



HIDDEN PIECES

PAULA STOKES

AUTHOR OF LIARS, INC.

Hidden Pieces

Paula Stokes

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Embry Woods has secrets. Small ones about her past. Bigger ones about her relationship with town hero Luke and her feelings for someone new. But the biggest secret she carries with her is about what happened that night at the Sea Cliff Inn. The fire. The homeless guy. Everyone thinks Embry is a hero, too, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

Embry thinks she'll have to take the secret to her grave, until she receives an anonymous note—someone else knows the truth. Next comes a series of threatening messages, asking Embry to make impossible choices, forcing her to put her loved ones at risk. Someone is playing a high stakes game where no one in Embry's life is safe. And their last move...is murder.

Hidden Pieces Details

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Author : Paula Stokes

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Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Mystery

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From Reader Review Hidden Pieces for online ebook

Ari says

I am a bit conflicted.

There were parts I absolutely loved, but some I struggled with and I am not even sure why - I just felt the need to skim through some chapters.

Though I guessed who might be sending the messages, it was interesting to understand why things happened the way they did, so I still enjoyed the ride. There was also half-good communication - which is a good thing, because we didn't wait for the very last page for some things to settle (and some characters to make some particular confessions), but the requests were creepy (!!! Like go-to-the-fucking-police-already creepy), though it's not like the character didn't try to look at things from all angles.

Jennifer says

Hidden Pieces is a YA contemporary book that is part mystery, part thriller and part romance.

The narrator is 17 year old Embry (girl -1st person POV). The book is set in Three Rocks, a small town along the Oregon Coast.

This book looks at a lot of issues: friendship, single parenthood, cheating, financial difficulties, secrets...

Embry was a very interesting narrator. She is mostly a good kid. But she keeps lots of secrets and she closes herself off from those around her. It took me a little bit of time to really get into this story. But by 1/3 it became much more interesting. Embry and her friend Holden get caught doing something and someone knows. There is a video and emails and there is a whole mystery about who knows Embry's secrets.

I found this mystery to be very intriguing. And I enjoyed it a lot. There were a couple of reveals that I found a bit obvious. And I even guessed the guilty party. But it was very interesting to find out why everything happened. This book is an interesting combination of Young Adult romance, mystery and thriller. And I ended up enjoying the story.

Thanks to edelweiss and HarperTeen for allowing me to read this book.

Shelley says

Source Publisher

Genre Young Adult / Contemporary

Rating 3.0

Thoughts

Paula Stokes' Hidden Pieces is a twisted mystery surrounding protagonist Embry Woods and the events surrounding what happened on the day of December 11. On December 11, Embry and her boyfriend Holden Hassler accidentally start a fire at the Sea Cliff Inn. In order to avoid trouble, Holden leaves while Embry realizes that someone is still inside. Risking life and limb, she rescues a homeless man and is cheered on as a local hero. Only Embry and Holden know the real truth about what happened on that day.

Full Review @ Gizmos Reviews

<http://gizmosreviews.blogspot.com/201...>

- ?? DANY ??- (danyreads) says

. : ?? — 3 ★

READ THIS REVIEW ON MY BLOG!!!

<https://bit.ly/2OsFdUb>

ARC provided from the publisher via Edelweiss+ in exchange for an honest review (thank you HarperCollins/HarperTeen!!)

Hidden Pieces follows Embry Woods, a girl with many secrets, who accidentally commits arson while hooking up with her best friend's ex-boyfriend. She concocts a plan to leave the crime scene and remain blameless, but after receiving a series of increasingly threatening messages blackmailing her over her role in the fire, Embry is pushed into a dark series of events surrounding her family and loved ones that could potentially end her life—or somebody else's—if she doesn't make the right choice.

This book has A LOT of potential. I'm a little conflicted because, for a mystery/thriller book, Hidden Pieces wasn't anything new. It was pretty formulaic to be honest, and other than the blackmailing thing, we really aren't given a solid plot because this is a heavily character driven book. It isn't to say that I didn't enjoy myself, completely the opposite. This book was a lot of fun!! I love mystery/thriller books where you feel like you honestly can't trust any of the characters, and I also love the satisfying feeling of getting to exclaim "I knew it!" when the mysterious bad guy is revealed.

