



Believe Me

J.P. Delaney , Tony Strong (Pseudonym)

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In this twisty psychological thriller from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Girl Before*, an actress plays both sides of a murder investigation.

A struggling actor, a Brit in America without a green card, Claire needs work and money to survive. Then she gets both. But nothing like she expected.

Claire agrees to become a decoy for a firm of divorce lawyers. Hired to entrap straying husbands, she must catch them on tape with their seductive propositions. The rules? Never hit on the mark directly. Make it clear you're available, but he has to proposition you, not the other way around. The firm is after evidence, not coercion. The innocent have nothing to hide.

Then the game changes.

When the wife of one of Claire's targets is violently murdered, the cops are sure the husband is to blame. Desperate to catch him before he kills again, they enlist Claire to lure him into a confession.

Claire can do this. She's brilliant at assuming a voice and an identity. For a woman who's mastered the art of manipulation, how difficult could it be to tempt a killer into a trap? But who is the decoy . . . and who is the prey?

Believe Me Details

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Author : J.P. Delaney , Tony Strong (Pseudonym)

Format : Kindle Edition 400 pages

Genre : Thriller, Mystery, Fiction, Suspense, Mystery Thriller, Psychological Thriller

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From Reader Review Believe Me for online ebook

Melisa says

Well, I don't know about you, but my heart nearly burst out of my chest on this one! Holy smokes, the twists and the turns and the turns and more twists. I'm spinning!

Such a unique structure, I love how this one was set up - scenes structured as a script as it is playing out in the protagonist's mind. As a former acting student of a studio in New York City, this one was super relatable. I loved hearing all about the acting exercises and techniques that I once studied.

And may I please point you to my friend Mackenzie's review for her personal take as a psychologist who once studied Beaulieu. Her background casts a unique perspective on how the author has taken these topics and melded them into a fresh, fast paced psychological thriller.

This was a Traveling Sisters group read, and we were a slightly split group on this one. Always enjoy reading the perspectives from my fellow reviewers.

Thank you to Random House and JP Delaney for my advance copy. This book is available today!

Meredith B. (readingwithmere) says

5 STARS

What. Did. I. Just. Read. My mind is totally *blown* right now. I devoured this book in a matter of hours and I just could not get enough of it! This was my first J.P. Delaney (yes i know, I need to read the Girl Before) but wow this did not let me down!

The opening scene of this book is a big **BOOM**. Claire is an aspiring actor, an also an immigrant from London without a Green card, that is just trying to make rent. In order to make rent she may have to do some questionable things.

And Where are you from Claire? I'm trying to place that accent.

I'm from...wherever you want me to be from.

I never met a girl there before.

What's the most you've ever paid a woman, Rick?

Five hundred but that was --

Double it.

What's your Room Number?

I'll knock on the door in five minutes. Don't make eye contact with the concierge.

I know what you're thinking, Claire's method's come off a certain way but I'll tell you that what you're thinking is not AT ALL what happens. You'll have to read to find out more.

Through Claire's "profession" and best way to make money, she gets herself into some trouble. She literally puts her life on the line in order to get the job done. One day, Claire is asked to work on a recent murder case and try to have the husband of the wife confess that he was the one who killed her. Claire does this in exchange for money and a green card. They make a completely new identity for Claire and she quite literally has been given the role of a lifetime...

Reading through this book I had no idea where it was going to go. The author did a phenomenal job at tricking me into thinking that at different points different people had killed the wife. I also doubted at times if Claire could have been dreaming or if she was hallucinating some of the things she described. There were also points that I questioned, **Is she just this great at acting?**

Something I loved about this story was that it intertwined Claire's real life and her love of acting. There were chapters where she was either in class or acting in a play and I could see the connections between the two. It was almost like the author wanted to foreshadow some of the upcoming events but I thought this was done in a really creative way.

The book is fast paced, like I said, I read it in under 24 hours. This is definitely a thriller and one of the best that I've picked up in a really long time. It was new and different from the stuff I've been reading and I just devoured it. 10 out of 10 would recommend picking this up for all your thriller lovers!

Thank you to Random house for my Advanced Review copy of this book!

j e w e l s [Books Bejeweled] says

FOUR STARS

I felt the author's previous book, *The Girl Before* was written well; but, for an architectural mystery based on minimalism, it was a big ole mess --structurally speaking, of course.?

