly wonderful, especially for YA.)" --Entertainment Weekly

"Teen fans of Gillian Flynn and James Patterson will embrace *Damage Done* and clamor for more." --Booklist

"Exceedingly clever and surprisingly unsettling, *Damage Done* is an unforgettable read." --Melissa Marr, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Made for You*

"In her incredible debut novel, Amanda Panitch leaves you on the edge of your seat. Prepare to be stunned. Prepare to be torn apart." --Roxane Gay, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Bad Feminist*

"A real page-turner. . . . Nothing can prepare readers for its bombshell ending." --New York Daily News

"A brilliant thriller. Gillian Flynn for the YA set." --Amy Christine Parker, author of *Gated*

"If you're a fan of shows like *Pretty Little Liars* or *Revenge*, give this book a try." --Bustle.com

Damage Done Details

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Author : Amanda Panitch

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From Reader Review Damage Done for online ebook

Marla Mei says

This review is also posted at Her Book Thoughts! (Oh, did I forget to mention? Yes, I just recently became one of the new co-bloggers at Her Book Thoughts! and will also be posting my reviews there from now on.)

Early praises for this book were very positive and it was even dubbed as the ‘Gillian Flynn for the YA set.’ I’ve never read any Gillian Flynn but I know how highly praised and raved her books are so I wouldn’t go so far as to calling it that. Because honestly, **Damage Done is mediocre at its best**. True, it was a fast and extremely compelling read but only because I was itching to know the truth.

The narrator is such a liar and it was obvious from the start how skilled she is at it. It made me think how much lying she’s done already in her life as Julia Vann before she became Lucy Black **because she’s so good**. Who wouldn’t be fascinated with sifting the truth from all those lies especially when every word that she’s spewing out of her mouth could probably be all pure lies? **Never for one second did ever I let my guard down and trusted Julia/Lucy.** And for that, I have the author to thank for not pulling any punches in making her as calculating and unreliable as she is. I loved it. For most of the time, I enjoyed being inside her thoughts.

I said most of the time because there were times when I just couldn’t care. **It was easy for me to lose focus on what I was reading especially when the scenes became way too unbelievable and stupid for me.** One scene in particular is the one where Lucy entered a highly secured prison by posing as one of the officers without even getting noticed. Okaaay. I couldn’t get my head around of this ever happening in real life. There were a lot more of the same unrealistic scenes that made me scrunch my eyebrows one too many times but I’d be spoiling already so just go ahead and see for yourself.

I guess if the entirety of the book was as stimulating as those last remaining chapters, perhaps I would’ve cared more. I was actually really thankful that the author kept giving away clues – even though it made the twist less shocking when it came to the final reveal – because if I wasn’t too busy connecting them, I was mostly just detached.

In spite of everything said above, *Damage Done* is a promising debut that will satiate anyone looking for a carefully-plotted psychological thriller starring a completely untrustworthy narrator that will make you question people (this is why I have trust issues!!!) and I can see now why many people have enjoyed this despite my lack of strong feelings towards it.

Lola says

Damage Done was one hell of a page-turner. Thanks to its many disturbing yet interesting and suspenseful elements, a rather unreliable narrator and plenty of impactful scenes, this novel knew how to keep my interest from dwindling.

Julia Vann isn’t your typical YA main character. She and her twin brother are abnormally close. As in, they can’t stand being separated from each other for even a short period of time. They do everything together: sleep in the same room, sign up to the same clubs, take comfort from one another, *everything*.

But Julia's brother is a psychopath. He kills. He destroys. He doesn't feel a thing, except for his sister's love for him.

This is my first time reading about such a situation: a character having to change name and city because they don't want people to associate them to their murderer of a sibling. Julia became Lucy. Lucy's new life suits her just fine,

until she discovers that her brother woke up from coma and is missing.

Honestly, **I loved every second of the well-thought-out and twisty plot... except for the ending.** But this is a minor complaint. There were some characters that disappointed me; or rather their epilogue disappointed me. And the ending was pretty open... and the last sentence a big fat lie. As if I believed it. Pff!

Lucy was intoxicating, her personality so complex that the book would have deserved a hundred more pages for us to better unravel her. **I never trusted her.** She was too much of a victim for me to think she never had anything to do with what happened... but I liked that. I liked simultaneously doubting her word and digesting everything she ever uttered or thought.

