



## **My Sister and Other Liars**

*Ruth Dugdall*

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## My Sister and Other Liars Ruth Dugdall

Sam is seventeen, starving herself and longing for oblivion. Her sister, Jena, is mentally scarred and desperate to remember. Between them, they share secrets too terrible to recall.

Eighteen months earlier, Sam was still full of hope: hope that she could piece together Jena's fragmented memory after the vicious attack that changed their family forever. But digging into the past unearthed long-hidden lies and betrayals, and left Sam feeling helpless and alone in a world designed to deceive her.

Now, in a last bid to save her from self-imposed shutdown, Sam's therapist is helping her confront her memories. But the road to recovery is a dangerous one. Because Sam has not only been lying to her doctors: she's been hiding dark secrets from herself.

## My Sister and Other Liars Details

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Author : Ruth Dugdall

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# From Reader Review My Sister and Other Liars for online ebook

## Tracy Fenton says

I think it's quite safe to say that Ruth Dugdall likes to write about topics many authors avoid and has no qualms about covering controversial or taboo subjects. My Sister and Other Liars is a standalone psychological thriller which tells the story of 17 year old Sam who is currently residing in a hospital in Suffolk due to her anorexia. It is NOT an easy or comfortable read, but it is gripping and sympathically written. Going back and forth, Sam recounts the horrific events that lead her to being institutionalised 18 months previously. With psychological thrillers it's almost a given that there will be some twists, turns and red herrings and I will publically admit to feeling quite smug with myself when at 25% through the book I had worked out the twist. I will also publically admit that at 70% through the book I realised I had actually got it all wrong and the said "smug smile" was swiftly wiped off my face. This is a fabulous and thoroughly researched book which I highly recommend to fans of any suspense and thriller books.

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## Tulay says

### Predictable psychological thriller.

Ending was obvious from the start, but getting to end was not enjoyable. Don't like stories that goes back and forth. Title of the book and reviews I read made me download this book free, it was a waste of my time.

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## Jan says

4.5 stars

Dark and twisty, a great read!

It's clear that there is no subject matter that this author is afraid to tackle, and you will find plenty of them in this one read alone.

The key players here are Jenna and Samantha (Sam)-2 sisters who are years apart, but have a bond that defies this age gap. Chapter one opens with Sam, 17 years old and in the hospital being treated for anorexia. The mood is quickly set, as Dugdall paints a grim and disturbing picture of how desperately Sam and her fellow patients are determined to control their bodies. Even if it means their death....

Flashback to months earlier and Jena is introduced. She is also in a hospital, but for different reasons. Jena was brutally attacked and left for dead, and has minimal memories of the event.

But Sam was there. She was the one who ran to her aid when she fell. She held her head until the ambulance came. The one thing she couldn't do though was identify the attacker, as she never saw their face.

What follows is a slow and steady build up to that fateful day, and all that transpired before hand to make it happen. Added to this mystery is the present day struggles of Sam. This journey was both sad and beautiful. Dugdall takes the reader inside her mind-sharing her fears, her anger, her compassion, and her determination

to control at least one thing in her life, however misguided it may be.

My emotions were all over the place with this one, and while I did figure some things out that allowed me feel oh so smart, there were plenty of surprises left that had me wondering how I missed the clues.

Why not 5 stars? I felt the pace was a bit slow in the first half of the book. But once it does get going, strap yourself in, because it doesn't let up until that last word is written.

ARC provided by NetGalley

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### **Christine says**

With Ruth Dugdall, you are pretty much guaranteed a strong, intelligent and emotional storyline. Her latest novel is no exception. *My Sister and Other Liars* is rather a brilliant mystery, with an uncomfortable dark side.

It is a story of two sisters, Sam and Jena. Sam is locked away in a mental health unit, undergoing treatment for anorexia. It is clear that she is dealing with some tough emotional baggage by refusing to eat and to see her family. She is angry. She is confused. We see her pain and hear her mixed up adolescent thought processes. Slowly she begins to open up to her psychiatrist about her past, in the hope that she will gain her freedom. The question is though what drove Sam to this? What is she refusing to acknowledge? Jena is Sam's older sister, a woman in her twenties. Jena was brutally attacked, some eighteen months ago. This devastated the whole family. Only Sam seems to want to find out the truth behind this.