I really like **BELIEVE ME**. I was absolutely crazy about the first 2/3 of this addictive story. The plot had me second guessing my way through. Sadly, the last 1/3 just went so overboard it got ridiculous. I have a hard time understanding why the author (actual name: Tony Strong) wants to throw in everything he knows about his subject. It's too much. He overshot that line of believability and my five star rating dropped to a four.

This novel is mostly set in the theater world and our main character, Claire, is a young actress trying to make a living in NYC and eager to do anything to pay her rent. I think Claire is one of my most favorite unreliable narrators in recent memory. She's not a drunk or a sociopath or is she? We never know because she is ALWAYS acting. How CLEVER is that?

The performance aspect of her personality is a refreshingly innovative way to style an unreliable narrator! Hmmm. Talk about "method actor method actor method actor".

Some scenes come alive in Claire's head in the form of an actual written play. At first this can be confusing, but you'll catch on quickly. When she gets into serious trouble by being accused of murder, the real fun begins! This is a cat and mouse game with lots of twists.

BELIEVE ME is sophisticated, slick, beautifully written. It's a dark and addictive book, just know an over the top ending is waiting for you!

Thanks to NetGalley for allowing me to read this book before publication on July 24, 2018. All opinions are mine.

Carol (Bookaria) says

This was a **great thriller!** Claire is a British actor living in NYC. To make ends meet she works for a law firm luring unsuspecting husbands into making her a sexual proposition, once she gets them on tape she walks away and gets the evidence into the attorneys or wives' hands.

All is well until one day one of the wives shows up dead and Claire is enlisted by the authorities to get a confession out of the suspected husband. This novel was a very quick read, fast paced, and intriguing.

The story takes place in NYC and is narrated from Claire's point of view. I found the characters **complex, dark, and interesting**. In some parts, the novel is written like a play which was very unique and original, fitting perfectly with Claire's role as an actor.

Overall, **I enjoyed the novel** and recommend it to readers of thrillers, mysteries, and contemporary fiction.

I received an ARC from the publisher via Netgalley

Review posted on **Blog**

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

4 dark, sultry stars to Believe Me! ?? ?? ?? ??

Claire is British and living in the United States as a struggling actor. Not only does she need money, she is desperate for a green card, too.

Her ship comes in when she is hired as a decoy for a law firm of divorce lawyers. Her aim, to catch husbands cheating on tape...with her.

All seems to go as planned until the wife of one of the target's is murdered. Claire is asked by the police to ensnare the husband in a confession for the murder. Is she prepared for this starring role?

Believe Me is both enthralling and icky for different reasons! Are the traps ethical? Does Claire cross the line? Throughout, I never knew whom to trust, including Claire.

If you enjoy darker, twisted thrillers, Believe Me should be on your radar!

Thank you to J.P. Delaney, Random House/Ballantine, and Netgalley for the ARC. Believe Me will be published on July 24, 2018!

Christina - Traveling Sister says

Thank you to Netgalley and Random House Publishing for a copy of this ARC in exchange for an honest review. All opinions presented are my own.

DELANEY (AUTHOR)

Writes Believe Me.

EXT.

SITTING ON A BEACH READING INSTEAD OF HANGING OUT WITH HER FRIENDS.

ME

4.5 knock it out of the freaking park stars!!!

Let me start this off by saying: NOTHIN' BUT NET Delaney, this redefined an unputdownable SLAM-FREAKING-DUNK of a book. This grabs the readers attention right out of the gate and doesn't let you go until literally, the last sentence. I am a marionette and Delaney was pulling my strings from the first sentence to the last.

This. THIS, is a master class in thriller writing. For all of the moving parts of this story absolutely nothing fell flat for me. The setting, the structure, the formatting, the character development - this absolutely blew me out of the water *maybe slight pun-intended since I finished this on a beach*.

It's been a hard time coming, but I've really come around to structural changes to your typical story telling (when done right). Delaney truly created something wholly unique here. We only have one POV (Claire) however, she views her life as a movie and we switch between traditional story-telling and script writing. I had originally and right away been turned off by this. For me, the goal of every book is to enter what I call the "reading zone" but what many call "deep reading" and when you really shake things up with formatting it can be hard to drop into. I'd say this took me about.....a grand total of.....two chapters to drop into that zone *because* of the script writing.

