

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct clusters or shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

Envy

Written by Gregg Olsen

Published by mckeonandassociates

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Envy

Envy

By Gregg Olsen

Envy Me Lyrics

Crime lives--and dies--in the deceptively picture-perfect town of Port Gamble (aka "Empty Coffin"), Washington. Evil lurks and strange things happen--and 15-year-olds Hayley and Taylor Ryan secretly use their wits and their telepathic "twin-sense" to uncover the truth about the town's victims and culprits.

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Envy

Envy Me

Envy, the series debut, involves the mysterious death of the twins' old friend, Katelyn. Was it murder? Suicide? An accident? Hayley and Taylor are determined to find out--and as they investigate, they stumble upon a dark truth that is far more disturbing than they ever could have imagined.

Envy

Envy Definition

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Envy review

I liked this YA mystery. The twins' supernatural talent was unique; if a little discursive. I didn't care for the emails texts, people don't really write that way. Also, he didn't or couldn't get inside the head of real teens. The author was trying too hard to be "cool". He was also flippant about the death of the teenage girl in the book towards the end. Having said that, it did keep my interest, I think there was a better book in here with a little more time.

Envy

Envy Meaning

~ Some of this story is completely true. And some of it isn't. Like truth, evil comes in all sorts of flavors. Some bitter. Some deceptively sweet. Sometimes it comes with a heavy price. Most people don't invite evil into their lives. The dirty little secret is that an invitation isn't necessary. Locked doors don't matter. Neither do fancy security systems. Evil is kind of amazing when you think about it. She knows how to get inside.

Author's Note

My main issue with Envy is that I really didn't get ~ Some of this story is completely true. And some of it isn't. Like truth, evil comes in all sorts of flavors. Some bitter. Some deceptively sweet. Sometimes it comes with a heavy price. Most people don't invite evil into their lives. The dirty little secret is that an invitation isn't necessary. Locked doors don't matter. Neither do fancy security systems. Evil is kind of amazing when you think about it. She knows how to get inside.

Author's Note

My main issue with Envy is that I really didn't get on with the style of writing. I found it painful to read, awkward, plodding, and melodramatic while attempting to be ominous. Olsen tries very hard to create a strong sense of tension, suspense and mystery by over dramatizing every little thing, through repetition, bullet points and italics.

~ Neither girl knew it right then, but the night Katelyn Berkley died was the beginning of something that would change everything.

Everything.

Every. Single. Thing

~ page 16

~ And finally, not far away, one person got online and started deleting the contents of a file folder marked KATELYN. Inside were copies of emails, messages and photographs that had meant to trap and hurt her so hard. Each item had been designed as payback.

Delete.

Delete.

Delete.

~page 22

It's not the least bit subtle, was irritating, and frankly, as a reader, I felt a little talked down to. I believe this is the author's first YA book (he has, according to the back of the ARC, written several best-selling adult novels), and the way in which he over-emphasizes significant details tells me he doesn't yet understand or trust his younger audience. Instead of allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions, he bashes us over the head with it.

The editor's note (which may or may not appear in the final publication), had a similar effect, "Young Adult readers beware: there are no cupcakes, ponies or rainbows in this book. Life is messy. Death happens. Evil is all around you and right within these pages. Envy is just the beginning. Don't wait for Gregg to push you, jump in." The whole thing is just trying too hard.

Aside from the style of writing, the paranormal aspect felt weak. Taylor and Haley, twin protagonists who don't believe Katelyn killed herself (with an espresso machine, in the bath), have some odd abilities. Haley is compelled to inanimate objects and with a touch can "see" a memory or feeling. Taylor receives coded messages from the dead when she is submerged in water. They first sense something isn't right surrounding Katelyn's death when, in the middle of the night, from their bedroom window, they see a small boat spell out the message "Look" in the water. (I'm still not quite sure how or why the boat did this, something to do with the foam in the water creating the letters, either way, it's all too random for me).

The characters are flat and lack any sort of personality. The almost clinical way Envy is written makes it very difficult to form any sort of emotional attachment to anyone, something not at all helped by the fact that the majority of the characters came across as fairly unlikable in any case. I'm also not a fan of using text message speech within a narrative, which Olsen utilizes quite a lot, while failing to create an authentic teenager voice.

