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LoveReading4kids Reader reviews of **As I Descended** by Robin Talley

Below are the complete reviews, written by the LoveReading4kids members.



Humaira Kauser

*From the way it started I didn't expect it to end that way and neither will you. I've been trying really hard to think about what I am going to write for this review without it sounding over the top or fake. But **this book is genuinely one of the best books I have read; nothing can compete (and lately I have been reading a LOT of books (perks of the summer holidays)).***

I wasn't so intrigued by the synopsis and I don't think it does the story that Robin Talley woven- I read it nevertheless and I was hooked straight away from the first page.

I loved and hated the main characters Maria and Lily but I think that's a good thing because it makes them feel real and authentic somehow. From the way it started I didn't expect it to end that way and neither will you.

Izzy Read

***A perfect mixture of new and old, that goes into the nitty gritty of American history, addressing slavery and racism while doing justice to the Shakespeare original.** Described by the author as a retelling of Macbeth with Gay people and ghosts, this is the perfect summary for 'As I Descended'.*

This novel is out of my dreams; a modern retelling of Macbeth, set in an American Boarding school and with a bi main character (not to mention 3 other gay characters as supporting)!!

A perfect mixture of new and old, that goes into the nitty gritty of American history, addressing slavery and racism while doing justice to the Shakespeare original.

www.fromcovertocoverr.tumblr.com

Eloise Mae Clarkson

*This book is set in a boarding school in America. There is a lot of competition in the school to win a prize which allows the winner to go to any college of their choice. The book contains themes of the supernatural. Some of the characters you could identify with. **Personally I didn't really enjoy this book because certain parts of it were creepy and too real. But I'm sure other people will like it but it just wasn't for me.***

Celeste Phelan, age 14

An interesting novel that transports you to a place where the paranormal and unnatural reign.

Maria Lyon and Lily Boiten desperately wish to have a perfect future together. However, to ensure their dreams become a reality Maria must win the prestigious Cawdor Kingsley prize. But the only person standing in their way, is the perfect Delilah Dufrey. Although as feuds become fatalities the two girls must remain silent and secretive to ensure that no one follows the trail of terror back to them.

Maria is the second most popular girl in the school after Delilah, but she is fed up being second best at everything. She possesses the ability to make contact with spirits but most encounters just led to trouble.

Lily is forced to use crutches after an accident when she was a child therefore always being treated differently and people find her creepy. Although she has a nice girl exterior, her controlling nature often comes through when she is with Maria.

I would recommend this book to 15+ who love ghosts and murder. But it should definitely not be for the faint hearted as it is slightly creepy in places.

Sarah Murray, age 18

A modern twist on the classic 'Macbeth' story that is creepy and has a sinister

twist. If you like ghost stories you'll love this book! Warning not a night time read unless you want ghosts visiting you.

I am not one to read spooky books typically however this book got me hooked and I couldn't put it down. As soon as I opened the first page and saw ""ouiji board"" I knew that this isn't the sort of YA novel I was used to.

If you have ever studied or read 'Macbeth' you will definitely notice some parallels however, this classic plot has been brought up to date with the diversity shown throughout this book. This is scarily relatable as the academic pressure placed on the main character you could understand her mind-set (not that it excuses her actions at all).

I found that I had to keep reading as this tragic story kept me hooked! I kept thinking nothing worse could happen only to be proved wrong. If you love ghost stories this is the book for you.

Amelia Corrick-Gough, age 14

How do I put my love for Robin Talley into words? This book was an amazing retelling of 'Macbeth', and the story sucked me in and held me there until I finished the last word on the last page.

If every book in the world was written up to Talley's standards, all I would do is read! I really loved the characters, and felt that they were easy to relate to and they were so lifelike, they could have been anyone. The image of Delilah, a popular but bad girl makes for a very interesting plot. A complicated but intriguing story, this book is one that I won't soon forget!

Elle Harding, age 14

A very highly recommended book, a real good page turner that you will not want to put down, it's basically a modern twist on 'Macbeth' with LGBT characters.