I'm only somewhat familiar with scripts (having read a few for my dad who free-lances B-movies on the side) and so I was a bit wary of this. However, Delaney executed it in a way even someone entirely unfamiliar with this format could enjoy. It not only added to the suspense and broke up the novel a bit but it further aided to the excellent character development. I've said it before, and I'm sure I'll say it again - thriller/suspense novels generally suffer in this area. The focus is on the development of the *mystery* instead of the characters. However, Delaney didn't falter here one bit. I really felt I *knew* Claire and Patrick - and to a lesser degree Kathryn, Henry and Frank.

**The girl lies naked, sensuously sprawled,
Her limbs spread wide to curious eyes;
Her secret places shamelessly exposed**

Poetry (due to the overarching theme of Baudelaire) is interspersed throughout with the scripting. I'm honestly really picky about poetry but it was utilized in a way that really created some seriously sinister

undertones here. I think Delaney used so many clever techniques throughout the story and it created a very unique, anxiety and character driven psychological thriller (this is just one of many examples).

Sometimes, when you wear a mask too long, you find it sticks to the skin.

The use of red herrings here made me understand why so many authors implement these. Why they are so important and how they are properly used. I absolutely loved the implementation of psychology as well and that it was (for the most part) *correctly* used. I only have my bachelors in this field of study but I do have a very dear friend who has Histrionic Personality Disorder so this aspect really appealed to me, especially since it was *accurately* portrayed. So much of mental health is misused and misunderstood and I appreciate that Delaney clearly did the research here.

I completed this as a Traveling Sisters group read and what a true and fun joy it was! Thank you ladies for such an enjoyable read and so many fun discussions! This would easily fit well into any book club out there!

Are you looking at reading this book? BUY. IT. PUT. IT. ON. YOUR. SHELF. This was a **insert another sports analogy for some kind of goal (I don't watch sports so I only know a few)**. To say the least, it's easily a 10 out of 10 for me. I don't want to do a synopsis because Delaney does that expertly - don't try to give anything away because this was a wild (and truly fun) ride from start to finish. Pick it up. Don't question it. READ IT.

Deanna says

My reviews can also be seen at: [https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress...](https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress.com)

I enjoyed this author's previous novel "The Girl Before" and was really looking forward to reading this one too. "**Believe Me**" was previously published in 2001 under the title "**The Decoy**". The author states that:

"although built around the same idea as the earlier one, and containing some of the same scenes, is completely different in plot, characterization, and structure."

Claire Wright a 25-year-old British woman with dreams of becoming an actress is struggling to make it in America. Because she doesn't have a green card her options for work are limited. She NEEDS to make it in the U.S. She can't go back to work in London....not after what happened there.

America is her second chance.

She has a scholarship for an Actors Studio course, but it only pays tuition, not living expenses. She is allowed to work on campus but those jobs are few and far between. In other words, she's broke.

Claire will do anything to keep acting...

Then she gets an opportunity to work for a divorce attorney. It's easy money and the work is easy too. She is hired to entrap cheating husbands...though she prefers to think of it as "*behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances*". Her ability to act, to become someone else came from how she grew up. Most of the time she feels like the husbands have it coming. Although sometimes she feels a little disgusted by what she does.

When her next "job" doesn't turn out as planned, EVERYTHING changes and things take a very dark turn. Claire is resilient and cunning, but can she do what she needs to finish this assignment?

What happens when even you don't know who you are anymore?

I thought this was a really engrossing read and I had a hard time putting it down. The characters won't win any awards for Miss/Mr. Congeniality, but I was intrigued by them. Usually, it bothers me if I can't connect with characters, but it didn't irritate me as much as it normally would. In fact, I liked not knowing who I could trust.

I didn't care much for the erotic poetry (which may be because I didn't understand it). However, I still enjoyed the rest of the story, and I have to admit, I did end up Googling to find out more about "Les Fleurs du Mal" by Charles Baudelaire.

Overall, I found this to be quite an entertaining psychological thriller. The story had some great twists and turns, leading up to an intense and gripping ending that I never saw coming!

