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The Game You Played: A Chilling Psychological Thriller



Synopsis

For readers of *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins and *After Anna* by Alex Lake. *Little Boy Blue*, where did you go? Who led you away? Only I know . . . Two-year-old Tommy Basko goes missing from a popular inner-city playground. Six months later, his parents begin receiving cryptic messages in rhyme about Tommy. The police don't believe the messages are from the abductor, but Tommy's mother Phoebe is certain they're a game meant for her. Against the advice of the police, Phoebe decides to play the game. She begins a frantic search for the writer of the rhymes, at the cost of causing her marriage to shatter. When the shocking identity of the message-writer is discovered, Phoebe's desperate race for the truth has only just begun. Who took Tommy? And why?

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Customer Reviews

Anni Taylor is absolutely brilliant in her debut book *The Game You Played*; an intense psychological thriller. I stepped out of my comfort zone of Fantasy and Sci-Fi for this and I am so glad that I did. *The Game You Played* opened up a whole new world for me. In *The Game You Played*, we are painted a picture of a happy family in Australia. Phoebe, Luke and their son Tommy are at the park,

enjoying themselves, like any other normal family would. When Tommy suddenly disappears, Phoebe's world is shattered into a million pieces. 6 months later and Phoebe discovers that someone is leaving notes for her, alluding to the kidnapping of little Tommy. As Phoebe races to find the source of the cryptic notes, as well as her son, the world suddenly doesn't seem so black and white. The shocking discovery of the correspondent will leave Phoebe questioning everything she's ever believed in. You too, will question everything as you follow Phoebe on her journey to discover the truth. The Game You Played kept me guessing until the very end. I had my theories and my queries but every time I got close to the answer, Taylor threw in another curve ball that shattered my ideas. If you are looking for an intense psychosomatic page-turner, I guarantee that this one is for you.

Absolutely phenomenal!!!! This book takes off running and never stops. It's one of those stories that takes you by the collar and tells you that dishes, laundry, work, they can all be done later. This story is to be read. Now. I started out thinking this was going to be a mystery: who kidnapped Tommy? However, just when I thought I had the answers guessed, everything changed. Again, and again. This is no cut and dry mystery: it's a psychological thriller, and written at the caliber of perfection I have come to expect from this author. Psychological thrillers are her game... and this one did not disappoint!! I recommend this to anyone looking for an exciting read with several turns you won't be able to predict!

Can I just say WOW!!!! Anni Taylor had me on the edge of my seat and I was mad, happy, sad, pissed every emotion you can think of I was feeling it. Phoebe feels lost as any mom would at the loss of a child whether it's from losing them at a park/store, or from death we grieve and there is no questioning that we lose our minds for our babies. Phoebe has been through Hell and back and she just wants closure...she finds help it the one thing that can get her close to her son. When things get rough in the marriage after suffering a loss of a child who or what do we turn to?... The anger I felt towards Luke was indescribable, but then I guess in some way I understood that he was hurting too. Sometimes we tend to neglect the feelings of a man because he is a man. They are supposed to be the strong one, the one that holds the family together. This book will not disappoint. It has you guessing to the very end. Phoebe is on a mission and will rest at nothing to get the answers that she seeks. Who will stand by her? What other mysteries are there lying in the shadows? This book was absolutely amazing. I'm still wanting more, I cannot have guessed at the conclusion and I'm still at awe | I absolutely loved it.

Six months ago Phoebe and Luke's two year old son, Tommy disappeared from a Sydney playground. They were enjoying a family trip to the local park and while Luke was buying icecreams, Phoebe stopped watching Tommy play for just a few minutes and then he was gone. No amount of searching or investigation by the police was able to find a trace. Six months on Phoebe still hasn't given up hope that he'll be found. While Luke has thrown himself into work at his busy real estate business, Phoebe drags herself through each day alone at home, zoning out with sleeping tablets at night and dreaming vividly of Tommy. And then the notes start arriving, in the form of sinister sounding nursery rhymes. The story is told in the alternating voices of Phoebe and Luke. They are not the normal, well adjusted couple that they first appear to be and there are secrets and past events that impact on their current lives and those of the friends and neighbours. The author gradually reveals the complex layers to this novel, building up waves of tension until there is a final crashing crescendo where all is revealed in a stunning, unexpected conclusion. This is a brilliant psychological thriller - the author's first novel for adults after writing a string of popular YA horror stories. I highly recommend it to all lovers of thrillers.

I was really enjoying the story, until I got to the last few chapters. Then, it turned into the most far-fetched, ridiculously impossible conclusion imaginable. It was as if a young child was making up a story, and didn't think through how stupid the ending was becoming. The woman who stole her "friend's" child kept him in an upstairs room for 6 months without anyone knowing it, including her 10-year-old daughter. She was then able to smuggle this 2-year-old child onto a small boat without her boyfriend and daughter seeing him. When they got to a deserted island, the mom lets her daughter play alone on the beach, not knowing anything about the island. There is no electricity, food, water, etc. on the island (although she supposedly has arranged for weekly deliveries from the mainland (a 4-hour boat ride), but then smashes their boat to make sure no one can leave the island. Somehow, nobody has seen or heard her go back down the hill to the boat, although she is simultaneously making dinner and hiding the 2-year-old in the cabin. There are too many asinine sub-plots and coincidences to list. Every single detail was contrived, and totally unbelievable. I was actually saying "You've gotta be kidding me" out loud. For a story to hold such promise (and be very well written) then to have it veer into Mission Impossible was a huge let-down. Absolutely none of it made any sense, and left me beyond disappointed. I can't think of any other story I've read that was such a outrageous mess of foolishness.

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