Basically, everything, from the editor's opening letter, to the author's misogynistic note, (considering how women have long been blamed as the root of evil, I don't particularly appreciate the labeling of "evil" as "she"), to the writing, it all served to annoy the hell out of me. Maybe I was simply in a bad mood, maybe this book just put me in a bad mood, but there it is. It's a shame, because this could have been a solid story about the growing issues of cyber-bullying. As it was, I wasn't interested in finishing this one. ...more

I was initially drawn to this book by the eerie cover so I really wasn't too sure what to expect when I started it. Was it going to be scary, the mystery too easy to figure out or just another YA paranormal book? Well I can tell you I was pleasantly surprised with what I got. Envy is a dark, cleverly written mystery with a very real threat.

Envy takes place in Port Gamble, a small town in Washington State, and centers around twin girls Hayley

Envy

& Taylor. The central plot of the book revolves around I was initially drawn to this book by the eerie cover so I really wasn't too sure what to expect when I started it. Was it going to be scary, the mystery too easy to figure out or just another YA paranormal book? Well I can tell you I was pleasantly surprised with what I got. Envy is a dark, cleverly written mystery with a very real threat.

Envy takes place in Port Gamble, a small town in Washington State, and centers around twin girls Hayley & Taylor. The central plot of the book revolves around the mysterious death of another local teen Katelyn. The girls desperately want to learn the truth surrounding her death and as they delve deeper into the mystery, we soon come to realize that there is more to Hayley & Taylor as well.

I thought the plot was interesting (especially as a parent) but I have to admit I was a little nervous at the beginning that I knew exactly where the story was going since Gregg uses a true event as the basis for his story. I don't want to give anything away in case you aren't familiar with the actual case but I can say he twisted it up and gave me a bit of a surprise at the end. My biggest pet peeve in mystery novels is when I can figure out what happened too easily so I was happy that Gregg threw me for a bit of a loop at the end.

I enjoyed the paranormal elements in the book but hope we get a little more information in the next book. His characters are definitely a bit on the darker side and I wasn't quite expecting that. Can you say mean girls? It makes me thankful that I am no longer in high school but makes me nervous as a parent.

My biggest complaint with the book was the text/IM messages between characters. Gregg uses them a lot throughout the beginning of the book and they were so distracting. I had no idea what they were trying to say half the time. I found it so frustrating trying to decode them and it completely took me out of the story. Do teens really text like that? If so, it's annoying. UGH!

Overall I really liked the book. I thought it touched on a real issue that needs to be addressed but at the same time gave readers a clever mystery to unravel as well. I look forward to discovering more about Hayley & Taylor and what other secrets may be revealed in Port Gamble. ...more

Envy

Envy Apples

I am astounded at all the four and five star ratings for this book. I hated this book so much. I found this to be unbearably juvenile. I'm a fan of YA fiction, but this felt like writing geared toward 4th-6th graders with mature content thrown in. Such a mess.

Things I hated:

1. The characters were hollow. They didn't feel real. Their dialogue felt empty and forced for the sake of the "story". They were all very unlikeable.
2. Somebody please tell me teenagers don't text/e-mail like that. The text I am astounded at all the four and five star ratings for this book. I hated this book so much. I found this to be unbearably juvenile. I'm a fan of YA fiction, but this felt like writing geared toward 4th-6th graders with mature content thrown in. Such a mess.

Things I hated:

1. The characters were hollow. They didn't feel real. Their dialogue felt empty and forced for the sake of the "story". They were all very unlikeable.
2. Somebody please tell me teenagers don't text/e-mail like that. The texting conversations were horrible. I almost returned the book after I read the first one. God I wish I had.
3. I didn't realize that the twins had "powers" until I read it in the book. There's really not much else to say about them. It was lame.
4. The story was just plain awful.