I'd like to thank Ballantine Books for giving me the opportunity to read this book in exchange for my honest review

Debra says

Believe me when I say, this was not my cup of tea.

Claire is a struggling actor looking for work. Her one main obstacle is that she British living in the United States without a green card. This makes getting a job quite difficult and one does need money to survive.

She finds a job which will pay her cash. She works as a decoy, hired to entrap cheating spouses on tape. There are rules that need to be followed, the spouse with the wandering eye needs to proposition her, and she needs to get it all on tape. Then one day, the wife of a suspected cheater is found murdered. The police believe her husband is to blame and have Claire help them get his confession.

The premise of this book sounded extremely interesting to me. Like a cat and mouse book where one often questions just who the good guy is and who is the bad guy. I so wanted to enjoy this, and I will say that I did enjoy it in the beginning and then things went downhill for me. I found myself losing interest and didn't really care who was telling the truth, who wasn't, who was acting, who wasn't, etc.

I enjoyed the Author's other book "The girl Before" and was hoping to be blown away by this book as I was by that book. Sadly, I just did not connect with this book. Yes, it is well-written, but I just didn't care about any of the characters to even care what happened to them. There are some twists and turns along the way with lots of lies, deceptions and revelations. Even with the twist and turns I was underwhelmed by this book. I may be in the minority on this one but it just felt flat to me.

At times this book is written like a play (or maybe a script) in keeping with the part of Claire being an actress and giving performance. There are also a lot of quotes from Baudelaire's Les Fleur du Mal (his book on

S&M Poetry) thrown in.

The Author does note publishing this book years ago, then re-wrote it after "The Girl Before" became a best seller.

Thank you to Random House Publishing-Ballantine and NetGalley who provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

See more of my Reviews at www.openbookpost.com

Mackenzie - Traveling Sister says

A dark and twisted thriller that lured me into the story and captured my thoughts until the very last page! There is no one in the psychological thriller genre who can write such captivating, loathsome, alluring characters as well as J. P. Delaney. Earlier this year I was enthralled by his last book, *The Girl Before*. This one is somehow even better. I could not separate myself from this book. Everything about it was so carefully crafted, from the story to the characters to the writing techniques.

And what to say about those twists!?! I read this with a group of my traveling sisters and because we were always at very slightly different points in the book, our opinions and theories kept misaligning in a good way. That is how often Delaney has you rethinking everything in this book! Nearly every chapter led me in a different direction.

About the Book

Claire Wright is an actress who was blacklisted in the UK, and takes up coursework in New York City for a fresh start. Despite incredible talent, without a green card Claire isn't much better off in the U.S. Struggling to live her dream, Claire finds some unconventional work ensnaring cheating husbands for a divorce firm. Sure, it doesn't make Claire feel great, but it is work that uses her beauty and skills and intelligence, and allows her to continue her studies.

Claire always follows the rules...

Always appear available. Don't approach them first. Always let them be the one to proposition you. Don't actually sleep with them. Get the evidence, return it to the wife, and don't speak of it to others. Claire has never struggled to seduce men. She finds this is a job she was made for.

Until one entrapment doesn't go as planned and the game changes...

Claire finds herself in the middle of a murder investigation. The first mark who doesn't go for Claire's charms ends up with a dead wife by morning. The police want Claire's help to capture a dangerous killer. Claire goes undercover, but finds herself confused as she gets to know him. At what point does the mask we put on become who we really are?

Reflection

In college I was a double major in literature and psychology. Though in my doctoral degree I chose to pursue psychology, literature has a very special place in my heart. I took a French Literature course where we read Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* in the original French. This book is heavily crafted around Baudelaire and so I was immediately drawn in.

One thing I always remember about studying Baudelaire was his passion for contrast. Highlighting the incredible beauty of the grotesque and challenging our sense of propriety. Baudelaire pushed boundaries beyond many poets and writers of his day. His poems tend to leave me breathless. They leave me mesmerized but disgusted. The beauty of his words and verse contrasted with the dark imagery are really something to behold.

"Never fall for anyone who prefers to speak someone else's words."

