



The Classroom

A.L. Bird

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Letting go of your daughter for the first time isn't easy

After years of IVF, Kirsten White is a devoted mum to Harriet and she can't believe the time has come to send her little girl off to school. But Harriet has now turned five, and she can't stay Kirsten's baby forever. It might be hard, but it's time to entrust her daughter's care to her new teacher.

the classroom is the one place she should be safe.

Miriam Robertson has been waiting for the perfect little girl to walk into her class. She's very picky but when Harriet walks in, Miriam knows: this is the child she's been waiting for.

Harriet knows not to speak to strangers. But her lovely new teacher isn't a stranger at all. In fact, she's her new best friend. And you can always trust your friends can't you?

The Classroom Details

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From Reader Review The Classroom for online ebook

Darinda says

Kirsten loves her daughter, Harriet, and is nervous about sending her to school for the first time. Miriam is Harriet's Kindergarten teacher, and she's been waiting for the perfect child to walk into her classroom. With Kirsten's busy work schedule, Harriet spends more and more time at school. During that time, Harriet grows closer and closer to Miriam.

Told with alternating points of view and alternate timelines. At first, the flashback timeline is confusing, but as the story progresses, the flashbacks become integral to the story. Obviously, the past is going to catch up with the present in some way, but it isn't clear how things connect until about 30% into the novel.

Kirsten is a working mother who puts in a lot of hours at her job. Kirsten's husband, Ian, is mostly distracted and useless. He seems unconcerned with the issues going on with Kirsten, Harriet, and him. Miriam appears to be a dedicated teacher worried about her students, but she's also a bit unstable. Harriet is a precocious five-year-old. Really, none of the characters are likable, making it difficult to care how things play out. Admittedly, Kirsten seems a little paranoid, but maybe she has a right to be. It seems not everything is as it appears to be, and there are several secrets waiting to be revealed.

An entertaining domestic thriller. Creepy, complex, and twisty.

I received a free eARC of this book from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Katlyn Duncan says

Twisty and thrilling. You'll hold your kids a little closer after reading this book.

This story weaved two different timelines together for one explosive ending. While the characters were flawed, they leaped off the page. Can't wait for more thrills and chills from future novels from A. L. Bird.

Mandy White says

The Classroom... a place that a child should be safe right? Not when the teacher has a hidden agenda! This was the first book by A.L Bird that I have read and it was a great story. A story of lies, desperation and love. The only character that I really did like was the child... the adults were all despicable people out for themselves.

Harriet is now 5 years old and ready to start school. Her parents are both full time career minded people- Kirsten is a GP and Ian a high school teacher. Harriet's teacher Miriam Robertson dotes on her new student, with a plan of her own. The story jumps between the past and present which really didn't make a lot of sense until about 30% in but once it all came together I flew through this book which had a very unexpected twist ending.

Thanks to HQ Digital and NetGalley for the advanced copy of this book to read. All opinions are my own and are in no way biased

Steph Stewart says

The book started off very good, going through the different viewpoints of each character; Kirsten and Miriam.

After many failed attempts at IVF, Kirsten dotes on her daughter who has just started school whilst Miriam has been waiting for the perfect girl to come into her classroom.

The book contains a few chapters back in the past which was quite confusing but it all made sense within the third part of the book.

It's an intense, Fast paced book with lots of twists and turns throughout.

I did rate a 3 as I was disappointed in the ending but it is certainly still a worthwhile read.

Jacqueline Murphy says

This book is told from different perspectives:-

Kirsten finally got what she always wanted, a perfect daughter after so much IVF. Harriet is 5 now and about to embark on her adventure to school but like any new parent, Kirsten is afraid of letting go, added together with working at setting and building up a private doctor's practice is taking its toll on both her relationship with her daughter and her husband (who is less than useless with helping with the childcare and pick ups and drops offs).

Back in 2012, Becky is a straight A student, she and her friend attend a Drama Summer Camp and that's where things go wrong.... Becky is so straight laced that her friends saw fit on the last night of the drama camp to drug her but not only her but the teacher whose in charge of them. Both waking up the following morning together not knowing what had happened, is where it all goes wrong. Was she raped by the teacher, she has no recollection but as a result she is pregnant, turned away by her parents, she has nowhere to go..... and so the Becky story ensues.....

Miriam gets a teaching job in a school and has zoned in on one little girl in particular, Harriet. She feels she is being ignored at home when she asks the children to draw what they did in their holidays, Harriet draws a picture of her sitting in her mother's GP practice playing with toys, Miriam is appalled and believes she is not being taken care of properly and so makes her her pet project starting with beginning a breakfast club.