This is truly powerful stuff. The story of Sam is one that it is easy to believe in. A girl wasting away, within a psychiatric unit and a mystery surrounding her. We meet a bunch of teenage patients who want to be as thin as possible. We see the healthcare workers who are trying to make sense of these children, on the verge on life and death. No one can possibly hear about Sam and not feel compassion for her or the other girls in the unit. This is just one aspect of Sam, as we get to know her and see her inner strength and determination. Dugdall captures the small eating disorders psychiatric unit beautifully, with the almost strained and complex relationships between the mental health workers and their patients.

Check out Ruth Dugdall if you want a complete breath of fresh air from the psychological crime genre. *My Sister and Other Liars* was marvellous and slightly disturbing!

Highly recommended!

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### **Kendall says**

DAMNNNNN... Holy guacamole what a thrilling ride!!!

I am proud to say that I am a new fan of Ruth Dugdall! What a fabulous read :).

*My Sister and Other Liars* is a unique and dark psychological thriller. This tells the story of our main character Sam who is hospitalized with anorexia. We slowlyyy.. but ever so gripping are thrown into this

pack of disturbing events that led Sam to be institutionalized 18 months earlier.

Honestly, this one I wasn't quite expecting to be so dark. But, boy was I ever thrown off by that final twist!! Let me just say ladies and gents please pick up this lovely little gem and you will definitely not be disappointed! Highly recommended for my psychological thriller lovers! :) Go on.... you know you want to ;)

4.5 stars ?

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### **Diane S ? says**

I have now read several books by this author and the connection between them seems to be the tone, which is very dark. This one partially takes place in a unit for anorexics, that in itself is difficult to read, but the reason for Sam being there is heartbreaking. We know she is there for something she did as well as her anorexia, which was used as a defense, but we don't find out exactly what until the story unfolds. She tells her story to the psychiatrist who is trying to help her get released, and I liked trying to follow the clues in her story to where they lead.

Not too much into psychological novels these days but do enjoy the novelty of this author and her plotlines. Tightly plotted and well written, I love all the twists and turns, never quite sure where this is going, but enjoy trying to guess. A foray into the dark side of tortured young people, but at the end there is a glimpse of hope.

ARC from Netgalley.

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### **Deanna says**

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

4.5 Stars!!

I've read a few books by Ruth Dugdall and have enjoyed them. One of my favorites was "Humber Boy B". So after reading the description for "My Sister and Other Liars", I was quick to hit that request button.

In eighteen months many things can change. This is especially true for seventeen-year-old Sam. Eighteen months ago, Sam was searching for ways to help her twenty-nine-year old sister regain her memories after a vicious attack. Now Sam is struggling to care about anything...

The first line of the book pulled me right in.

***"My body is eating itself, my brain too, apparently"***

This is one of the things Sam is learning in her eating disorder group. Her body is searching for sustenance anywhere and causing serious damage. But that's not scary to someone with a severe eating disorder, it actually offers comfort. Because the thing they most want to do.....is disappear. Sam is in a group with four

other girls but feels very alone. She hasn't seen any family or friends for eighteen months.

On her sixteenth birthday, Sam's dad gave her a vintage camera. A present that Sam loved! It belonged to him when he was a boy. He gave it to her sister Jena as a gift, years ago and now he was giving it to Sam, which understandably upset her sister.

***"You can't give Sam that camera! It's not right, Dad. you promised you wouldn't. How can you do that to me?"***

Sam had always been jealous of the shared passion for photography her sister and father had. But her father said Jena had lost interest so he was giving the camera to Sam. Her sister stormed out and not long after was attacked by an unknown assailant and left for dead. Jena had no memory of what happened or who attacked her, so the police had little to go on. Sam was going to do whatever she needed to do to help her sister remember.