I think some readers will find themselves hating his poetry that appears in this book, and that is a completely valid reaction. But I always think of Baudelaire as testing people. Showing people that they can actually be attracted to things that horrify them. Delaney showcases this power in his book, both through Baudelaire's life and poetry, and through the story of the novel itself. I don't want to spoil anything about the plot, but I will say that the characters of Claire and Patrick are so perfectly crafted to mirror the feelings that Baudelaire's evokes in readers. I am absolutely captivated by this story.

I found it interesting that Delaney actually did the translations for this book himself. They are incredibly good translations! Translations of Baudelaire's work tend to bring some controversy, because it is incredibly difficult to capture the meaning, beauty, and horror of Baudelaire's poems in a translation. I am in awe of Delaney for the skill it took to craft such great translations. The inspiration for this book is the work of Baudelaire, and to capture that essence of his writing for an audience that has less knowledge of him is incredible.

"Sometimes, when you wear a mask too long, you find it sticks to the skin."

Onto some other reflections on this book. This book really plays with the line between reality and fiction. Claire is an actress and early in her career she learned the difference between pretending and acting. To act, she learns, you have to feel what the character is feeling. You have to let a part of yourself become the character. And then, as she learns throughout the book, it can be difficult to tell when you are acting and you have become the character. I loved reading about Claire, both in what she acknowledges, as well as what Delaney allows us to see as observers of her story.

And then there is a strong theme of trust and deception. Many of the characters in this book talk about trust. It becomes central to every element of the story. The most fascinating use of this theme is in the way that characters are unsure whether they are deceiving not only others, but themselves. The characters have so much introspection, despite how narcissistic they are. Like Baudelaire, the contrasts and paradoxes are the beauty in this book. A character might be both strong and fragile, honest and deceitful, alluring and repulsive. A character may both desire the spotlight but spend their life hiding. A character may be trusting and mistrusting. These contrasts kept me on my toes. I wasn't ever sure where the narrative would spin next, and I loved every moment of it.

"Those are always the most interesting characters: the ones who deceive themselves. Because sooner or later, the deception always falls apart."

I read that Delaney had actually written a book like this nearly seventeen years ago, under a different title.

The book was published but didn't take flight. When Delaney went to republish it following his recent success with *The Girl Before* (which you should really go read), he felt that there were flaws in the original work. He rewrote it from scratch and says it is "completely different in plot, characterization, and structure." Well, Mr. Delaney, I did not read the original version of this book, but I would like to go on record saying that this recreation of your original idea is a true masterpiece.

This book is pure chaos and terror and love and torture and poetry. I loved it!

See my blog for more: <https://PhDiva.blog>

Thank you to Random House and J. P. Delaney for my advanced copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Carrie says

Believe Me by J.P. Delaney is a psychological thriller that brought out that side of me that argues with myself. My reaction while reading this one.... What?? Yes... well, no... yes... no way! Yeah, you get my point.

The book begins with Claire doing what she does to earn money, propositioning a man in a bar. But it's not what one would think in any way, Claire works for a law firm going undercover to catch cheating spouses since acting jobs are hard to come by for someone without a green card.

Normally these jobs go very quickly for Claire, all she has to do is wait for the mark to approach her and flirt a bit all the while getting them on camera. But Claire is surprised when a mark doesn't fall for her attempts but even more surprised when the wife is upset her husband didn't cheat. What Claire never expected after the job was over was to find herself in the middle of a murder investigation.

This is one that I'm not sure if it would be for everyone as it is certainly different. The style the author chose was one that took a little getting used to. A lot of the conversations and such are in an interview type of format but since the story was intriguing I went along with the differences well enough. Once the twists in the book begin to happen my internal debate meter shot off the chart and it wasn't as if you are thrown a whole pile of suspects but the psychological side showed in playing mind games with the reader. In the end I was glad I picked this one up as it certainly was an entertaining read.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.com/>

Chelsea Humphrey says

4.25 STARS

Does anyone else feel completely refreshed and renewed when they pick up a book and finish it in 24 hours or less? Good, I'm glad to know it's not just me. I had to wait forEEEEEEVVVVER for this one to come in

at the library because I'm starting to review fewer books as arcs to accommodate our busier schedule as a family, and this was one I really wanted to take on initially, but just couldn't fit into the schedule. *Can we all give a round of applause for the wonderful libraries across the globe and the wonderful people who work at them?* It was 100% worth the wait, and it seems the forces that be knew exactly when I would need to pick this one up. Quite frequently I find myself craving a good trashy novel (I mean that as the highest compliment, truly), and this wacky, wonderfully suspenseful story was deliciously wicked in all the right ways.