So it turns out that Kirsten's husband, Ian, headmaster of a failing school and out to prove a point and his reputation has fathered Becky's child, YES she was the girl that was raped/drugged/slept with (that's up for debate as to how to look at it!) and he was the drama teacher. Becky was only 17 and has been persuaded by a psychiatrist friend of Kirsten's that she would be an unfit parent who couldn't be trusted with a baby, so she lets Kirsten & Ian have the baby. With a home birth, they manage to put Kirsten down as the "biological mother".

BUT present day, Becky wants her daughter back and will do anything to achieve that, Kirsten will do anything not to let Becky anywhere near... Ian is playing both sides of the coin.....

With kidnapping, threats of violence, fires, near death..... I'll say no more for fear of ruining it for others

but be prepared for a mind bending twisty psychological read... just when you think you've got your head around it.... HMMMMMM you'll see!!!

Many thanks to Netgalley, HG Digital and A.L. Bird for letting me have an advanced copy in exchange for my honest opinion.

Connie Fischer says

Dr. Kirsten White's daughter, Harriet, age 5, is ready to start school at St. Anthony's. Kirsten is nervous about leaving her but her husband, Ian, himself a headmaster, assures her that Harriet will be fine. Kirsten had a difficult time getting pregnant with Harriet which is one reason she is so protective of her.

Harriet's teacher is Ms. Miriam Robertson. She is so happy to have this job and just wishes she had her own child. Harriet is the one child who has caught her eye and she knows this child will be her special pupil.

Kirsten and Ian have a lot of tension in their marriage. Kirsten is a physician who set up her own private practice and works hard. She strives to work her schedule around Harriet so she can take her to school and pick her up. She feels that Ian works too late as his school is fledgling. She also thinks that he does not love Harriet like she does. Sometimes, Kirsten will have a couple of glasses of wine in the evening which angers Ian.

The story flips to Becky who has decided to join the drama club at school. While it's not something with which she feels comfortable, she drama teacher encourages her participation and she is a success. The drama teacher and Becky end up having a fling one night after too much alcohol, and Becky ends up pregnant. Becky knows she will have to put the baby up for adoption.

When Ms. Robertson sets up a breakfast club for students whose parents need to drop them off early so they can get to work, it's quite successful and the children and parents alike happily adapt to it. But Kirsten seems to feel jealous that Ms. Robertson gets to spend so much time with Harriet resulting in a lot of tension.

When secrets begin to emerge, emotions grow to violence. Whom will be hurt? What is the truth?

This is a story that has it's good parts and brings up the question of true "possession" but some of the emotions expressed just didn't hold true. I have been eager to read a book by this author and must admit that I am a bit disappointed in this book. However, I look forward to reading more because I feel the author is quite talented.

Copy provided by NetGalley in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Mark says

A complex and very interesting read!

Firstly I really enjoyed it

Secondly there are plot flaws and areas of the story that were not quite believable BUT because the book was so well written and fascinating I glossed them over in my mind (like you do a good tv series or film)

Harriet is starting school, her teacher is also starting her new job at the school....Ms Robertson takes a shine

to Harriet....then 'just happens' to walk past her house one Saturday afternoon....Harriets Mum Kirsten invites her in, Harriet is thrilled.....Ian (the hubby) arrives home and is aghast when he walks in on the scene...but why? Well Im not going to say except you will never guess!

Then follows a shocking, riveting and page turning story as the lies, secrets and pasts of these 3 all come together, horrifyingly..

The author has a great vivid imagination and a knack of telling a story that was so unusual and it kept me turning, well swiping

I loved the insight into Kirstens struggle with being a Dr and a Mum, Ms Robertson's determination and Ian, well you will see what you think of him

The characters were scary, at times horrifying but wonderfully described and the style of writing easy and welcomed the reader to be part of the book

Every chapter had a new side/revelation to the story and it just kept coming with no let up

Really enjoyable and different

10/10 5 stars

Megan Jones says

After years of IVF, Kirsten White is a devoted mum to Harriet – and she can't believe the time has come to send her little girl off to school. But Harriet has now turned five, and she can't stay Kirsten's baby forever. It might be hard, but it's time to entrust her daughter's care to her new teacher. Miriam Robertson has been waiting for the perfect little girl to walk into her class. When Harriet walks in, Miriam knows: this is the child she's been waiting for. Harriet knows not to speak to strangers. But her lovely new teacher isn't a stranger at all. In fact, she's her new best friend. And you can always trust your friends... can't you?