Now eighteen months later, Sam is still hospitalized on the Ana (Anorexia) Unit. She's been there the longest out of the five girls. February 1st is an important date. A board meeting to discuss Sam's progress. She could be released if she's well enough. While Sam wants to be free to go home, she's not able to give up this control. A new psychiatrist wants to help her and uses some unorthodox ways to get Sam talking. It's hard for Sam to talk about what happened. Control and secrets are things Sam understands well. But the memories keep intruding, and no amount of starvation is going to keep them away.

Can Sam finally open up about everything that happened?

We learn how the other girls ended up on the unit. It was horrifying when these girls would praise each other for how low their BMI was. Congratulating each other for having a feeding tube!

***"Lucky, she says. Now you don't even have to eat."***

It made me sad but it was very enlightening. I thought I knew a lot about eating disorders but I feel like I have an even better understanding now. The author has obviously done her research.

While a lot of the book deals with Sam's illness, the mystery surrounding what exactly happened the year before is also slowly revealed.

This was an incredibly gripping read with many twists and turns. So many questions. Where are Sam's friends and family? Why is she refusing to let anyone visit? Where is Jena..... and who was responsible for her attack?

As well as ....what was Sam's part in all of this? What will happen when everyone's secrets are finally revealed?

I recommend you read the book and find out!

Thank you, Netgalley and Thomas & Mercer for providing an advanced readers copy of this book for me to read in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Mary Beth \*Traveling Sister\* says**

This is a very dark and disturbing psychological thriller.

I loved this book. I found it to be a slow burn in the first 40 percent of the book but even though it was slow, it was very interesting. I still had a lot of interest in the story. Then it really picked up and it then turned out to be a page turner. I loved the jaw dropping twists toward the ending.

The ending to me was a five star ending.

Sam is only sixteen years old and has anorexia. She is in a mental hospital. She just wants to die. She is there because of what happened to her sister in her past. Her sister has a very dark and sinister past. Sam is burying her secrets and is keeping everything bottled up inside. She doesn't want to remember what she did or what happened to her sister. To get released out of the hospital she has to tell a doctor everything that happened in her and her sister's past.

I learned so much about anorexia. I found it to be very interesting. Everything that these girls went through was so sad and how they were starving themselves. Sam's story was very traumatic. I always thought that anorexia happened because people just wanted to be skinny but there are other reason's why people are anorexic.

I thought the characters were done very well. My heart really went out for Jen and Sam.

I highly recommend this book to those that like a dark mystery and thriller.

I want to thank Netgalley, the publisher and Ruth Dugdall for the copy of this book for an honest review.

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## **Sue says**

MY SISTER AND OTHER LIARS is a standalone dark psychological thriller by talented author Ruth Dugdall. I have read several books by this author and each time was very impressed with her amazing writing skills, that I jumped at this one when it became available on NetGalley. Another winner!

This is the story of two sisters, Sam and Jena. Seventeen-year-old, Sam is in a mental hospital undergoing treatment for anorexia. She won't eat or see her family, and is starving herself. But why? Jena is Sam's older sister, a woman in her twenties. Jena was viciously attacked, some eighteen months ago. This overwhelmed the whole family, and Sam needs to find out the truth.

"Anorexics lie, everyone knows that. Her need to control everything, even in the way you blame yourself"

"Jena's brain was badly damaged after the fall. She may never retrieve what she has lost."

Slowly the reader gets to learn about the events that led Sam to be institutionalized. Sam recounts the horrific events that led her to being institutionalized 18 months previously.

Sam's therapist is helping her confront her memories. But the road to recovery is a dark and dangerous one. Sam has not only been lying to her doctors: she's been hiding dark secrets from herself. But now Sam must uncover the lies from the past and discover the truth!

*My Sister and Other Liars* is not an easy book to read, as it deals with dark horrific events that led to Sam being institutionalized. The story is believable as are the characters and the book is riddled with twists, turns and red herrings. I was thrown by that final twist...and did not see it coming!

Don't miss out on this special little jewel...you will definitely not be disappointed! Highly recommended for my psychological thriller lovers! Highly recommend!

I want to thank NetGalley and Thomas & Mercer for this ARC.