I feel I need to state right off the bat that I can understand why this book doesn't work for everyone. It is indeed very bizarre, unrealistic, and filled with despicable characters. It's truly hard to sympathize with ANYONE in the book, but that wasn't a feature I was taking into concern while reading *Believe Me*. When I say this book was wackadoodle, what I mean is that there aren't any words in the english language that can do justice to just how over the top this tale was. For me as a reader, and what I was searching for to fill my reading tank at the moment, it ticked all the right boxes.

I hate to really say anything about the plot, because it is complex and ever changing throughout, but also because you really want to go in blind to be surprised at all the right places. Beware reader, you may receive major whiplash from all the twists and turns, but it was precisely this aspect that kept the pages turning so quickly. Even though I trusted no one in this story (TRUST NO ONE I SAY!!!), I found myself unable to look away from the train wreck of a cast that put most soap opera storylines to shame. If you enjoy racy, compulsive, and fantastical thrillers, this one is for you. It's the perfect read when you're needing something to blow through in a very short time period.

Paromjit says

J P Delaney follows up the bestselling *The Girl Before* with this dark, and twisted psychological thriller set in New York with the starring role played by British actress, Claire Wright. Claire is attending a prestigious acting course that she came to NYC for. She is perennially short of money, behind in her rent money to Jess, whom she shares a Manhattan apartment with. Claire is forbidden to take up legitimate work as she lacks the green card to do so. She ends up working off the books, cash only for the law firm, Kerr and Adler, with their ex-cop investigator, Henry, filming married men coming on to her for their wives who have become suspicious of them. Every man falls for Claire until she meets Patrick Fogler, whose wife, Stella, she had met earlier. Academic Patrick Fogler is an expert on and obsessed with Charles Baudelaire, more specifically the poems within *Les Fleurs du Mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*) with content that touches on the dark and unseemly side of sexual relationships. Patrick refuses Claire's open advances but later that night, Stella is found brutally murdered in her hotel room.

Claire loses her job, but is offered an opportunity to entrap Patrick by NYPD cop Frank Durban and Forensic Psychologist, Dr Kathryn Latham who believe Patrick is guilty of murdering his wife and 8 prostitutes that they know of in his life. Scenes of Claire in her acting classes demonstrate just how good an actress she is. She sees this as a role that offers her the opportunity to get the much desired green card, and besides she can do this. It's a job with different rules from the usual of being an actress, but it requires the same skills and the same process. However, nothing is as it seems, is Patrick the real target? For the reader it is like falling into a dark rabbit hole with Claire, the unreliable narrator, can she be trusted on anything? And what are the Baudelaire connections to *Necropolis.com*, an extreme BDSM site? Claire is falling in love with Patrick, willing to go wherever he leads, uncaring of how dark that territory may turn out to be, in fact, the darker and more dangerous, the better, all the time approaching all that she encounters with the line, what can I use from

that?

Delaney writes a story with the kind of twists that make it difficult to predict where the novel will end up. It is a beautifully written story, with Claire, a central character who is hard to get a grip on as we wonder if there is anything we can trust about her at all? At the same time, I find myself unable to trust Patrick at all. I can see this providing the requisitely compelling material for a film! This is an entertaining and thrilling read, albeit you do have to suspend your sense of disbelief at times. Many thanks to Quercus for an ARC.

Berit??? says

4.5 Mind Blowing Stars ????5

WOW! What a crazy ride this book was! This book sucked me in from the very first page... and after it tossed me around and turned me on my head it spit me back out and left me spinning.... Claire I might need to crown you the most unreliable narrator of them all! Bravo! J P Delaney for writing such a unique and twisted thriller!

Claire is a struggling British actress living in New York without a green card... so what's a girl to do? Claire being resourceful and an actress begins working for a divorce lawyer and becomes a decoy... trapping cheating husbands and making enough money to pay the bills, all seemed good until... One of the wives she was working for ends up murdered... don't even want to say anything else about the plot, because this is a journey best gone into blind...