Things I liked:

1. The cover.
 2. I do like that the author is tackling the very real and dangerous problem of internet bullying. I have to admire that.
- ...more

Alright, this book. OK so yeah, I was all ready to like it, was in the mood for a scary read even if it proves to be generic, which can be lots of brainless fun sometimes, in fact I wanted just that. It certainly looked like it could deliver. It started out creepy and I was liking it, kinda reminded me of The Ring, movie American not the book Japanese, maybe because it was set around Seattle with all the verdant rainyness. It began with a very atmospheric tinge and it was very reminiscent of the

Alright, this book. OK so yeah, I was all ready to like it, was in the mood for a scary read even if it proves to be generic, which can be lots of brainless fun sometimes, in fact I wanted just that. It certainly looked like it could deliver. It started out creepy and I was liking it, kinda reminded me of The Ring, movie American not the book Japanese, maybe because it was set around Seattle with all the verdant rainyness. It began with a very atmospheric tinge and it was very reminiscent of that greenish greeny mood, maybe it was the girl on the cover, which by the way indicated it was a horror novel, but wasn't really. It was mostly a suspense murder mystery with bits and pieces of supernatural stuff happening,

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but that was presented in the dulllest way possible and I am being very nice about it. I want to be fair, so I'll say I did like few things about it, it crept me out here and there, no doubt. The book was competent but I have problems with its storytelling technique. I have major issues with its narrative structure and its cover was very misleading. Worst of all, Olsen made us a guilty of judging his book by its cover and deeming it worthier than it truly was. Third person omniscient nearly choked the life out of this novel, there were no characterizations whatsoever, it was just horribly done. The story was being told to us instead of being shown, God it was terrible.

In many ways this was worse than Twilight and that's saying something. Although they don't have anything in common just the Washington state maybe. Structurally Twilight was better than this. Imagine that. I don't know why but the twins protagonists kinda reminded me of the twins in Hemlock Grove for some reason, despite the fact they were indeed kinda bland. For a true crime writer Olsen seemed really clueless as to how people behave in reality and he seemed really, really insensitive at times. Among many woes to lament, the loudest would be that this should have felt more like a novel than a true crime nonfiction.

It's style and technique frustrated me so much I almost hated Envy as much as Ken Kermode hated the Entourage movie. Just kidding, I don't hate books but Olsen could have done much better with this..... than this.

Supposedly, this is based on a true life event, with Olsen being a true crime writer himself, the denouement and all felt a little too sketchy. He could have at least improved the ending, could have improve upon its over all message. I appreciate the point he was making, the concern he was clearly trying to raise but he should have been more eloquent about it, honestly he could have made the whole thing a little bit more exciting. Another thing, the twins based on his own children who could just divine the clues felt lazy and wasn't very creative. Just terrible, terrible storytelling. I kept repeating no no no as I trudged through this novel.

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Envy

Envy Nails

This review has been hidden because it contains spoilers. To view it, [click here](#).

I picked up this book because of the cover, the cover is creepy and dark, all the things I love in a book. It was not a horror. And although I was deeply depressed with the fact that the story did not match the cover at all, I kept reading.

This book at best is a who-dunnit mystery with some paranormal activity, I can not call it a thriller and there was very little suspense. The story line was okay, psychic twins looking for the person who killed their old best friend and saving their own butts I picked up this book because of the cover, the cover is creepy and dark, all the things I love in a book. It was not a horror. And although I was deeply depressed with the fact that the story did not match the cover at all, I kept reading.

This book at best is a who-dunnit mystery with some paranormal activity, I can not call it a thriller and there was very little suspense. The story line was okay, psychic twins looking for the person who killed their old best friend and saving their own butts along the way.

There were parts of the book that didn't make sense, such as why was Shania okay with murdering someone, what promise did she make to the twins mum? Who was Moira working for? Just a few of the questions left unanswered lol.

The main thing that irritated me through the book was: 1. Who takes a damn coffee machine into the bathroom and then leaves it close enough to the bath that it can fall in. And 2. Why didn't Teagan knock on the bathroom door and who even names a boy Teagan, is it an American thing? Teagan here in Australia is a girls name.

The Author has noted that the story line of Envy has taken some "cues" from a famous case involving the suicide of a young girl. The young girls frinds and mother had taken to cyber bullying her via MySpace after a falling out between the girls.

At the beginning and throughout you learn of a falling out between two girls and it is hinted that there was some online bullying happening.

"And finally, not far away, one person got online and started deleting the contents of a file folder marked KATELYN."

However the cyber bullying conducted by Katelyn's friend and mother is only really mentioned in the last few chapters and is overshadowed by the 'killer' coming forward.