People died in this story. Others got hurt. Some lost their way. It wasn't dark, but no way has it been written to delight you, either.

A one of a kind mystery/thriller. I just can't wait for everyone to have the opportunity to read this.

C.G. Drews says

Okay WOW. **This was simultaneously glorious and terrifying.** And you know how awesome glorious/terrifying books are? FREAKING AWESOME, THAT'S WHAT. Normally I am not thrilled, particularly, by thrillers. But oohhhh, this one *did good*. Although I honestly suspected what the plot twist would be, but not the *extent* of it. SO HUZZAH ALL AROUND.

So basically it's the story of twins, Julia and Ryan, **and the aftermath of Ryan shooting 11 people at their old school.** He's in a coma and Julia + parents are trying to rebuild their lives in secret. It's always intensely sad to read about shootings? And this is like from the perspective-of-the-shooter's-sister, so it reminded me of Hate List quite a lot. But that was more emotional. Julia rather had it together? Go Julia.

I have to admit though, I had to suspend disbelief a lot. That's literally my *only* negative. There are a lot of convenient plot developments and police fumbles that really wouldn't happen in real life. And I don't think it's entirely realistic how easily (view spoiler)

But **omg the rest was absolutely perfect and engaging and TERRIFYING.** I loved the writing style! I adored Julia's voice. She's this mixture of slightly self-deprecating humour, slashed with intense traumatised meltdowns. She felt venerable but *coping* at the beginning, and I loved her voice. I also loved her obsession with hot chocolate. I MEAN WHO DOESN'T LIKE HOT CHOCOLATE?!?

Also we can take a moment for Michael: the insanely adorable love interest. Like, duuuuudes, this boy was ADORABLE. He cooked for her (!!) and I'm beginning to ship him with myself, tbh. Any guy who makes a girl an omelette or from-scratch lasagna is a winner. Also **the best friend, Alane, was pretty epic too.** And I just have to say I LOVE how easily fleshed-out all the secondary characters were. No one felt

paperly platish. (Yes that is totally a thing.)

Okay so can we talk about the plot twist now? THE FREAKING PLOT TWIST (!!!!). Obviously no spoilers but *woah*. I was sucked in. It was perfectly revealed, although, *maaaaybe* a little info-dumpy at the end there? But I didn't even care because I WAS GLUED TO THE PAGE.

---> Spoilers about the plot twist!! ---> (view spoiler)

Although, the word "sociopathy" was tossed around? I honestly think *psychopathy* is the better phrase. I just finished reading another book (My Sister Rosa which is A+++) about psychopath and this fits that more than sociopathy, tbh. RANDOM. But just putting it out there.

Anyway, this is a thriller NOT TO BE MISSED. It totally twists your brain and it's addictive to read...and it's kind of calm at the beginning? Like you get sucked in and you're not really scared or anything -- UNTIL THE ENDING PUNCHES YOU. Positively good.

(Also *HI FIVE* to my #BookishTwin Zoe who is never wrong with her book recommendations. <3)

Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

Damage Done is one of those books that push us far outside our comfort zones, making us feel confused, scared and completely disgusted. It was a considerable feat for Amanda Panitch and a huge risk to take for a debut novel, but being courageous enough to stretch the boundaries or even erase them altogether can certainly pay off, and it did.

We meet Julia Vann as she's getting accustomed to her new life, in a new city and under a different name. Her parents packed up and ran from their past after a horrible crime, mostly for her benefit, and now she's alone in a new city for the first time in her life, a tabula rasa free to become anything at all.

It's clear from the start that Lucy/Julia has a lot to hide as she's very consciously lying and manipulating her way through her new environment. The terrible crime her brother committed might be a looming shadow over her life, but her exact role in it remains unclear until the end. Through her eyes, as she slowly reveals her past to us, we see the development of a sociopath, feared by everyone but herself. While it's clear that people can be born evil, it's also quite obvious that nothing is ever that simple. Even those born with something essential missing can be changed by their environment, if those around them are interested or caring enough to actually get involved. Damage Done is a psychological thriller first, but at the same time, it's a critique of parents, the school system and even, to a degree, mental health professionals, who can become so absorbed in their own problems that they completely miss the warning signs of those they're responsible for.

