

All the Best Liars

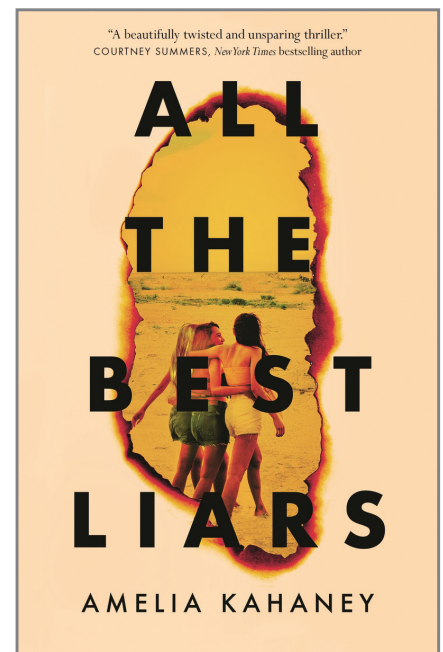
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Secondary
(violence, sexual references)



SYNOPSIS

Tic tac toe, three girls in a row. Nine years old and inseparable. Friends for life, or so they think . . .

Best friends Syd, Rain and Brie grew up on the wrong side of the tracks in the stifling California desert, desperately wishing for a way out.

In the end, each of them will escape, but not in the way they expect. One will do it by dying, another by lying, a third by taking the fall. A deadly fire is set two weeks before the end of their senior year of high school and nothing will ever be the same.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amelia Kahaney is the author of *The Brokenhearted* series. Her short fiction has appeared in *Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *One Story*, and *Crazyhorse*, among other publications. She teaches writing in New York City, where she lives with her husband and son.

STUDY NOTES

- What do you think the significance of the title *All the Best Liars* is? Who do you think was the ‘best liar’ of the girls and why?
- How are right and wrong presented in the novel? Are some characters presented purely as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ or are there shades of grey in everyone?
 - Did you find yourself forgiving some characters for their actions easier than others?
- Other than the prologue, the book is told through first-person narration from multiple perspectives—although primarily through Syd’s eyes. How did that make you feel? What were the similarities and differences between Rain’s sections and Syd’s? How would the story be different if it was told in third person, or primarily from another character’s perspective?
- How does the novel explore the dynamics of female friendships? How have the girls shaped their senses of identity from each other?
- Do you think Syd and Rain’s friendship was a healthy one? Why or why not? What do they bring out in each other? Discuss and compare with what we see of Rain and Brie’s friendship, or even Brie and Syd.
- Did you connect with Syd as a character, or agree with her choices? Why or why not? Did your opinions change throughout the book? Do you need to like or relate to a protagonist to enjoy a book?

- ‘I was perfectly fine all by myself. Alone, I wouldn’t go around wearing ridiculous clothes that didn’t suit me. Alone, I was invincible,” (p 174). In the book, we see Syd experience breakdowns of her relationships with both Chase and Rain. How might a friendship breakdown compare to that of a relationship breakdown? What might be some of the similarities and differences we see through Syd?
- Did you see that big twist coming? If not, how did it change your perspective on the characters and events of the novel? If so, what hints did you pick up along the way?
- ‘We were still fine. More than fine. Money or no money, Rain wasn’t going to leave me behind,’ (p 135). Do you think having money changes you? Why or why not? Discuss how Syd, Rain and Brie have shaped their identities in different ways through their respective families’ financial situations.
- Did you find the book’s ending satisfying?
- How have the events of the novel changed Syd? What do you think her future looks like and why?