I believe that the cyber bullying would have been a great baseline for the story, if it had actually focused on it, and a believable reason for the death of Katelyn. Not because of an accidental electrocution from a coffee maker. :| ...more

Envy

This review has been hidden because it contains spoilers. To view it, [click here](#).
Oh God, it is bad. Details coming soon.

Update: Okay done. So.

- 90% of the plot is ripped off the Megan Meier suicide story. This is acknowledged at the end of the book, but if you've read about Megan Meier and Lori Drew, the twist ending...just isn't one.

- The chapters end with an overly dramatic, ominous line like: "Neither girl knew it right then, but the night Katelyn Berkley died was the beginning of something that would change everything. Everything. Every. Single. Thing." "She was onto s Oh God, it is bad. Details coming soon.

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- The chapters end with an overly dramatic, ominous line like: "Neither girl knew it right then, but the night Katelyn Berkley died was the beginning of something that would change everything. Everything. Every. Single. Thing." "She was onto something big. Bigger and far more dangerous than she really knew." It made me want to sing "dan dan daaan!" every time.

- The author thinks he's funny and clever, but he's not = a lot of witticisms and attempts at observational humor that fall flat. Example: "Beth deflected the remark by changing the subject. Beth was like that. Taylor thought that Beth's Chinese heritage might have had something to do with it. She often wondered if Beth's ancestors invented fireworks because she seemed to totally get off on lighting fuses and standing back to watch the fun." Ummm...wtf?

- The twins (who are the protagonists, kind of) have psychic powers? What? That came out of nowhere. One can touch stuff and see the past. And the other gets visions while she's underwater. Oh, but they can see the future too -- when they were babies, they warned a woman against a serial killer by spelling with their alphabet soup! Okay...

The characters are flat and superficial; the plot isn't believable; and the writing is cringe-inducing. I guess Gregg Olsen usually does true crime. Maybe he should stick to that.

(By the way, the copy I read was an advance reading copy. Just in case there were amazing edits before they printed the final version.)

...more

Envy Scooters

When I found out via Daisy Chain Book Reviews that one of my favorite true crime authors was now delving into the world of young adult fiction I was way excited! Who better to weave together true crime, mystery, and paranormal fantasy into a fast paced young adult novel than Gregg Olsen? For years young adult mysteries have languished being replaced with the ever -popular paranormal romance. While these books have had elements of mystery in them they are mainly focused on the romantic entangleme When I found out via Daisy Chain Book Reviews that one of my favorite true crime authors was now delving into the world of young adult fiction I was way excited! Who better to weave together true crime, mystery, and paranormal fantasy into a fast paced young adult novel than Gregg Olsen? For years young adult mysteries have languished being replaced with the ever -popular paranormal romance. While these books have had elements of mystery in them they are mainly focused on the romantic entanglements of humans and otherworldly creatures such as vampires and werewolves. What happened to just a good old-fashioned mystery? One where you have to piece together clues and sort through the red herrings to figure out who-dunnit? Now that Gregg Olsen has entered the YA fray with Envy, the first installment of his Empty Coffin series, there is a fresh new voice that expertly encompasses all of the elements of a "mystery mixed with all of the things we love about YA novels.

Port Gamble, Washington is not your average scenic small town. Bad things happen there. Behind the historic homes and beautiful beaches there is evil, and the first thing one learns is that evil never takes a holiday. Things were not going well for Katelynn Berkley. She was depressed and lonely, shutting herself off from everyone who once cared about her. Former friends Taylor and Hayley Ryan knew that Katelynn needed help, yet they had a difficult time accepting that Katelynn's unexpected Christmas evening demise was actually a suicide. First there was the manner in which Katelynn supposedly used to kill herself, an espresso machine in the bathtub. Next, were the cryptic messages they were sure Katelynn was sending them from beyond the grave. Messages they felt would unlock the mystery behind Katelynn's untimely death. As twins, Taylor and Hayley share a psychic connection beyond the boundaries of normal sibling relationships. They have kept the extent of their connection a secret from everyone except each other. How would anyone else be able to understand that they can catch glimpses of the past and future and possibly receive messages from the dead? Their gift has been something that they never gave much thought to until the death of their former friend. Taylor and Hayley want to know the truth behind Katelynn's death and agree to use their abilities in solving what they come to believe is her murder.