What a terrible read this was! Worst of the year so far, probably going to vie for worst overall if I am being brutally honest. It started off okay and I did like the premise of the plot, my liking of the premise would continue throughout the whole book, but there was a lot severely lacking from the execution of the book and it transcended into a confused, jumbled mess. Having said this, some of the later plot developments are unbelievable and poorly explained, resulting in me being confused as to how events happened or were resolved.

Bird then begins to unravel the plot, which I must say is an obvious one, and to make matters worse it is extremely confusing. The writing style and general execution turns this book into a farce, seriously I could barely understand what was going on, events happen with barely an explanation, there is dialogue all over the place and things jump about all over the place and any enjoyment I could have had was destroyed by the poor execution.

The characters are not a saving grace either. Kirsten is such an unsympathetic character, particularly at the beginning, I just did not gel with her, I found her irritating and wanted to shake some sense into her. When she is our main character and the one we are supposed to be rooting for, this causes another big problem for the book. The rest of the characters are not amazing either, Miriam is okay I suppose, probably the best of a bad bunch but I just found them all quite irritating.

The saving grace of 'The Classroom' is how short it is, at least you do not have to put up with it for that long! I nearly did not read this and having finished it, I wish I had listened to my initial instinct! There was nothing I enjoyed about this book, just awful.

Lou says

When I came across this book, I thought it sounded like a great read with many different facets to it.

Unfortunately, it was much harder work than I envisaged, and I had major issues trying to become interested

and then invested in the storyline. Don't get me wrong, the premise is sound and was a somewhat plausible situation, but there was something very much lacking in the thrills department. Eventually, it becomes more and more unbelievable with little in the way of redeeming features. Suspense, yes. Thriller, no.

I don't usually need a likeable character in a suspense novel to be able to enjoy it, but the characters here are especially annoying and detestable. I also felt it was difficult to sympathise with any of them as the scenarios just seemed too far-fetched, and although I can suspend my disbelief as much as the next reader, I found this was just too "out there" even for me. There was a lack of depth, and I felt that the story was pretty superficial. There was also a distinct lack of excitement, which is absolutely essential in a genre that both lives and dies by the amount of thrills the reader experiences! The denouement felt extremely "iffy" as well and added to the whole anti-climatic tone of the book. I had high hopes for this story, but, ultimately, they weren't justified. A book I wished I had passed on. Dull, a hard slog and certainly not a must read.

Many thanks to HQ Digital for an ARC. I was not required to post a review, and all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Shalini says

A story of 2 women and 1 man which was interlinked between them. A triangle is never a good thing in a relationship, and neither was this...

One was mother Kirsten who said she loved her daughter but never found time for her. One was a teacher Miriam who had a special eye on the child, more than what was required. And last was husband Andy as slimy as an eel, who loved only himself. This was a story about them.

The debut by A. L. Bird had me wondering initially where the story was leading up to. And the real secret was revealed at 40% of the book. Then what was remaining, asked my brain? And the mental games started. The ladies used their ways and means to get the child. The man used his wiles to get rid of both.

This book was a psychologically twisted tale of human psyche where I could just read it with wild, unbelievable eyes wondering how low a human can sink just to get a child. And the games kept playing on till the last page!!

Fast pace and highly twisted unlikable characters made this book a fast 2 hour read. The plot itself was a bit meh, there were only reactions no planned actions. But that was the charm of Bird's writing!!

Zoé-lee O'farrell says

Probably not the best time for me to read this book with my little one just starting school.....but you learn.

Now I will warn you this review will be vague, there is something in this storyline that just that the smallest detail slipped will give the plot away, and sadly I have read a couple of reviews that have done so.

Anyway, the story follows a couple of storylines that leave your head spinning with a LOT of questions!

We start with Kirsten life in September 2018 (Ah present day hello!) with her daughter Harriet starting school, both Kirsten and her husband Ian having busy lives. Constantly being told by Kirsten how much she

loves her daughter, but always has work on her mind. Before I changed my job, I was guilty of this a lot, and I felt a lot of empathy for her, as you love this bundle of joy but you always find your mind occupied on what you could consider more pressing.

Then, we meet Miriam in the same timeline as Kirsten, she is Harriet's young school teacher with an uneasy fixation with her. Something just slightly off there.

Then we are taken back five years to 2012 to Becky and the two weeks she spent at a Drama club in the summer.

What is the deal with Kirsten? Miriam? And how does Becky fit in to this?

These are just some of the questions at the beginning of the book, I spent ages playing detective, and for a change, this book delivered early on, still with one twist I didn't see coming. As for the rest of the book...well you need to read this.