I do believe, however, that this book could've been sooooo much better. Or just that it was too simple for me to take it seriously. A lot of things in this book could've been avoided had Embry just asked for help, either from the police or her best friend Julia or even her mom. She was really stubborn for no reason about wanting to figure things out on her own, and like, a good two-thirds of this book were just the consequences of Embry's bad decisions and worse logical thinking.

Hidden Pieces was just above average, but there was something missing. I don't know. I feel like the events of the book weren't really momentous in the character's lives. Nothing of transcendence really happened

other than the hotel burning down (and even that wasn't really important, to be honest). this book was fun and i enjoyed myself while reading, but i feel like it still might've had a long way to go in regards to plot development and originality. it really wasn't anything that i haven't already seen/read a thousand times before. still a great time, though!!

Jessica (a GREAT read) says

I received this ARC from the author in a contest that I won on Instagram. My review is completely honest and voluntary; I was in no way compensated for this review.

Paula Stokes wowed me with her thrilling and fast-paced Vicarious duology, so I was excited to read her next thriller, *Hidden Pieces*. It was definitely something different from what I was expecting, as the heroine was just a little hard to like in the beginning, but she grew on me as the story went along. It was quite a twisted mystery too, one that led to deadly consequences.

Embry is our heroine, she's a senior in high school and has been dealing with quite a bit lately; her mom is battling cancer and is finishing up her treatments so that the cancer will hopefully be gone, she's on a break with her boyfriend who's over in Afghanistan in the army and she has yet to work up the courage to break it off with him because she's been seeing another guy while he's away, her best friend's ex-boyfriend in fact and they've been keeping their relationship a secret.

It's when Embry is with Holden at a closed-for-the-season hotel that things get complicated. They were in the hotel by candlelight and had a little bit of alcohol with them and when they started getting a little hot and heavy, a fire breaks out among the candles. Fearing the serious trouble that they could get into they evacuate and call the fire department, it's while Embry is waiting to make sure they come that she sees a shadow inside the burning building, someone was still inside. She rushes to help without even thinking and is later claimed to be a hero. Though no one knows that she and Holden were the ones that caused the fire, accidentally of course.

Then Embry gets a text message, one that gives her chills. Someone knows what she did. Someone knows exactly what happened and they urge Embry to confess in public or something very bad will happen to someone she cares about. Embry is terrified, not only that she's being threatened but that someone else was there that night. It makes her wonder if there could've been someone else in the hotel with the homeless guy she rescued. When she fails to comply with the stalker's demands things start to fall apart very quickly as terrible things begin to happen and more threats are continually made and acted out.

This was a pretty chilling read in some sense! I mean, the whole idea of there being someone who saw you in a private moment is creepy. Not only that, but Embry and Holden are guilty of causing a fire and some serious destruction to the hotel and they fear the consequences that will come from that financially. Embry and her mom are not that well off due to her mom's illness and are barely scraping by. But when the stalker wants Embry to commit crime after crime in order to appease his whims, Embry decides it's time to fight back.

I felt like I knew who the stalker was fairly early on though. To be honest, I had two suspects, ones that I felt highly suspicious of and I just knew one of them had to do it. I was leaning more towards one based on a few facts and I was pleased to find that I ended up being right! Though one of my conclusions about some of the events was totally wrong, which that kind of blew me away a bit! Not the fact that I was wrong, but by the

event itself!

One thing that kind of nagged at me when I started this one was that Embry was a just a tad unlikeable. I mean, I know Holden and her best friend broke up, but she herself was still in some sort of relationship with her boyfriend despite the break. Honestly, it goes back to that early season of Friends when Ross and Rachel were on a “break” and yet Ross slept with someone, whose side did you take? It just felt a little wrong that she was moving onto a new relationship while her boyfriend overseas thinks everything is just fine, despite the “break” being installed. That was really one of the main reasons I found her hard to like in the beginning, I really don’t like cheaters and yes “breaks” might be hard to define for some people but unless there’s an “up”, I feel like you’re still in a relationship.

