

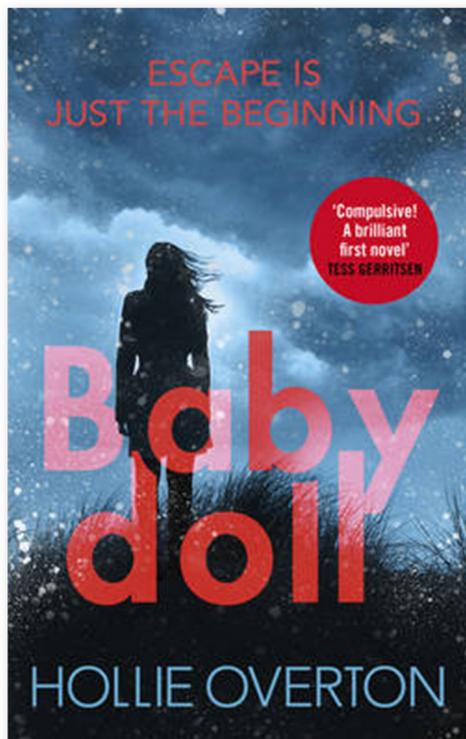


Helping you choose
your next book

LoveReading Reader reviews of **Baby Doll** by Hollie Overton



Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Celia Cohen

A taut well written psychological thriller which will hook you from the first page.

This book didn't make for a comfortable read but once started I couldn't put it down until it was finished. I couldn't help wondering if this family were always a bit dysfunctional or if it was just the result of the traumas they all went through. Well drawn characters whom I found myself sympathising with one minute and then impatient with the next. It certainly draws you in.

Jo Hutchinson

A fascinating read, it's not just about the mystery of a missing twin girl and her escape from incarceration but how it affected those left waiting and wondering what happened to her over the years.

'Baby Doll' by Hollie Overton is a deeply moving novel that is also fast paced and a truly riveting story.

'Baby Doll' is about a twin teenager called Lily Riser who is snatched and held kept captive in a basement for eight years, where she bares her captor a child called Sky. Lily Riser seizes her chance to escape with her six year old daughter and makes the nerve breaking dash to her former childhood home.

Lily has no idea what has happened to her family during this time, especially her beloved twin sister Abby.

The book relays how Lily's mysterious and tragic disappearance all those years ago, hasn't just tainted her life, but also the lives of all those close to her.

I really like that the book chapter's narrative were frequently passed from character to character, even the evil psychopath that kidnapped Lily. The book very cleverly focuses on what Lily's mother, and now pregnant twin Sister Abby and old boyfriend, have been up to over the years and how they dealt with the situation. 'Baby Doll' really makes the reader feel Lily's apprehension, that no-one will believe a much respected member of the community is her captor and the families shock and horror at the discovery.

This book wasn't the format I was expecting for this psychological thriller and I was very pleasantly surprised.

I loved that this book wasn't all about the capture, and the captivity but focused on the return, the recovery, and the ending result. The book's ending is just as satisfying as the start and I will look forward to reading more works by Hollie Overton.

Francesca Ashurst

Hollie Overton's debut novel is a gripping read.

The main protagonist, Lily, has been held hostage since she was sixteen. The novel begins at the point where Lily and her young daughter Sky manage to escape and make their way home. 'Baby Doll' explores the aftermath of captivity for Lily and also for her twin sister, Abby, her mother Eve and, surprisingly, her captor Rick.

Each chapter is told from the perspective of one of the characters and thus we learn how traumatised Abby was during the time that Lily was absent; how she blamed herself for Lily's plight and her guilt at having become involved with Lily's first love, Wes. Lily's mother Eve has struggled to cope with the loss of her daughter and events soon after. And whilst both are thrilled to have Lily home they have to negotiate the difficulties Lily faces as she struggles to understand what happened and why she is still under the influence of Rick who continues to manipulate her as he awaits trial.

This is a promising debut which deals with a difficult issue in an interesting way. There is little focus on what happened to Lily during her captivity with just enough detail to ensure that the reader is aware of the horrors she endured.