As I said I did feel some empathy towards Kirsten, but slowly I found that her, Miriam and Ian were not likeable characters. Only protecting themselves and what was best for them. I loved Harriet and Becky, well bless her, she deserved so much better. Despite the lack of likeable characters, this book draws you into a terrifying story that unsettles you to the core. It made me cuddle my little one a little bit tighter and tell her I love you so much that I was told off as I said it too much!!

I whizzed through this book without realising as I needed to know what was going on. I needed closure and I needed safety! I personally did not find any bits of the books slow, but just so much intrigue and cryptic conversations between people that had me screaming at the book to tell me the answers and now!!! Goddammit! Plus I always love it when I see a shoutout to my hometown Watford -give me a whoop whoop.

This is my introduction to A.L Bird (but not my last), I was left feeling uneasy for most of the book. It felt tainted, and I was worried because really as the blurb says, the classroom should be the one place your child is safe.. isn't it?

Who do you trust?

Joan says

Dr Kirsten White and her husband Ian have a beautiful young daughter called Harriet. Oh how they struggled before Harriet came along, disappointment after disappointment. She is so beautiful and precious that Kirsten is loath to let her go to school. She loves their days together and will miss Harriet so much. But she must take her 5-year-old daughter to school and trust that she will be taken care of and kept safe. Her husband, the Head teacher of a different school, talks her round gently and besides Kirsten has a fledgling private medical practice to nurture. She knows the local primary school they have chosen is the right place for Harriet and she can arrange her consultations around Harriet's school day. At least that is the plan. They have a gorgeous home, but that has come at a price, so Kirsten persuades herself to take Harriet to school that first day and meets her reception teacher Ms Miriam Robertson.

Things get even better when the 'after school club' is joined by a 'wide awake club' even supplying breakfast each morning, allowing Kirsten even more flexibility. The big plus is that it is run by Harriet's teacher, who Harriet adores. Kirsten knows she shouldn't feel jealous of Miriam but none-the-less she does. Harriet loves Miriam and Miriam is wonderful with her, encouraging, gentle and kind. She arranges all kinds of creative activities which go down very well. She reads and directs their play activities and Harriet

certainly thrives under Miriam's care. She's the class 'teacher's pet', there's no doubt about it. As the first parent's evening draws ever nearer Ian and Kirsten feel certain that they will come home feeling very satisfied with their teacher consultation. There's no doubt that Harriet is happy and a model pupil. But the parent's evening is a total disaster and is the catalyst for what happens next. Sure enough their world is turned around and things will never be the same again. It's the beginning of even more worries and upsets. Just where will it all end?

I enjoyed reading this novel. It was well written and full of twists and turns, some very dark. I never once correctly predicted the dreadful outcome, despite paying close attention to the storyline. I didn't particularly like any of the adult characters despite their carefully crafted introduction and development. There were all kinds of trickery and wrong-doings, injustices and evil intent: vile secrets too. But what could have added greatly to the story never happened in the final few chapters and this spoilt my overall enjoyment, leaving everything up in the air and so many unanswered questions – my worst nightmare when reading and reviewing the story.

I received a complimentary copy of this novel from publisher HQ digital through my membership of NetGalley. Thank you for my copy sent in return for an honest and unbiased review. This novel is a good read apart from the ending. It's a 3.5* review from me.

Trish at Between My Lines says

A page turner of a read, that had me swiping fast on my kindle to see how it was all going to end. I love the title and the tag line and just how that all fitted together.

It reveals it's secrets tantalising slowly thorough alternate points of view and mysterious flashbacks. And the quick changes kept the pace snappy, and truth uncertain.

My only complaint was that it went beyond the point of believability. But I granted poetic licence, and didn't leave that spoil the tension packed read.

If you enjoy books with ordinary seeming families hiding extraordinary secrets, then you might enjoy this. Fans of authors such as Liane Moriarty and Lucy Clarke should also appreciate this book.

Thanks to HQ Digital and NetGalley for giving me a copy of this book for review consideration. As always, no matter what the source of the book, you get my honest, unbiased opinion.

Pauline says

The Classroom by A L Bird is a psychological thriller with many twists and turns.

When Kirsten's five year old daughter Harriet starts school, Kirsten like all parents is worried about her safety. She is pleased that Harriet is happy with her new teacher Miriam.

Miriam however has a plan that no one knows about.

I found all the adult characters unlikeable. I was also irritated by the dual storylines.

I would like to thank NetGalley and HQ for my e-copy in exchange for an honest review.

Sherilynvan says

The Classroom by A.L. Bird was chilling. It was a great story and the twists and turns kept me very intrigued. I was surprised by the ending, and it left me pondering for a few hours after I finished it. Not being a parent myself, I found the characters' actions interesting.

I look forward to more from this author.

Thanks to NetGalley and HQ Digital for the ARC.