One thing I did like about Embry though was that she was a sort of complicated character. She wasn’t Miss Popular or Miss Perfect. She was pretty flawed, though I didn’t care for one of those flaws. Her other ones made her human and relatable. She was dealing with a lot of things beyond the stalker issue and the pressing secret of the fire. Her life was in turmoil before all this chaos and it’s not that I liked that happening to her, it was just refreshing to see a fictional character deal with the intense struggles people face in reality every day.

Other than that, I did really enjoy *Hidden Pieces*! The mystery was intense and scary as this stalker holds nothing back when it comes to ruining Embry’s life. It was deeply chilling, though I felt like the ending was just a little too clean. That or I’ve become used to the more vague endings some thrillers tend to end in. I truly hope Paula isn’t done with thrillers yet because she definitely has a knack for this genre!

Overall Rating 4/5 stars

Hidden Pieces releases August 28, 2018

Jen Ryland says

[I thought the mystery person was her boyfriend, who knew about the cheating and was somehow on leave and decided to torture her. (hide spoiler)]

Vicky Who Reads says

3.5 stars

I loved Stokes’ *Girl Against the Universe*, and was very excited to hear she was coming out with another book! I hadn’t read any of her mysteries before this, but *Hidden Pieces* sounded AWESOME.

And it was definitely **better than I expected** (my expectations for mystery/thriller are honestly kinda low), but I did think that this was a **pretty solid read!**

It's easier to start with the negatives first, and there were honestly only two things that I wasn't a huge fan of.

First, I felt like honestly all of this could have been avoided if the character wasn't as...negligent? Was more honest? Like, I sort of facepalmed because I felt like the main character just could have avoided this whole situation better if she was honest with the start.

And I don't mean just with the burning the house down thing (which I actually felt she was reasonably justified in not telling anyone because money, but still boo?), but with the whole not telling her boyfriend thing too.

I just felt like the who reason why the plot happened could have been avoided if the main character was a little more honest.

But, I do realize that this is partly because of character flaws etc., but I always get a wee bit frustrated with plots that could have been completely avoided if *one thing* did/did not happen.

The other thing that made this less appealing to me was that I predicted the blackmail/murderer from a little before the halfway point. Which never happens to me.

I'm pretty terrible at guessing these things and I definitely probably am getting better at guessing killers, but I also felt like Stokes didn't include enough red herrings to make it hard to guess. Like, it was pretty easy to rule out the obvious ones (and you know the murderer is usually a side character) and there weren't many other characters left, so I intuitively knew who it *had* to be just based on mystery/thriller tropes in general.

I definitely wished it was more twisty, but there were still a lot of pluses to this!

I LOVED the blackmail aspect. Like, those were chilling and dangerous and super cool. I think Stokes did a really great job of building those up and making Embry distressed and everything. It definitely felt like there weren't a lot of options and you really felt what Embry was going through.

Plus, this book just totally sped by. It was really easy to digest, and even though I didn't have a lot of time, I *wanted* to find out what happened next and I *wanted* to keep reading, which is more than I can say for a lot of books I don't connect with.

So even though this didn't end up being perfect for me, I was invested and interested and I enjoyed being chilled by all the danger! Definitely recommend if you're in the mood for a story featuring blackmail and characters who don't have any good options...

Thank you so much to Harper Collins for providing me with a digital review copy in exchange for an honest review!

Stacee says

I am always up for one of Paula's books because I have always enjoyed her stories.

I loved Embry, even though I wanted to shake her. She's so loyal and so good, it was easy for me to root for her right away. Yes, she's stubborn af, but it makes sense why she chooses some of the things she does, and I enjoyed seeing her grow. Holden is adorable and the dynamic between him and Embry was equally as adorable. He pushes when he needs to and backs off when she needs it. And hello to healthy communication.

Plot wise, it was delicious. Some parts did feel a bit drawn out, but I looooooooved the tension and the not knowing. That feeling of not trusting anyone is my favorite in a book like this, and I figured everyone had something to do with it. The slow burn build up made for a satisfying reveal and ending. And while I wanted more from the epilogue because I'm greedy, it was great for the book.