This is a real page turner with plenty of twists and turns along the way which makes for a compelling read.

Follow Francesca on Twitter: @francescaashurst

Michelle McKernan

A brilliant page-turner. Believable characters interwoven with a great plot made me want to fill even the odd minute with this book. Unpredictable and pacy – A must read.

This grabbed me right from the start and I struggled to put it down. The characters are so believable and their relationships are honest and real. The author clearly writes from experience where the twins are concerned and the intensity of the bond between mother and daughter was beautifully depicted.

The plot twists and turns and I found it impossible to predict what would happen next. The courage and bravery written into each and every character was clear yet subtle. The cruelty and depravity of the 'baddie' was intense and worryingly hidden. An excellent read which I can't recommend enough.

Lisa Hall

A tense, uncomfortable read, I was hooked from the very first page.

This is a tense, uncomfortable read, one that draws the reader in from the first page and stays with you for a long time after you've read the final sentence. With realistic, relatable characters and a plot full of twists, Overton's debut novel is a cracker.

Emotions run high throughout the book and the quality of the writing gets the reader feeling all of the "feels" - I felt desperately sorry for Lily and her family as they tried to get themselves back together, and Rick's attitude had me furious. Fast-paced and cleverly plotted, this was a five star read for me.

<http://reading-room-with-a-view.blogspot.co.uk>

Follow Lisa on twitter: @lisahallauthor

Joan Hill

Held captive for over eight years Lily Riser seizes her chance to escape with her young daughter. This is the engaging story of her

fight for justice and to make a new future.

'Baby Doll' is American writer Hollie Overton's debut novel, an exciting psychological thriller. In it she uses her own experiences as an identical twin to great advantage. Identical twin Lily is abducted from her school when she is sixteen years of age after a row with her twin Abby. She is held captive for three thousand one hundred and ten days and escapes with her six-year-old daughter Sky when her evil, arrogant captor forgets to bolt the door to their cell.

Her family are rocked but joyous at her return. This novel examines the consequences of trauma and coming to terms with what has happened in order to rebuild the future. It also details the investigation into the crime and the justice sought for Lily and Sky. The narration is shared between her family members and her manipulative captor. It deals with the issues of guilt, deception, loyalty, love, abuse and family dynamics.

Central character Lily is brave beyond words. She is calm and clear thinking, but not so Abby, who is ravaged by her loss and her feelings of guilt. Her family are supportive and determined, but severely challenged by Lily's period of captivity. They are full of empathy and love.

I enjoyed this novel and this new, talented author excites me. Her characters were well crafted and her easy reading storytelling vivid and fast paced, with some unexpected twists and turns. I didn't have any clue how the story would end but I really liked the resolution.

You can find Joan on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/reviewsandrecommendedreads/?ref=bookmarks>

Suzanne Bellingham

*'Baby Doll' is the story of Lily who is kidnapped and held captive for 8 years, however this book explains what happens next...it answers many of the questions you are left with after watching TV footage of a captive story who has escaped yet you never find out the emotional side of the fallout for the victim and their family. **It's a real page turner of a book as you are drawn into the family's story, how the relationships try to rebuild after the separations and how new relationships emerge.** Whilst the kidnapper is brought to justice alongside twists and turns which keep you gripped right to the last page, I thoroughly enjoyed this read and would recommend fully.*

Laura Gardner

A difficult subject to read but well worth every minute - Fantastic

I'm not sure I've ever read a book in which you hit the ground running quite as quickly as you do in 'Baby Doll'. In some ways it feels like this book starts half way through the story but that is, in no way, a bad thing. It's, actually, one of the things that makes this book so good. The author manages to introduce you to the characters well enough that, even without a big lead up, you get to know them and invest in their futures, almost instantly.

The story is very hard to read, in terms of a lot of the subject matter, but its well worth it. The characters develop really well throughout the story, they're very believable despite being a part of such an unbelievable story. Despite the fact that the plot of this book is very interesting (kidnap, abuse, revenge, the list is long), it's much more about the characters than anything else.