The idea of psychic twins might seem a little far-fetched, but Gregg Olsen does a masterful job of creating a subtly to their messages that makes the storyline completely believable. The messages Taylor and Hayley receive are little more than feelings and glimpses they get when they come into contact with something that belonged to Katelynn. These bits of information are what help to propel them in their quest to discover the truth about Katelynn's death. The cast of characters who reside in Port Gamble are brilliant. Every family has a secret they wish to keep hidden. This not only adds to the creepy factor of the story, but also sets up numerous plotlines for future installments. One of my favorite characters was Starla Larsen. Her name alone is genius. What better name than Starla for a girl who feels that she

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is better than everyone around her and will stop at nothing to get what she wants. Starla is the proverbial "mean girl" in the story and she plays the part well. A villain the reader will relish to learn more about.

One of the things that make Envy an engrossing story is the way in which Gregg Olsen weaves fact with fiction throughout the book. While Port Gamble and its residents are his own creation the plot is loosely based on the true story of Megan Meier. Megan was thirteen years old when she committed suicide after being horrifically cyber bullied. Her case brought attention to the cruelty that can be perpetuated by both teens and adults through the various social media outlets many of us innocently enjoy. By using what he knows best, true crime, Olsen creates a story that keeps the reader captivated until the very end. Some of the plot choices he makes are extremely bold and refreshing in that he chose not to soften the events of his story just because it is being written for a young adult audience. There are more than a few OMG moments throughout Envy!

While Katelynn's story comes to a satisfying resolution not all loose ends are tied up in the final chapters of Envy. The second novel in the series, Betrayal, is set for release in the fall of 2012 and promises to deliver on some of the edgier themes touched upon in the first book. Might we see the very first well-done young adult serial killer novel? I hope so! Gregg Olsen definitely has the experience and talent to tackle a topic of that magnitude. I definitely recommend Envy for any reader who loves to be scared, but you might just want to sleep with the light on!

Envy is set for release in September 2011. Click [HERE](#) to watch the trailer!

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WOW, absolutely fantastic!!!! Review coming soon!

Okay so I was asked to read and review an ARC for the sequel to this book, I blindly said yes. I'd never heard of the author or the books. So I was hoping that I would enjoy this book first so I could enjoy the sequel as well. And low and behold, I was HOOKED!! First off, the author is a male and normally I don't read books written by males. Not that I'm bias against them or anything, but I just haven't come across any I really liked besides "I am Number Four", which I am hoping is indeed a male author or I will feel like an ass. But Pittacus? Sounds manly. Anyway, so I was AMAZED that how much I enjoyed this book. I didn't get to read it as fast as I'd have liked because it's a very fast-paced book. However, I've got like 4 ARCs I am currently reading, plus finishing my own for those that are getting antsy.

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The premise of this series, is so fresh and interesting and albeit a little eerie, but it's based on facts and stories that have indeed happened. At the end of the book, the author talks about the events that took place and it's similar to the book he wrote. Needless to say, I was astounded by this refreshing and emotional story.

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Katelyn Berkley, a lonely, misunderstood teenage girl dies suddenly, tragically...in her bathtub. No one knows exactly what happened but the small town of Port Gamble, Washington is intensely affected by the sad news. There are rumors swirling around the school that maybe it was suicide, accidental, or maybe something more....

When the twins Taylor and Haley Ryan try to uncover the events that led to her demise, they discover some devastating secrets that could have possibly saved her if someone would have listened. Taylor and Haley, -sisters that are very different from most teenage girls- knew Katie when they were little and at one point were very close. But as they got older, Katie became reclusive more to herself. She wasn't popular but everyone knew her and for the part, liked her. She always wanted to be a cheerleader but each year when she didn't make the team, she became bitter and jealous of her best friend Starla Larsen-who by the way was a selfish bitch like her mother-and she was really popular and was too wrapped up in being the perfect cheerleader than being Katie's friend. Soon their friendship had demolished and Katie was all alone.

With an alcoholic, guilt-ridden mother she had no one to really turn to except some boy she converses with online. He wants to meet her and take her away from her troubled life. But can she really trust him?