This was an enthralling story that left me not trusting anybody! I thought it was so uniquely told I loved the script aspects... I loved all the psychology and the criminal profiling... The poetry discussed in this book will probably resonate with others more than me... poetry not my thing, to be honest I didn't even know this was a real poet... color me ignorant! This was a group read and fortunately my fellow sisters were kind enough not to make me feel stupid when I excitedly told them that Baudelaire was a real live poet!????

You do need to suspend belief for parts of this book and just go with it... but BELIEVE ME it is so worth it! The twists in this book they keep coming... this was a wild ride I was sad to have to get off of!

Strongly recommend to all fans of a well-done unique psychological thriller that will blow your mind?

*** many thanks to Valentine Books for my copy of this book ***

? you can find all my reviews on my blog @
<https://audiokilledthebookmark.com/>

Rose (Traveling Sister) says

3 stars. Right in the middle. I tore through this at lightning speed but was hearing circus music the entire time because it was **cockamamie AF**.

Last night, I did exactly two things: ate 822 grams of carbohydrates and read *Believe Me* cover to cover. Our

narrator, Claire, is a naïve yet ambitious actress who will stop at nothing to fulfill her dreams and, more pressingly, pay dat rent. She is excruciatingly self-absorbed, often narrates in stage direction, and throws herself into each project. Lately, her project is getting married men to agree to affairs. This is sponsored by their suspicious wives who've hired a private agency that might as well be called **Gotcha Bitch, Inc.**

After one of these wives is found murdered, things come unglued. The NYPD (FBI?) decide that they're going to use Claire's acting skills and experience baiting men to **BAIT SOMEONE THEY SUSPECT OF BEING A SERIAL KILLER AEGHJDCOEIHJV** and if you can get over such an unethical, illegal tactic then maybe you can suspend enough disbelief to get through the rest of this thing.

I don't know if I've ever been so dumbfounded by a thriller or had such a difficult time rating one. While I can't gush about this book, I do think it has fantastic elements that make it a unique example of modern genre fiction. One of those elements is the use of script excerpts to drive the narrative. This was a very smart way to illustrate how the outcome of every conversation hangs on each individual exchange. Every sentence and every reaction has the potential to go very well or very badly, depending on how it is received and interpreted.

Also, I enjoyed the way tragedy and comedy come into play. Tragedy is pretty self-explanatory, and there's lots of it in *Believe Me*. The historic understanding of "comedy" as witty, ironic power struggles between characters perfectly describes the relationships in Delaney's novel: everyone is exploiting everyone, and no one can be trusted.

There was not a single character that I truly liked. Being stuck with Claire was a drain. Baudelaire was alluded to on basically every page, and a lot of time was spent in Claire's acting classes. These felt like clever devices at first, but they quickly became heavy-handed and obvious. **DARK POEMS INSPIRE PEOPLE TO DO CRAZY THINGS. ACTORS ARE ALWAYS ACTING. DO YOU GET IT?** Yes, my dude, I get it.

The timeline was also wack. Months go by with little to no context, which made it difficult to follow what had happened once the pace and plot dipped back into what we're supposed to assume is "reality."

Overall, this was a good book and it kept me riveted. A lot of my GR friends really loved this one, and I can see why. It's as crafty and twisty as it can be, and there's no way to know what's really happening at any given moment. There's just so much going on that it felt like a mad dash at the end to get everything tied up, so certain plot points felt unnecessary and forced in my opinion. **Don't throw catacombs at me at the last second, ever.**

Kaceey - Traveling Sister says

Well if you are looking for a thriller than will shock you at every turn...then look no further!
This book was so full of surprises and twists that I was in danger of getting whiplash,

Claire is a young actress from England now living in New York City looking for her big break! She attends acting school yet is always in need of money to continue school...and of course to just survive in the big city.

Her latest gig is to to work for a law firm's investigator. Only one assignment may be more than she can handle.now where does her acting stop and reality take over. Will she survive to act another day....or will this

be her swan song?

An absolute fast and furious read! Who to believe? Who to trust? What is real? And what is fiction? This book will keep you guessing right up until the very end.

A buddy read with Susanne!

Thank you to NetGalley, Random House Publishing Group - Ballantine and JP Delaney. For an ARC to read in exchange for an honest review.