Damage Done works hard to shock and astonish and it succeeds to a degree. It would probably work best for someone who'd go into it blindly, unaware of the many comparisons to Gillian Flynn and other similar thrillers. But even aware that something is coming, I couldn't have possibly guessed the full extent of it or how unsettling it would all be.

For all the attention it gave to its protagonist, the book painfully neglected the secondary characters, leaving

them unexplored, unexplained and completely two-dimensional, starting with Julia's parents and ending with her new boyfriend Michael. Such lack of serious characterization should not have happened in what is essentially a psychological thriller, where everything is, and should be, about the characters.

Overall, *Damage Done* is disconcerting and scary as hell, but it's a much needed breath of fresh air in YA fiction. I'm still reeling from the effect it had on me, and although uncomfortable, it makes for a nice change after all the lukewarm, forgettable reads.

A copy of this book was kindly provided by the publisher for review purposes. No considerations, monetary or otherwise, have influenced the opinions expressed in this review.

Max Baker says

Thank you Netgalley for providing me a free review copy in exchange for an honest review

THIS ENTIRE REVIEW IS PRETTY MUCH A HUGE SPOILER. PROCEED WITH CAUTION.

I. TOTALLY. CALLED. IT!

A few days ago I reviewed Hannah Jayne's *The Escape* and found it largely uninspiring. But, I'm happy to report that *Damage Done* has restored my faith in YA psychological thrillers.

I got roughly two chapters into the book before I (correctly) guessed the big twist at the end, but despite that, I never found myself bored with *Damage Done* and that's because this is how a psychological thriller should be. This book is dark, twisted, and absolutely fucked up. It's a perfect balance between all the aforementioned elements while being compelling.

Even though I called the ending early on, my heart was still pounding during the reveal and I must chalk that up to Panitch's amazing writing. Julia/Lucy has got to be one of the best unreliable narrators period. I don't think I've ever read a character like this before and being in her head was an absolute roller coaster. Not only has Panitch mastered the art of a selfish character, but she also managed to create someone we actually root for. I wanted Julia to be happy with Michael and Alane. I wanted her to be okay even though I knew she wasn't telling the truth.

It becomes fairly obvious that Julia was a compulsive liar from the beginning, but her being a full blown sociopath was flippin' awesome. I understood Julia's mindset, I saw how she manipulated everyone around her, I felt how emotionless she really was. She was so real and, in the end, she was just a great character. Fucked up, defiantly, but still great. Even though I knew Julia was a sociopath, I still wanted to know what happened. Her voice was so chilling and so clever. God, I cannot give Panitch enough credit for this character. Bravo.

I also loved her relationship with her brother. It took me a little but longer to guess the whole incest part, but once I did, I actually had to go back and look how she viewed her brother. The clues were subtle, but numerous. And even while I was reading about how Julia and Ryan's relationship began, I was still disgusted, but my god, Julia and Ryan had such passion. I could feel how obsessive Julia's relationship was with her brother and how willing Ryan would do anything Julia asked of him. This is also one of the best unhealthy and obsessive relationships I've ever read about. Their relationship was fucked up, but done

beautifully.

While Ryan is billed as the villain in the story, it's actually Julia. She's the brains behind the school shooting. She's the one who manipulates Ryan into taking the fall for her. Both Ryan and Julia emulate a different kind of killer: Ryan, a disorganized psychopath, and Julia, a cunning sociopath. When you combine the two, and make them not only brother and sister but in "love" you've got one hell of a story.

The plot itself did drag on for a bit, okay a lot, but Julia is such a character it took me a while to notice. For the most part, the book is mainly about Julia, now called Lucy, trying to move on with her life after the school shooting. There's a best friend, Alane, and a love interest, Michael. Both of these characters were great compliments to Julia. I loved their sarcastic and witty back and forth, but I liked the subtleties in their relationship a lot more.

Julia is a liar and manipulative. During the slow parts of the book, which there are plenty, I enjoyed picking out the little ways Julia manipulated them. That's how you do side characters. They manage to further and clarify the protagonist's personality while still having their own. These characters aren't one dimensional; they're real authentic characters that just feel in with the wrong girl.

I guess my only real grievance with this book is the adults. Julia's parents were all over the place. One moment they're hiding everything from their daughter and the next they're being all touchy-feely despite Julia's insistence that's not who they are. And yes, I know unreliable narrator, but they completely embodied those traits except for maybe one scene that was completely out of character.