I am stopping there so I don't give anything away. WOW, I was blown away by this book. There were things that happened that I wasn't prepared for. But this author had me on my toes going, "What the bleep?" He wrote a very detailed book that made me feel like I was there. I cried some and laughed some and yelled some. I felt so many emotions at once I wasn't sure what to feel next. I would guess a few times and was taken aback by how wrong I had been. It had a very eerie feel to it but not to the point where I couldn't read it at night. I loved the characters. Taylor and Haley were my favorite....and Colton, who was Haley's boyfriend was such a cutie!!! I loved him. I loved the twin's parents too. They were amazing characters. There were a few times I was confuzzled(confused and puzzled thrown together) when they were having conversations via text. Some of the slang words that were used didn't make sense or maybe I didn't see them right. So I usually skipped over that unless it was valid information that needed to be read. But other than that, I loved this book. I disliked a few of the characters: Beth Lee, Starla Larsen, Mindee Larsen and Moira (forgot her last name). But I highly recommend this book to those that love a little mystery mixed with some horror(not really horror, but there was some ghostly encounters of sorts). This book will keep you hooked, and be surprised by the twists by the end of the book too!

Now I must get ready to read my ARC of Betrayal soon so I can find out more about this story. ...more

Envy

Envy Adams

I haven't read Olsen's other writing, and I don't read a lot of true crime books, either. However, I do read a lot of YA fiction, and this book just didn't work for me.

I visited Port Gamble earlier this year, and Olsen dropped the ball when it came to setting the scene properly. There's a few asides about the historical property management and how old the houses are, but he never takes the opportunity to give a flat-out description of the town's small scale and quaintness. That's a real shame, I haven't read Olsen's other writing, and I don't read a lot of true crime books, either. However, I do read a lot of YA fiction, and this book just didn't work for me.

I visited Port Gamble earlier this year, and Olsen dropped the ball when it came to setting the scene properly. There's a few asides about the historical property management and how old the houses are, but he never takes the opportunity to give a flat-out description of the town's small scale and quaintness. That's a real shame, because the creepy twists of the story are a good match to the odd New England feel of this Northwest town.

I entertained my boyfriend by reading a few of the last lines of the first several chapters.

Chapter 1: "The spaces among those gathered began to shrink as people pushed forward, completely unaware that someone was watching them. All of them."

Chapter 2: ."No one knew it right then, but someone was about to pick at the scab, and when they did, those who lived in Port Gamble would face fear and consequences they'd never imagined."

Chapter 3: "Neither girl knew it right then, but the night Katelyn Berkley died was the beginning of something that would change everything. Everything. Every. Single. Thing."

Chapter 4:"And finally, not far away, one person got online and started deleting the contents of a file folder marked KATELYN. Inside were copies of emails, messages, and photographs that had meant to trap and hurt her so hard. Each item had been designed as payback. Delete. Delete. Delete."

Chapter 5: "It was because neither her nor her sister had any recollection of what happened that rainy afternoon whatsoever. Not a single one."

No one knew that someone was doing something. Something evil. Something. Evil. That no one knew right then.

It's a silly thing to poke fun at, I know, but it was just so dramatic! And secretive!

Also, there's a few questions I had about the legal issues, when all is said and done. Serious Spoilers

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follow, of course.

(view spoiler)[So, Starla and her mom sent bullying emails, and Starla's brother read them and convinced himself that he could be Katelyn's secret internet boyfriend. He goes over to Katelyn's house and startles her so much that she pulls the espresso machine into the bathtub with her, which kills her. And somehow, knowing all that, the police chief says that Starla's mom instigated Katelyn's death, in a prosecutable way? What?!

Okay, and I know the reporter was nosy and underhanded, and probably kidnapped the twins' dog, but everyone was remarkably okay with her murder. Again, what?! (hide spoiler)]

...more

I abandoned this book around 170 pages in. To be fair, it wasn't entirely the book's fault. I currently have way too many books out from the library, so I need to get through books as fast as I can. So if something's not holding my attention, I'm probably not going to finish it.

And this book really didn't hold my attention. This is probably due to the pacing. The mystery was engaging at first, but then the pace slowed to a crawl, and I got bored of it. A lot of the book doesn't consist of the ch I abandoned this book around 170 pages in. To be fair, it wasn't entirely the book's fault. I currently have way too many books out from the library, so I need to get through books as fast as I can. So if something's not holding my attention, I'm probably not going to finish it.

And this book really didn't hold my attention. This is probably due to the pacing. The mystery was engaging at first, but then the pace slowed to a crawl, and I got bored of it. A lot of the book doesn't consist of the characters working to solve the mystery or developing their relationships with each other or doing much of anything.