Overall, another captivating story with excellent characters. I can't wait to see what Paula writes next.

Huge thanks to Harper Teen and Paula for providing the arc free of charge

Candace says

Loved this book! Cruised through it faster than any other I've recently read. Desperately wanted to skip to the end to know but I didn't and was surprised! Loved the MC who is definitely flawed but is well fleshed out and I 'got' why she made some of the decisions she did.

Excellent thriller, definitely recommend!

Paula Stokes says

FOR EARLY REVIEWERS:

As usual, I made a lot of little tweaks to the ARC, however they're almost all cosmetic, deleting word echoes, removing repetitive passages, clarifying the timeline, adding in a couple of transitions, and strengthening a couple of chapter endings. There are no changes that affect the overarching plot or mystery, though I did pull back on a couple of "clues", trying to hit that sweet spot where most readers won't guess the culprit early on, but afterward the reveals will feel sort of inevitable. One thing I definitely did was weave in too many references to the title--it's so easy when you're writing to see a small thing link up to an overarching theme and think AHA! I MUST EMPHASIZE THIS!--but yeah, less is more, so you'll see way fewer mentions of "hidden pieces" in the final book :)

As usual, if you're someone who wants to see how a book changes from ARC to published version or verify quotes before reviewing, feel free to contact me via the contact info on my website and I can provide you detailed information about the final edits.

This story was hard for me to write because originally it was a very slick and streamlined plot-centered "OMG what if this happened??" idea, but the more I wrote, the more I realized that the driving force behind the mystery was more complex than I originally envisioned. Also, as much as I love to read a fast-paced, plot-driven thriller, when I write I feel compelled to dig deep into my characters, exploring how their histories, worldviews, social statuses, etc. affect the choices they make. So, HIDDEN PIECES isn't just a thriller about a girl with a secret who's being stalked by a stranger. It's also a book about friendship and family dynamics, an exploration of how socioeconomic status can weigh on almost every aspect of a person's life, and a story of self discovery. There's no doubt that Embry is flawed, but she grows and changes throughout the story. I enjoyed writing her journey. I hope you enjoy reading it.

ETA: If you're interested in learning more about the book's setting, content, infidelity subplot, or possible

mental health issues present, check out this blog post.

Shannon (It Starts At Midnight) says

You can find the full review and all the fancy and/or randomness that accompanies it at It Starts at Midnight

3.5*

This was a fun mystery, if a little predictable. I will say that I did figure out who the anonymous note sender was fairly early on, but I was invested enough in the story to keep going to see if I was right! (I was, but still.) Embry and her terrible life choices pulled me in fairly quickly. Here's the thing: Embry isn't particularly likable, she's just... an average girl and I kind of liked that. She made a ton of mistakes but I always understood why her character would make such choices, and it was rather refreshing to see a flawed character portrayed in such a realistic way.

And she was a good person, which helps. No matter her decisions, she wasn't bad. She was just a teen girl trying to navigate the messy world of high school, and boys, and friends. With a little accidental arson and a potential killer thrown in. Was it a little campy at times? Yeah, it was, but in a fun way. Love interest Holden was funny and sweet, and I loved reading as Embry wrestled with her feelings for him. Her relationship with her mother was also really well developed, which I loved.

While I did figure out some the twists early on, the conclusion was quite satisfying while not being too tidy. Overall, a pretty solid book- and certainly entertaining!

Bottom Line: Perhaps not wholly shocking, but I enjoyed the character development and the air of mystery regardless!

PinkAmy loves 💕 books📖, cats😻 and naps🛏 says

Embry and Holden, not her boyfriend, hook up at an abandoned hotel, accidentally setting it ablaze. They were not alone. Someone videoed their encounter and sends Embry threatening messages. Escalating threats make finding the blackmailer essential, before somebody ends up dead.