The book has an interesting collection of characters that make the book even more interesting as each character harbours their own story, the book has been added to my favourite with the great story lines and turns that makes you want to read and read on due to this I couldn't put it down and read it the day I received it, I loved the development in Maria and her and Lilly's relationship, I also loved Maria and Brandon's friendship and its growth, all and all this is a great book and highly recommended to anyone who likes the horror genre.

Jodi Coffman, age 14

*Lily and Maria are the perfect couple and they want to go to the same college next year. But there's only one way to guarantee that; Maria needs to win the Cawdor Kingsley Prize. But she's second in everything, only to her equally popular friend Delilah, who is the shoe-in to win the prize. Lily and Maria will do anything to win the prize but they don't realise how far it can go. But soon friends become enemies and Maria loses control of what's happening leading to fatalities. **I really enjoyed this new twist on the classic story 'Macbeth' and recommend it to anyone who wants a unique and interesting book to read.***

Georgia Walters

*I absolutely adored all of the characters; Robin Talley takes the time to examine the backstories and the internal conflicts of each student, and they all felt incredibly real to me. I ended up feeling so conflicted about Maria and Lily especially (in a good way!) because they are both such loveable characters, and yet do such incredibly dark things. What I also loved about the characters is that they're refreshingly diverse, beyond the angle of sexuality; Lily is physically disabled from a car accident, Maria and Theo are Hispanic, and Brandon is illustrated as being "fat" whilst not being portrayed in a negative light. As for the story... whoa. I had assumed it would be quite dark, as after all, it is based on the plot of 'Macbeth'. However, I didn't anticipate it being just as dark as it was! Mostly, I read this book during a week's internship - on my lunch breaks and commute into London - and I was so absorbed, I didn't want to put the book down! It grips you from the opening pages, and leaves a ghostly imprint on your mind when you've finished it. Eerie doesn't even begin to cover it; I'm not usually so spooked by horror novels, but this was definitely an exception, as there were so many parts that literally evoke shivers. The book begins with a Ouija Board experiment that doesn't go to plan, and the events of the novel cleverly spiral out of control from there, weaving in myths about the boarding school. **Robin Talley does an excellent job of writing a fantastic, classic-feeling horror story, that still doesn't feel cheesy or cliché at all. Overall, I highly recommend As I Descended - it ticks all the boxes for me.** It's addictive, well-paced, with an excellent plot and a memorably diverse cast of characters... Not to mention, it's incredibly creepy! It's the perfect read to gear up for Halloween with - just don't read it in the dark (or in the bathroom...)*

Jenny Duffy, age 23

Delilah Dufrey is top student at Acheron Academy. She's the most popular girl in school, she's a shoe in for the prestigious Cawdor Kingsley Prize. She is also the only thing preventing Maria Lyon and Lily Boiten's dream future. Best friends, if Maria wins that prize it means they can go to college together. They want this future more than anything, and they are willing to do anything to achieve it. When they call on the spirits that haunt the school, a former plantation, the feud becomes darker and deadlier than they could ever have imagined. But there is no turning back...

*'As I Descended' is a queer retelling of 'Macbeth' set in a haunted boarding school. It's such **a clever reworking of the play – using the power structures of the school, the spirits as the witches – but readers with no knowledge of Macbeth could enjoy it as a brilliant book in its own right.** The cast is diverse in terms of race and sexuality, and many of the roles have been gender swapped. Talley engages with her characters identities – some are open about their sexuality, some more conflicted. She treats Lily's disability in a sensitive manner, and really shows how much she struggles. Most of all, it was just so creepy. There are some scenes that will be staying with me for a long time. Not one to read late at night!*

<https://thebookstheartandme.wordpress.com>

Cesca Anderson, age 14

'As I Descended' is one of the most intense books I have ever read. Robin Talley manages to create a book with both a gripping storyline and a few funny moments, but with an underlying darkness throughout. The characters are incredibly realistic and Talley's descriptions are so exact that I can visualise every setting. The story of two girls fighting for their relationship, and then their own survival, highlights the importance of friendship and love, even in the darkest of times. Robin Talley's narration stays with you for a long time, making you question whether that shirt hanging on your wardrobe is really what it seems. 'As I Descended' was a book that sent shivers down my spine with every other page; it is certainly not a night time read!