The suspense is fantastic, the story is well thought out and you'll want to reach the end of this book as soon as you've started it.

<http://www.petitmoi-bigworld.co.uk>

Laura Delve

An incredibly compelling, edge of your seat story that focuses on what happens after you escape years after being abducted.

'Baby Doll' was a read that completely sucked me in and caused this need to keep on reading until I got to the end. If any of you have watched/been watching the UK series of Thirteen on BBC 3, then Baby Doll has a similar concept to this; what happens after you escape years later from being abducted when you were a child. Think of Room by Emma Donahue, but focusing on the story after their escape and not during their abduction.

This was an incredibly compelling, edge of seat story. Even though Lily has escaped from her abductor after eight years of being held captive, her story is far from over. Baby Doll was a story that gripped me so entirely that I just had to keep reading just one chapter after the next and the next and the next.

Multi narrated, we get this story from all angles and it worked really well. It made the story all the more fascinating to get inside the heads of each of the characters, from the victim to the victim's family members to the actual abductor himself. You get to know their deepest thoughts and worries, each just so well developed and causing you to get further absorbed in this gripping story. There was just so much so going and loads of unexpected developments, so like Lily you could never truly get comfortable.

'Baby Doll' got off to such a great start and I was racing through to the end, but what knocked off one star from me was that some of the events seemed a touch too unrealistic and over the top. If it hadn't been for this then it would have been a five star read. Overall though a great thriller.

www.lauraslittlebookblog.blogspot.co.uk

Edel Waugh

As soon as I started this book I was immediately thrown into the action and the adrenaline was pumping, a sense of urgency got me straight away. Lily was abducted as a teen and had a child by that person. Kept captive for many years she gets free one day after her captor is unusually forgetful.

This story fills you with all the emotions you would want from a book, excitement, hope, love, family bonds and the most basic instinct, to survive.

The author was excellent at creating the urgency you would imagine a crime like that would create when a missing person returns and they know their kidnapper. Then there is all the aftermath that a crime like that causes.

Terrifying and impossible to put down. *Lily is a very likeable character and along with her twin sister Abby, these two women ooze gumption. **A must read book! Add this to your summer reading list.***

Sandra

A fast paced and thrilling novel which is truly un-put-downable. Lily has been held captive for 8 years since she was only 16. We find out what happens when she escapes.

Lily has been held captive in a windowless basement room for 8 years when she was abducted by someone she knew and trusted when she was 16. She's suffered but she's also loved - she's got a little daughter called Sky who is her world.

Once day her captor forgets to lock her in and they escape finding out they've been close to home. She makes it to safety but finds so many things have changed...

Her boyfriend now is in love with her sister. Her twin has suffered too since she's been away and even her mum seems to have put her life on hold. Can things ever go back to how they were?

A fast paced story which I couldn't put down.

<http://bbalm.blogspot.co.uk/>

Vikki Patis

*Now, I love a good thriller, and **'Baby Doll' seemed to have all the right ingredients - kidnap, abuse, escape, revenge - for a hard-hitting, moving story. But, sadly, 'Baby Doll' didn't live up to expectations.***

*Anyone who reads my blog know that the most important aspect of story writing is the characters, in my humble opinion. Of course, a story needs more, and things like plot and setting serve their purpose, but it is the characters you follow, care about. It is the characters that make the story real. The characters in *Baby Doll* felt wooden, unrealistic. I couldn't relate to any of them. Lily in particular was, quite frankly, annoying. One could understand certain aspects of her personality, due to all she'd been through, but the delivery was, put simply, disappointing. I'm sure Overton has talent as a writer - her ability to imagine the plot and execute a thrilling storyline is clear, but she needs to work on her characters. It seems to me that Overton was too focused on delivering the thrill and shocks that come with this genre, and so her characters suffered.*

I recently watched 'Thirteen' on BBC, which had a similar storyline to 'Baby Doll' - girl gets kidnapped, girl escapes, girl tries to live a normal life. As always, the most interesting aspect of these stories, for me, is the relationship one builds with their kidnapper. Despite suffering terrible abuse at their hands, the victim can grow attached to their abuser, even loyal. 'Baby Doll' could (and arguably should) have focused more on this aspect, in order to create a protagonist the reader can relate to, empathise with, and even understand. But instead, Overton created a shallow protagonist, and one I simply couldn't care less about.