I haven't read a thriller recently that left me holding my breath, clenching my fists and shake in a very long time. Most thrillers are more mystery than thrilling. Paula Stokes did such a great job escalating tension from the first blackmail letter to the reveal of the culprit. HIDDEN PIECES never dipped in intensity. The mystery aspect of the story had many plausible suspects, one who was the actual perp.

Embry is sympathetic and complex. She cheats on her overseas boyfriend, afraid to break up with him, lies to friends and her mom and makes some stupid, but understandable decisions. Most of all, she doesn't want to let people down or lose relationships. I adored Holden, who was also no stranger to terrible choices.

Family, class, commitment and friendship are at the heart of HIDDEN PIECES. I would have read the book in one sitting, but reluctantly had to go out for a bit. HIDDEN PIECES is a slow burn that will keep you

guessing until the very end. My heart is still thumping.

Camila Roy ••RoyIsReading•• says

RATING: 3/5

This is basically *Pretty Little Liars* but with least interesting characters and a more basic plot.

e-ARC provided by Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review

Paula Stokes, author of *Liars, Inc.*, delivers a twisted psychological tale about Embry Woods, who is both praised as a town hero and haunted by secrets she must hide to keep her loved ones alive

In comparison to *Liars, Inc.*, which I read a couple of years ago, this book is an improvement. However, it still falls in the "average" category for lack of a solid plot or engaging characters.

I could tell from the first few chapters that I wasn't going to *love* this. I figured it was worth a shot, since most of the books I read are 3 stars (in other words, I'm usually drawn to average contemporaries). I hoped the big reveal at the end would make up for the book's flaws. This was not the case, however.

After we're introduced to Embry Woods, our teenage main character, an event occurs that sets the story in motion. An inn called the Sea Cliff is set on fire and she is partially responsible (not spoiling anything guys, it's in the synopsis). Things take a turn when Embry rescues a homeless guy trapped inside the building. The town learns of this "heroic" act and she earns the title of hero. But someone is not happy about all the attention our main character is getting and that's where the trouble starts...

Issues I had with this book: 1)The characters were clichés 2)the plot didn't sit well with me and 3)everything that was happening felt incredibly unnecessary. If someone is threatening to hurt you or your loved ones...YOU ASK FOR HELP! And I don't mean telling your friend or your boyfriend. Why are there policemen if not for this specific situations?

The ending wasn't bad. It wasn't good either but I wouldn't categorize it as bad. Could it have been better? Definitely. But I can understand what the author was going for. It's hard to write unpredictable finales these days because we've basically seen it all. Not everything is explained at the end. I still don't know how the blackmailer managed to do pull of their scheme and remain undetected. But do I really care about those details? Not really.

In conclusion, it may sound like I hate this but I don't. If I had read it a couple of years ago, I probably would have loved it. Present-day me is not that easy to please I guess.

Jazmen says

If I could describe Hidden Pieces in one word, it'd be trivial.

Awash with petty secrets, horny teenagers--and avoidable mistakes--Hidden Pieces was the last season of

Pretty Little Liars--over.

While this story had a lot of potential to solidify itself as a great thriller--it was drowned out by what I felt was petty foolishness.

Embry, is keeping pieces of herself hidden, hence the title--however, her secrets, although potentially hurtful--were superficial at the surface.

Cheating trigger ahead

She's keeping secrets from her Mom, her best friend--and maybe even herself. Embry is in this weird space of trying to figure herself out--all the while trying to maintain some small piece of happiness for herself--which is fair, but the way it all happens is kind of wrong.

Amidst this back and forth inner angst, and secrecy--she becomes the target of a stalker--so to speak. This person, who was dubbed "Unknown," like his/her name and phone number--has decided to be the reaper. The reaper of consequences and redemption, no matter the outcome. He/she sends threatening messages, texts, and emails. She'll do as they say--or suffer the consequences.

In a very "A"-esque fashion, this person has her acting out their very whims--even if it means someone might wind up dying.

As a huge fan of this type of scenario--this is what initially pulled me into the book--but it is also the part that let me down.

Despite the fact that Embry's life is in complete shambles both figuratively, and literally--she can't seem to help herself from getting hot under the collar, and away from her clothes with her "love interest," at times I felt like--that should be the farthest thing from her mind. It's possible it was their way of coping, but it made their relationship seem frivolous and not at all worth the risks they were taking.