The other is Dr. Atlas Spence, who is probably the worst therapist ever. During the book we get journal entries by this guy about working with Ryan. These entries really don't further the plot or any character growth the reader hasn't already seen. It seemed like they were to further Spence's character and show just how much he really didn't care about Ryan or his troubles. The guy only cared about what diagnosing and helping Ryan would do for his career rather than thinking about the consequences about having a tiny sociopath on his hands.

That being said, I wasn't surprised when Ryan told him about Julia. He was, after all, the only person besides Julia the guy liked. However, his character never really goes anywhere because he dies. All that characterization...wasted.

I don't think I can accurately end this review without stating how I knew the ending. As I've stated before I read a lot of psychological thrillers and, like with any genre you read too much of, you begin picking up on things. Julia's entire narrative is riddled with little Easter eggs that are pretty easy to find if you know where to look. That being said, I think someone who doesn't read a lot of thrillers will be even more blown away than I was. I defiantly recommend this to anyone looking for something fucked up and awesome.

Bonnie says

My rating: 3.5 of 5 stars

'I only did what I did to protect myself. I didn't have any other options.'

Julia Vann had the seemingly perfect life before the incident. She belonged to a happy family, had a twin brother she was incredibly close to, close friends, and a boyfriend she thinks she could love. The incident took that all away and left her and her family packing up their belongings to move to a new town with new

names where nobody knows who they are. Lucy Black has a chance to start over, to start fresh, but her past proves to be a bit more inescapable than she thought.

Julia/Lucy was a very surprising character and her first-person narrative which carefully entwines the past and present was written extremely well. She was quite a distorted character that at first appears to be like any normal teenager, but the subtle glimpses that begin to leak through her façade tells a whole other story. Was it the incident that transformed her or does her past provide the real answers? The side characters weren't as impressive: the dutiful boyfriend that comes over to make her homemade soup when she isn't feeling well, the devoted best friend that asks no questions, and even the absent parents that we see very little of. The legal technicalities did manage to raise some eyebrows as well, however, despite these issues that could have brought down the whole story, Panitch still impressed me with an incredibly riveting tale.

Damage Done is quite the twisted mystery and the summary does little to prepare you for what's in store. I think it's best kept that way, seeing as the reveal was quite the impressive twist, even if it was foreshadowed early on. The first twist isn't the only twist though and this is one engrossing mystery that will keep you speculating. Panitch has another YA psychological thriller coming up in 2016, *Never Missing, Never Found* that will most certainly be on my TBR.

I received this book free from the Publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

The major problem with this book is that it is sold as a *Gone Gori*-ish thriller. It involves mass murder. It involves amnesia. It involves a fake new identity, although it didn't quite take the witness-protection route. Sounds great, right?!

I've felt more thrilled while eating a sandwich made with one of those plastic cheese slices.

There's just really not much I can say about this book because it was just so bloody bland. It was emotionless. Of course there's romance---this is an YA book, after all---but it was awkward and forced and the love interest holds as much appeal as a wittle puppy. Oh, wait, that's how the main character feels about him, too.

He was basically a golden retriever in human form: big, sweet, earnest, and a little bit dumb.

Can you feel the love tonight?

It was just so, so dispassionate. Julia/Lucy's brother is insane. Before the book happened, he burst into a classroom and killed 11 classmates.

"Eleven people died," I said. "One was my boyfriend. One was my best friend. One was my teacher. I knew the others, but not super well."

I suppose this book is brilliant in a way that it made me feel nothing whatsoever for those who had died, and those who had been left behind. The book was disjoint, there was no established setting, we're plunged into the middle of a tragedy without knowing much of the characters involved, and in fact, I never cared a whit for what I learned. The twist was not shocking, and completely foreseeable from the beginning. The twist actually held so much potential that could have been far more brilliantly portrayed with better writing.

Wendy Darling says

3.5 stars This thriller has a pretty great reveal--and while I think it was telegraphed fairly early, the premise holds up under scrutiny and the twist won't be spoiled for you even if you guess it.

I do wish, however, that the entire book had been written with the same tautness and electricity as its last three chapters. I didn't love the writing style or the characterizations (the boyfriend Michael is particularly cartoony) before that, and almost everything that wasn't specifically related to the central mystery felt underdeveloped. Still, the mystery part is well-plotted and structured, and the twist is a good one--and even delivers on the shock/recoil factor even if you'd been paying attention ahead of time and anticipated what was going to happen. That, and its untraditional ending, are enough to bump up this book's rating considerably in my eyes.