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## **Jean says**

*My Sister and Other Liars* is an eye-catching title. Who are all the liars, and what lies do they tell? Ruth Dugdall's psychological thriller addresses anorexia and some of its underlying causes in the portrayal of Sam, a seventeen-year-old girl who is hospitalized for treatment following the commission of an unnamed crime. The psychological issues that led to her eating disorder were used as her defense. When we meet Sam, she has been hospitalized for eighteen months. Her case is coming up for review, and she must begin showing progress in her therapy sessions if she is to be released.

Initially, I found Sam to be hostile and quite unlikeable. She does not want to get better. She wants to starve rather than cooperate with therapy or eating or even establishing friendships with the other "friends of Ana". I found myself wondering, why not just kill yourself instead of enduring a slow death by starvation? But as Sam's story begins to emerge, it becomes apparent that it's about control – control and denial. Eighteen months earlier, her much-older sister Jena was brutally attacked. She suffered a brain injury, which involved memory loss and seizures. Sam became frustrated with what she perceived as lack of desire on the part of the police and her parents to find her sister's attacker. This made her feel powerless. She began investigating on her own. She also stopped eating. This not only helped her to regain some sense of control, but it also allowed her to push away the feelings that were gnawing at her – the pain of her terrible memories of the attack as well as the secrets she uncovered along the way.

Everything is revealed from Sam's perspective as we get flashbacks while she meets with her therapist, Clive. At first, he appears unsympathetic, but as Sam begins to open up, we see that he does want her to get better. Step by step, Sam takes us through the stages of the attack, her visits with Jena in the hospital, and her actions as she tries to learn who was responsible for hurting her sister.

The story unfolds quite slowly, which makes for lukewarm reading for a time. However, as Sam does a gut check, she digs more deeply into her memory, events emerge in the telling. There are situations that tangle and turn in several directions. I should have seen the final twist, but I was immersed in the story as told by a seventeen-year-old narrator, and I didn't question her version enough to wonder about other possibilities.

A couple of things bothered me slightly. First, there were a lot of references to Jena's "fits". I realize that this is how many laymen refer to seizures, but even the doctor referred to one of the seizures as a "fit" in one instance, and I found that unacceptable. I was also rather surprised that Sam didn't seem too preoccupied



with her weight, as many with anorexia are. She simply seemed not to care about her appearance at all, and I wondered how common this is. I do think that Ms. Dugdall got many things right about the disease – the problems in the home, self-esteem issues, or the history of physical and/or sexual abuse. I found it interesting that when one of the younger girls admires Sam, what Sam sees this as “thinspiration”, Sam is appalled by her hero-worship. “It’s not strength. It’s sickness,” she tells her. Even though she can’t convince herself that she is getting better, it is obvious that she has made progress.

Will that progress allow her to be released when the review board meets? Will the lies that Sam has kept stuffed deep down inside finally come to the surface of her psyche? Will her mind and soul be free so she can heal? Do we learn if Jena’s attacker was brought to justice? The final chapters of *My Sister and Other Liars* are hard to put down! I am not always a fan of psychological thrillers, but this one was worth reading!

Thanks to NetGalley, Thomas & Mercer, and the author for providing me with a read-for-review copy.

4 stars

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### **Kristin (KC) - Traveling Sister says**

**\*4 stars\***

Fantastic writing, enticing plot, and a twisty ride.

Just a few quick thoughts...

This story focuses on a young girl spiraling down into the frightening throes of anorexia after a mysterious attack on her sister leaves her sickened and desperate for answers.

Sam's struggle with anorexia was handled very well: authentic, not prettied up for the sake of the reader's comfort, nor was it over-played or dramatic.

Loads of mystery was present, revealing the truth in slow patches and through tiny scratches of a cryptic surface.

For the most part, I was glued to this story. However, most of the twists were pretty evident and the ending started to lose me a bit as it began to feel a tad exaggerated.

Still, a fantastic read!

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### **Jill Croce-McGill says**

Dark... Twisted... Thrilling!!!

*Ruth Dugdall* has a new fan in me! She is definitely not afraid to take on uncomfortable, controversial, or dark subject matter - writing it with such ease.