Instead, Olsen plugs the book with useless information about its many characters. Because there are a lot of named characters - so many that I had trouble keeping them straight. It probably doesn't help that Olsen insists on giving us their entire background, complete with only one or two useful details, the others being pointless. But when the useful details come up again, Olsen expects us to remember them with no reminder. He even expected us to remember the house number they lived in, for God's sake! Giving us all this information slowed the pace, and it made everything confusing.

You'd think giving us all this information would help the characters feel fleshed out, but it didn't. You see, Olsen has clearly thought out his characters' backgrounds well, but he hasn't considered their personalities at all. None of the characters were particularly interesting or engaging, and I couldn't tell them apart.

Another problem with the pace was the skipping through time that the book presented. And I'm not talking about flashbacks due to Hayley and Taylor's paranormal powers, I'm talking about actual

Envy

skipping through time in the narrative with no explanation. One of the things I love about murder mysteries is that once the victim is dead, you can't talk to them, you can't figure out why they were dead and how they were feeling right before they died. There's always something that the characters (and you) want to know but can never find out. So if you flash back constantly to when she was alive, it really defeats the purpose.

And then there were the paranormal elements. Why were they here? Seriously. Why. They felt very tacked on and unnecessary. The explanation for what exactly they do are vague and inconsistent, leading me to wonder if Olsen just... made it up as he went along. It didn't help that in the very beginning, we're given a seemingly complete background story for Hayley and Taylor... that doesn't include the paranormal elements. 60 pages in, they're suddenly dropped on us, with no prior foreshadowing. It made me think that Olsen didn't know exactly what he wanted from the story. Well, he needs to make up his mind in order to write something like this.

So, now for some positives. I liked the writing. A lot of people seemed to hate it, but I actually think that was the only major redeemable aspect about this book. It could be kind of cheesy sometimes, and if you have a lower tolerance for rather purple prose, I could see how you might really hate it. But I found it to be a rather guilty pleasure.

I also liked that the world was gritty. Olsen had written mostly for adults before this. In the past, I haven't had great experiences with authors that have done that in terms of how realistically harsh the world is. (See *I Am Number Four* and *Michael Vey Prisoner of Cell 25*). But here, it wasn't a problem. In fact, I'm wondering if it might've been a little too gritty. Almost everyone smoked, and there were quite a number of lustful woman. Also, people talked about suicide in a very light manner. People made jokes about it (I firmly believe that this should never be done), and they talked about it as if it was no big deal. But I have to praise Olsen for trying to deal with issues such as suicide, self-harming, and cyberbullying because they need to be dealt with. Even if it didn't work out, I have to praise him for the attempt.

Overall, I can't help compare this to *Slide*, the only other YA murder mystery I've read. They have a lot in common: both feature an unusually gritty world for YA, both deal with suicide and murder hand in hand, both deal with issues outside of murder and suicide (this had self-harming and cyberbullying; *Slide* had eating disorders and adultery), and both have only one paranormal element in an otherwise contemporary story.

But where *Slide* is strong, *Envy* is weak. *Slide*'s pace moves at a breakneck speed that never lets the mystery get boring; *Envy*'s slow pace makes it too boring to finish. *Slide*'s world always felt real; *Envy*'s was a little too gritty at times. *Slide* let its characters seem like real people; *Envy* gave them no characteristics whatsoever. And that's why I think *Slide* is better than this train-wreck. ...more

Envy Massage

Won through Goodreads Giveaway. 2.5 I'm going to split my review into two halves. First the bad: The book starts out horribly; I mean the writing is just atrocious. Each chapter ends with a sentence that is an awful, cliché, badly contrived cliffhanger. It was just gut wrenching to read. I am glad, however, that I made myself continue reading, as the quality improved in the end. My other major complaint: A true crime story does not a mystery make. It was obvious before I looked it up that the au

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There was a lot of great things about Envy, first and for most this book really made me think. I thought about the story this book itself tells but also thought about how true this could be. Things like what happen in Envy really do actually happen. Everyday. Aside from his fabulous characters I also enjoyed his writing style. It was the first book of his I have read and am considering his adult novels. I'm still really curious and anxious for the next book, but I have no doubts it will be just

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