You might enjoy this if you liked certain elements of *Fury* and *Complicit*, though again, the writing style is a far cry from those. I did like that the author doesn't pull punches (view spoiler), though.

Maybe a bit more of a review to come. A promising debut.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life.

I am a little surprised by how much I ended up enjoying this book! I have to admit that I went into this book with rather low expectations so the fact that this turned out to be really good makes me very happy. The more I read of the story the more I was hooked. I had to leave for work with only 4 chapters of the book left to read and I found myself sneaking peeks all day until I finished. This is not my normal behavior but I just had to know how this book would end. I couldn't get this book out of my mind until I read the very last word. Very few books are that hard for me to put down and I appreciate the ones capture my attention like this one did.

I did guess some of the major twists in this book but I never felt confident that I had it figured out. I felt compelled to keep turning pages to see if my guess was right and sometimes it was. There was a whole lot in this story that I never expected to see and there was enough unpredictability to really keep things interesting. I think that the manner in which everything was revealed really kept the story suspenseful until the very end.

I found the characters to be really interesting. Lucy, also known as Julia, was probably one of the most interesting characters that I have read in quite some time. The story is told from her point of view and it is that storytelling that held my attention. Her friends, Michael and Alane, were the perfect support system for Lucy. I didn't really relate to any of the characters or find them to be very likeable but I also didn't dislike any of them. I think that all of the characters fit perfectly into this little story just as they are.

I thought that the pacing of this story was near perfect. The plot never hit a slow point. There was just enough information given as the story progressed to raise more questions. The more I learned the more I felt I needed to know. I really liked this author's writing style and found this to be a very easy to read book.

I would highly recommend this book to others. This is a YA novel but it is a little darker than usual book in

this genre. It does deal with violence including a school shooting so it may not be the right book for some younger teen readers. This is Amanda Panitch's debut novel and I can't wait to see what else she comes up with in the future.

I received an advance reader edition of this book from Random House Books for Young Readers via NetGalley for the purpose of providing an honest review.

Stacee says

Wow. Wow. Wow. This was amazing.

I really liked Lucy. Being in her head was captivating and I was hooked within the first few pages of starting. She had great friends in Alane and Michael and the dynamic of the friendship was interesting to see as things started to get revealed.

I refuse to say anything about what the plot is about. I had 3 different theories while reading and none of them were correct. And when I finally got the truth of everything, I was blown away.

The subject matter definitely isn't for everyone, but it was some of the best mindfuckery I've read in a while.

****Huge thanks to Random House and NetGalley for providing the arc in exchange for an honest review****

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to Random House Children's and NetGalley.)

“You have to understand, my brother and I were born hand in hand. As in, we literally had our fingers entwined inside the womb.”

This was an interesting YA mystery story, and the answer as to what had happened was even more messed-up than I guessed!

Julie seemed a bit traumatised by what had happened to her, and once we began to find out what had happened it was clear why. I did think that Julie herself came across as a little odd, but that could have been put down to PTSD.

“What happened in the band room, Julie?”

The storyline in this was about Julie's new life, and also about her brother (can't say any more because of spoilers though). I did guess some of the details of what had happened, but I didn't guess it all as it was even worse than I expected!

“Eleven people died,” I said. “One was my boyfriend. One was my best friend. One was my teacher.”

There was some romance in this, but it was a bit weird, and wasn't the sort of thing you could enjoy, as it was very controversial.

“You sound just like your brother.”

The ending to this was okay, and overall the story was okay, I would have liked a faster pace though.

6 out of 10

Nikka says

I received an advance digital copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review ? thanks!

Read an ARC here

Wow. That was one hell of a ride.

I couldn't even begin to explain how this book made me feel. I'm out of words. But I'll try, it's the least I can do.

Julia and Ryan Vann are twins.

Once upon a time, 11 people died in the band room.

Ryan was responsible.

Julia was in the band room.

She's the only one who got out alive.

Now "Lucy Black", Julia and her parents moved to the other side of the country to leave their past behind.

But it wouldn't stop hunting them.