*My Sister and Other Liars* is a powerful, emotional, and brilliant psychological thriller about a family's dark, deep, and twisted secret. Dugdall takes us back and forth between present and the past telling the story of Sam and her sister Jena's horrific tale of lies, pain, anorexia, and a heart-breaking crime. Buckle up because this novel will take you on an emotional roller coaster ride until the very last page!

This is a fantastic and well-researched book that I highly recommend!

*\*I want to thank NetGalley and Thomas & Mercer for this ARC in exchange for my honest review.*

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## **Jules says**

Wow! I LOVED this book!

I listened to it as an audiobook and had to take it around the house with me all day yesterday, as I couldn't stop listening to it. The story is told through the main character, Sam, a teenage girl dealing with anorexia as well as trying to piece together her sister, Jena's memory after she was violently attacked. I felt like Sam was sat with me talking to me all day long. I actually felt a little sad when the book finished, as I was going to miss her company.

*My Sister and Other Liars* is a gripping psychological thriller full of emotion and mystery. There were twists I never saw coming. In fact, I gasped out loud and slapped a hand across my mouth at one point due to being so surprised. And, wow, what an ending!

This is definitely a book I highly recommend to fans of psychological thrillers that cover uncomfortable subjects such as anorexia and trauma. Which I'd like to say, was written about very well in this book. It made for difficult listening at times, but it felt so raw and real.

Because of the way this story was told I thought it worked particularly well as an audiobook, so if you like to listen to audiobooks as well as reading, I'd say go for the audiobook version of this if you can, as it's brilliant.

This is the first book I've read by this author, but I'm sure it won't be the last!

I borrowed this through Amazon Kindle Unlimited.

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## **Kacey - Traveling Sister says**

Anorexia – destructive control over one's body. In life, when someone feels helpless and desperate, the drug of choice may be starvation. Drastically limiting what they eat may be the only sense of control they feel. And perhaps silence the demons.

"Empty body, blank mind"

Jena leaves home following a disagreement with her family. When her sister Sam finds her, Jena is bleeding

heavily with her head smashed against a rock. Sam takes it upon herself to find out who is responsible for this attack on her sister. Losing touch with reality during the search, Sam slowly descends into full-blown anorexia, punishing herself through starvation. The guilt of the family fight with her sister has totally consumed her.

"The smell made my stomach growl with anticipation. It still didn't understand that I was in charge."

The book is told from Sam's perspective in a facility specializing in eating disorders. She begins opening up about the tragedy that led to her sister's attack with her therapist, Clive. Gradually unlocking the secrets of that day. Told as flashbacks during her sessions, it's clear and easy to follow along. You're able to flow back and forth between the timelines seamlessly, without losing your place.

As the story unfolds, you are pulled in ever deeper, and this book becomes hard to put down. Little pieces of the puzzle are cleverly spread along the way to draw you in, but nothing is revealed until the end. You are kept guessing throughout and pointing the blame at everyone! I recommend this one!

"You must remember to forget"

Thank you to NetGalley, Ruth Dugdall and Thomas & Mercer.

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## **sue says**

I'm not ashamed to say that I'm a big fan of Ruth Dugdall. Her writing is superb in that she has a unique way of drawing you in from the start.

I know I'm in for a fabulous read with a fabulous theme.

This is an author that will take a subject matter that others may find uncomfortable but compulsive reading for the reader.

We have Jenna who has been hospitalised due to not only her anorexia but her past. She's convinced she's bad.

There starts her long journey of not treating just the anorexia but the cause. It's an unsettling, emotional and sometimes angry frightening journey. She's got to tell her story.

Then there is her sister that was attacked and left with disabilities.

Behind this is Mum and Dad and a few other characters relevant.

I really was so dam close to thinking I knew the ending. So very close.

But The author just jumped one foot ahead of me. She tricked me. What a fabulous book, what a great way of taking a controversial subject matter and turning it into a compulsive read that just blew me away.

It's undoubtedly reached into my top 10 of this year.

Thank you to Thomas & Mercer for my copy via Net Galley