Nicki Southwell

This thriller manages to encompass all the elements of an exciting story.

It centres on a young woman who manages to escape capture after eight years living in a basement. Her captor impregnates her, so survival is essential to ensure the safety of her young daughter. She knows the man, and the story opens when she is able to escape after a momentary lapse in security. This man is a respected and well liked member of the community so has not been a suspect

in investigations. When she was kidnapped she left behind her parents, twin sister and childhood sweetheart. She had no communication from the outside world so is unaware what has happened during her absence, and the impact that the last 8 years has taken their toll on those left behind. We follow her progress in picking up the pieces of her and her daughter's life and reconnecting with those who were left behind. They both undergo physical and mental examinations to ascertain exactly how they were treated over such a long period of time. This evidence is needed to prosecute and reveals the depth of his evil and controlling behaviour. No mention is made of how Lily and Star adapt to sunlight (her daughter has never been outside and the effects of a limited diet. The lack of essential nutrients is mentioned, but not the long term effect this is having on their health.

Phylippa Smithson

*If you have read the novel 'Room' (or seen the movie), then there is not much that is unique about 'Baby Doll', but **it's an easy and reasonably appealing read.***

Lily has been held in captivity for three thousand and fifty days by her English school teacher, Rick. When Rick makes his first and only mistake by failing to remember to lock the door to her prison cell, Lily grabs at the chance of freedom. She also grabs, Sky, her young child who was born as a result of rape.

On exiting the place where she had lived throughout her imprisonment, she realises she had been held just five short miles from the front door of her family home. This home where she grew up with her twin, Abby who she was a close as all twins usually are, her adored Father and her loving and caring Mum, Eve.

The story follows the days and weeks after her escape and the effect of her absence and then reappearance has, not just on Lily and Sky, but the immediate family.

I felt the plot was too familiar. The characters did not engage me – there were just not gritty and real-life enough for me. And the style of writing led me to predict that everyone would live happily ever after.

Disappointing.

Tanera Simons

Overton's first novel is an engaging insight into the psychological aftermath of abduction and abuse. It is fast-paced, emotional, and I couldn't put it down!

I've always been a fan of psychological thrillers, and consequently raced through this novel! The genre of abduction and kidnapping seems to be growing in popularity, and I think this book will do well as a consequence of this. The opening scene of the book describes Lily's dramatic escape from the hellish basement that served as her home for the previous 8 years, and we follow her re-entry into society alongside her young daughter. Overton invites us into Lily's home, and the multi-narrative nature of the book allows us to learn first-hand how each member of her family copes with the transition.

Having recently watched the BBC drama "Thirteen", I couldn't help but compare it with this novel. I thought that the difficulties Lily faced were realistic, but that she (and especially her daughter Sky) dealt with each hurdle almost too easily. Having lived in a one-room basement for 8 years, and for Sky's entire life, I felt that their re-emergence into the real world should have been more difficult for them. Overton does describe some of these hurdles, but I do think that it would have been a more rewarding experience as a reader to see Lily struggle more with her release, as it would have made her success at re-adjusting to society a bigger accomplishment at the end of the novel.

I also felt that Lily's relationship with her abductor, Rick, could have been explored in more detail. It would have been interesting to hear more about how she was perhaps suffering from Stockholm syndrome, and how harrowing it was for Sky to love Rick as a father.

Overall though, this was a pacy and emotional book that I would definitely recommend.

Beth Winsor

A good read with interesting family dynamics.

This was a thought-provoking story, although it will be familiar territory to some extent if you have read Room, and seen the TV drama Thirteen.

Some interesting family dynamics, though, especially the twin sister/ex-boyfriend aspects. It was well-written, I found it absorbing and a quick read.