I was only a few chapters in, but I knew I was in for something great. The plot sounds crazy, the characters are intriguing, and the voice of Julia Vann ? Lucy Black, whatever ? is so real, you could feel her narrating *TO* you and not *FOR* you. Does that make sense?

The best part of this book is Julia.

Not Michael the ridiculously hot swimmer boyfriend.

Not Alane the most supportive best friend in the world.

Not Ryan the twin brother slash murderer.

It's Julia.

In the beginning chapters of the book, you'd feel nothing but sympathy for her. What a strong young girl she is, right? But as you read on, you'd notice how creepy she's become ~~or how creepy she's always been~~ and you start to doubt her and as well as your own judgment.

I stayed up until 3AM to finish this book and I was literally too paranoid to sleep. IT'S SO GOOD.

Julia is the most unreliable yet convincing narrator I've encountered so far. She's so sketchy!

It's as though she'd put a leash on my neck, yanks it and tells me "No" every time I think bad of her and, on the other hand, kiss me on the nose, feed me my favourite food and tells me "Yes, good girl!" when I do otherwise.

Yes, Amanda Panitch is one good storyteller.

And yes, the narrator is *that* strong and creepy.

I did predict some parts of the ending (view spoiler) but that didn't affect my reading experience.

Disturbing, intriguing, and twisted — the story of Julia and Ryan Vann is just one of the many examples of things that people are capable of when they lack of parental guidance. It's very obvious throughout the story that their parents weren't as involved as parents should be.

Towards the ending, Julia kept questioning her feelings. *Was that love? Was this love? How do you know you love someone? I don't know what love is.* It's as though she never experienced being loved. And although I knew she was hiding something, I couldn't help but root for her.

I really really enjoyed this book.

It's fucked up, but beautifully.

Beautifully fucked up.

5 STARS = HELL YES.

Recommend if you like

Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn

We Were Liars by E. Lockhart

The Pact by Jodi Picoult

Dahlia says

I don't even want to say anything about this book because it's one of those you just need to read for yourself, but I read it when it was still in manuscript form and Oh. My. God. You could not pry my Kindle from my hands with a crowbar while I was devouring it. If you love psychological thrillers, you need this book like you don't even know.

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

Brace yourself because this review might be all over the place only because my thoughts are as well.

How did I feel about this crazy messed up read? At times upset at the parents, confused about Ryan and

Julia's relationship, and other times mad at the psychologist who was obsessed with getting into the BAU instead of the actual case. And other times, completely enthralled with the story and wondering what possible messed up twist was coming, because I knew it was coming, it was only a matter of when and how.

So how did I feel about this story? I think it is safe to say, I felt a little bit of everything.

This is definitely one that you don't want to miss out on if you love something that will completely mess with your mind and throw you for a loop. It was one crazy ride that I'm not sorry I took, no matter how twisted it ended up being.

I really did enjoy this and of course, was disgusted with it as well. I saw many things coming but there were quite a few I didn't and I loved that. Overall, it was hard not to be caught up in the mystery, intrigue, and the characters themselves. It was hard not to be fascinated, sort of like a train wreck you can't resist sneaking a peek at and then feeling sick over by the time you go by but still somewhat glad you looked and satiated your curiosity.

A review copy was provided in exchange for an honest review.

Alienor ✖ French Frowner ✖ says

Re : Damage Done fail

Damage Done presents as a **psychological thriller** following on the success of *Gone Girl* (which I haven't read yet, I trust other readers on this), *Dangerous Girls* and *Dangerous Boys* (which I loved). It starts quite well with an unreliable narrator, Lucy, who's afraid her family's past is about to explode in her face. Her family's past being **her brother shooting eleven students in their former high-school**. Now that's a prime example of a shitty family history, isn't it? But we'll come back to that. At first glance, it seems like something I would devour with delight : an unreliable and manipulative main character, a mystery to unravel, trust issues... What not to love? Sadly, many things.

True Fact : *If a romance isn't working, it's not working.*

What about the romance, you're asking? Well, **I thought the romance was TERRIBLE**. Terrible, as in :

- 1) No chemistry, as in "I never felt ANYTHING"
- 2) Cheesy lines which sound hollow
- 3) Overused scenes (the cooking, the gentlemanly behavior, blabla, blablabla, and blablabla...)