As for supporting characters--I don't have much to say about them as I felt their roles were superficial as well. Not that they weren't needed, but they only served as reason for Embry to both divulge and keep secrets.

I didn't feel too much of an emotional connection from Embry to them--aside from her tears...and as I am writing this--I think that was the main issue I had with the story itself. Although one is want to believe that all of this is about her protection of her loved ones--but, aside from her Mom, Embry seemed emotionless--as if acting out of survival instead of care.

Don't get me wrong, the book is absolutely not terrible, it's just pretty meh on the scale of meh-to-great. Many of you who have issues with cheating characters--won't be pleased with this story--and although I typically, am not deterred by cheaters--this one kind of rubbed me the wrong way; because of the underlying feeling of selfishness.

Also, the big reveal--was disappointing--but I've come not to expect much from YA thrillers. BUT, to be honest, I really thought the author was going to take this portion of the book, and blow me away--the wind barely moved my hair. *shrugs shoulders* Such is the life of YA mystery/thriller.

I'm not here to trash this book, but it was pretty disappointing--and I have to be honest about that.

This book is going to work for some of you, but it's a no for me. Slated for a late summer release--it will give you plenty of time to think about, whether or not this book is for you.

I've said my piece--and I said what I said.

Samantha (WLABB) says

Rating: 4.5 Stars

I am always excited to read a Paula Stokes book for a myriad of reasons. First and foremost, she always entertains me. No matter what genre Stokes' story falls into, I find myself fully invested in it.

As I read *Hidden Pieces*, I recalled my very first Stokes book - *Liars, Inc.* This book had that same tangled-web, twisty sort of plot, but there was a lot more to it. The heart of the book was finding out who the blackmailer, "Unknown", was, but it was also about so many other things.

One theme, which played a big part in the book was honesty. Embry started keeping a lot of secrets, and though some were to protect people she loved, more were to protect herself. These secrets spawned lies, which multiplied into some serious trouble. Right there we have the idea of honesty in its simplest form, but then there were all the parts of herself that Embry kept locked away. A lot of that was because she could not be honest with herself. I liked the way Stokes worked with this theme, and thought it added an extra layer and depth to the story.

Embry intrigued me. She was really hard on herself, and though I would agree some of her choices were less than stellar, I thought she had a good heart. She showed this time and time again in the book via her actions. I knew it seemed as though some of her decisions were born out of guilt, but even guilty people wouldn't do some of the things she did, and I was glad she had Holden to help her see this.

Holden was someone, who really saw Embry. He saw all of her, and was one of the few people who was able to penetrate her walls. Their relationship was one of my favorite parts of the book. I am always up for a good romance featuring a guy as wonderful as Holden, and this one really made me happy.

Onto the plot! This was revenge type thriller, where an unknown assailant was blackmailing Embry. The threats were real and the stakes were high. "Unknown", as they are referred to in the book, had Embry fraying at the edges and had me biting my nails. It got to a point where I felt like I couldn't trust ANYone. That's what a great job Stokes did pointing us in the direction of different characters and planting red herrings. I had three of my guesses blown to shreds, and will honestly admit, that I didn't realize who really did it, until they were practically unmasked. It was surprising, but once I knew, and backtracked, I could see how it was possible.

I will mention what I am seeing in other reviews. Yes, there was a little bit of cheating, BUT when you read the whole story, I think you will be able to forgive Embry. As for Embry's overseas Army "boyfriend", I will evoke the Ross and Rachel clause, and state - they were on a break. But don't worry, because although Stokes softens the blow, she does NOT let the characters get away with it. Embry suffers the consequences of her bad decisions over and over again in this book.

The biggest difference between *Liars, Inc* and *Hidden Pieces* was the ending. I was really surprised with

what a wonderful ending Stokes gifted me in *Hidden Pieces*. I wasn't expecting that much, but was so overjoyed with it.

Overall: Another fantastic Paula Stokes book, which had me biting my nails and happy crying.

*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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