Meet Michael, the love interest. *Who?* *frowns* I'm serious, WHO? Haha just kidding. Almost. To say that I found him bland and completely uninteresting would be an understatement. Indeed I never ever felt something towards him - he didn't annoy me, nah. But then, to me he brought nothing to the story, and never managed to make me care about him - I mean it, he could have been morphed into a golden retriever for all I care. Oh, but wait! He *did*!

"He was basically a golden retriever in human form : big, sweet, earnest, and a little bit dumb."

Okay, kidding, kidding. So true though. So true.

I want to digress here, because I need to talk about **the cooking scene**. Talk about missing parents and unrealistic scenes. Here's how it went : *The guy shows up at her house and literally cooks her an omelet and then they eat and her mother is upstairs BUT never realizes that a guy is in her house making dinner. SO FUCKING WEIRD.*

Michael : Hey! I saw you wasn't well earlier at the bar so I thought it would be nice to bring you ice-cream.

Lucy : Hmm yes well that's adorable but you shouldn't have, I'm making dinner right now

Michael : *Enters the house* What? (*Looks at the sandwich she made*) Is it your dinner? That's decided, I'm making dinner for you.

Lucy : Sure!

Anna : Ugh no I mean we don't really know each other and my mum is upstairs so well, no.

Michael : Lalalalala I'm a great cook and I'm making an omelet!

Lucy : Wow. How efficient.

Anna : No, really, that's weird. I mean, no, don't go in there.

Anna's mum : Chérie? What's this noise? Who's this guy I never met and you never talked about and what is he doing in our kitchen making dinner?

Lucy's mum : zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzZZzzzzzzzzzzzzzzZZzz

To sum up, **I never bought Lucy and Michael "love" story - not for one second**, and to me it was useless as their relationship could have been switched to friendship without never impacting the storyline.

Moreover, I know that they're supposed to have "known" each others for several months (and by "known" I mean that they talked 4 times to each others in class (No kidding. Michael *counted*), but to me **the romance spread strong instalovish vibes** : if I can understand why Lucy decides to get closer to Michael I have NO idea what brings him to want her. **No. Fucking. Idea.** Oh, except she's hot or something.

True Fact : These books that make you think you should have worked for the FBI, because you're clever like that (I'm not really) (that's the point).

Let's clear the air right away : it is a *thriller*, so I know I wouldn't have minded the screwed-up romance if the mystery delivered. In my opinion, **It didn't**. Here's the thing : if you want us to be shocked by a twist, don't make it obvious to guess from 25 fucking %. Indeed I have to admit that I found the thriller part of the book captivating at first, and more Ryan and Lucy's relationship unraveled, more I wanted to learn more, until, well, **until I guessed most of the ending "shocking twists" about 25%**. Although I do have a soft spot for intricate stories where characters are definitely unlikeable and original, the fact is, if you want me to believe in a character's way to tell her story, if I'm meant to *trust* her, don't make it obvious (view spoiler). Just saying.

That's why while at the beginning I appreciated the way Lucy was giving away clues at random moments, putting my brain in high gear every fucking time, I quickly reached a point where I wanted to scream STOOOP!! DON'T TELL ME!

Because hey! I was kidding earlier. I'm not that clever, and in my opinion I shouldn't have guessed, because if I don't mind predictability in romance, in thrillers it quite ruins the point, doesn't it?

True Fact : *THIS? This is not believable.*

Frankly, if I'm okay with little arrangements with the truth, I often couldn't suspend my belief, especially about :

- **Spence's journal** : What is it with this psychologist, for real? His data entries look like a teenager's diary and I didn't buy his implication in the Vann's family drama.
- **Lucy's parents reaction** : Your son is a sociopath? I know, ignore your daughter. Okay, I'm not sure about this one - it did bother me, but I guess it could be an understandable reaction, and I might be too harsh here (maybe?)
- **The cops are fucking DUMB**, even in High Security prisons. (view spoiler)
- **The whole ending** sounded rushed and completely unbelievable to me.

Conclusion : I know I mostly talked about the issues I had with *Damage Done* here, but as you can infer from my rating (2 means that it was okay, I remind), it wasn't a crappy book by any means. Indeed **it was well-written and the premise was interesting**. Unfortunately I wasn't near as enthralled as I thought I would be, and ended disappointed : **for a book which deals with so strong issues, to feel such a little amount of emotions was disturbing, for crying out loud.**

ARC kindly provided by Random House Books for Young Readers through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

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