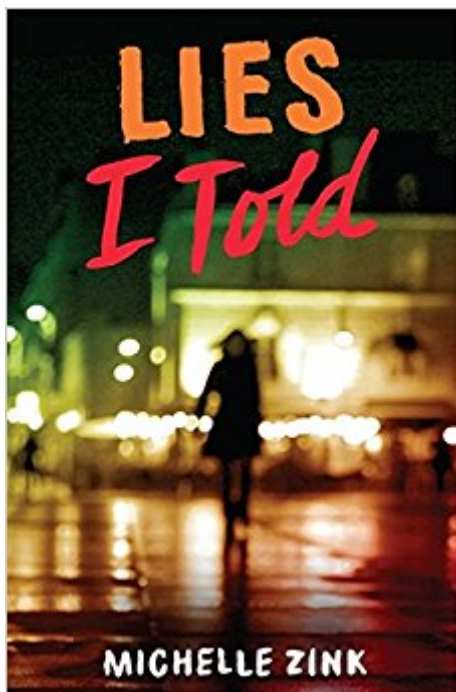


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# Lies I Told



## Synopsis

Grace Fontaine has everything: beauty, money, confidence, and the perfect family. But it's all a lie. Grace has been adopted into a family of thieves who con affluent people out of money, jewelry, art, and anything else of value. Grace has never had any difficulty pulling off a job, but when things start to go wrong on the Fontaines' biggest heist yet, Grace finds herself breaking more and more of the rules designed to keep her from getting caught . . . including the most important one of all: never fall for your mark. Perfect for fans of Ally Carter and Robin Benway, this thrilling, high-stakes novel deftly explores the roles of identity and loyalty while offering a window into the world of the rich and fabulous.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up **Gr 9 Up** • Fans of romance and a good heist will fall in love with *Lies I Told*. Grace is a foster child who has been adopted by a pair of con artists, and they are the closest thing she has to a real family. Her brother, another adopted foster child, is finding the life of constant deception increasingly unsatisfactory. He's ready to get out, and he wants Grace to come with him. Parker's entreaties would be more successful if Grace wasn't falling irrevocably in love with their newest mark. Zink uses a fabulous vocabulary to build a tale of deception and mixed loyalties that effortlessly draws readers in and allows them to vicariously experience the tension of living a lie while trying to be completely transparent with a love interest. The victims of the graft are sympathetic characters, and

Grace can be forgiven her deception since she must make an untenable choice between first love and familial abandonment or betrayal of a truly good person and an artificial family. Zink liberally includes the palpitating hearts and more mature, steamy love scenes that many young adult readers have come to expect in an action-packed tale, but leaves her readers dangling with an ending that will leave them demanding more.~\*~ Jodeana Kruse, R. A. Long High School, Longview, WA

Grace Fontaine has everything: beauty, money, confidence, and the perfect family. But it's all a lie. Grace has been adopted into a family of thieves who con affluent people out of money, jewelry, art, and anything else of value. The rules are simple: find a mark, run the con, and get out. No attachments. No looking back. There are sacrifices, but in return Grace gets something she's always wanted~\*~ a family. Now the Fontaines have arrived in Playa Hermosa, an isolated peninsula near Los Angeles where the wealthy live and play. It's their biggest heist yet~\*~ and their most difficult. But right from the beginning, things start to go wrong. As the pressure mounts and the foundations of her makeshift family start to crack, Grace finds herself breaking more and more of the rules, including the most important one of all: never fall for your mark. Grace has spent a lifetime convincing others to believe her lies. But what if the biggest lies are the ones she's told herself?

I. Am a sucker. For any story involving covert ops. Period. I don't care if it's Jennifer-Garner-in-Alias spycraft, Veronica-Mars-scoping private eye work, or a Grace-(Fontaine)-pretending-to-be-someone-you're-not con. I love the mystery and suspense of it all and the feeling like if you put down the book, it's going to keep going on without you. And that's the exact feeling I got from LIES I TOLD, the first of Michelle Zink's duology starring said Grace (Fontaine). She's adopted into this family of con artists/grifters. Previous to that, she was stuck in a myriad of foster care placements from not-so-horrible to pretty-darn-bad. So, she's thrilled to be a part of a real family, and goes on about her business as a junior grifter because it means that she has a FAMILY! And people who love her! And this story starts when that family, including her mom, dad, and adopted older (and kinda hawt) brother move to the exclusive Playa Hermosa community in California to start a brand new job. Her assignment? Get on the in with Logan Fairchild and/or Rachel Mercer. It's high school, she's done it dozens of times, and her mark seems easy... until her conscience starts to get in the way. LIES I TOLD is a fantastic specimen of young adult mystery with a side of romance in there too. Remember how I told you I start my summer reading in April? Well, this is prime summer reading, spring reading, you name it reading. I'm a Zink fan, and I believe it's

her best work yet. The teen characters are more complex than they need to be - in a good way. You understand their motivations, the reasons they make the decisions they do, choose to trust who they trust, break the rules they break on purpose. Zink masterfully crafts the tale with just the right amount of detail and clever dialogue. Pick it up, you won't be disappointed. If you're an Arizona girl like me, you might pick up on a couple of teensy mistakes like the fact that Chandler High School is actually in Chandler and not Phoenix, and is kinda ghetto these days, and wouldn't be a spot for the prepster community. You might pick up on the fact that Grace seems thrown by a new encounter in Playa Hermosa with palo verde trees when, in reality, they are everywhere in Chandler, Arizona. But aside from those few details that you wouldn't really fight if you weren't an Arizona native like me? It's as nitpicky as I get, and I still feel it deserves 5-stars, so there it is for you! I found no flaws in structure, flow, pacing, narrative, dialogue, character development... just a few of the details. Parents: There is a bit of language, but not a lot. There's an allusion to sex, but not a graphic depiction. There's graffiti, and the inner workings of a complex con and all of the lying and deceit that goes into that. But overall, it's pretty squeaky. I actually think it would be a great book to team read because of all of the choices that Grace is faced with. It'd be a great opportunity to chat with your pre-teen or teen about them.

Grace knows that everyone lies. She also knows that she's living one. To the outside world, she is part of the perfect family: devoted parents, loving brother. She is a girl with the world at her fingertips. What the world doesn't know is that it's all a lie, a carefully constructed one. She is part of a family of con-artists. Adopted at a young age, she is part of the con. In exchange for her work, she has a family, such as it is. It's preferable to the life she left behind, one of foster care and abuse. Now she has safety, as long as she follows the rules. They travel all over looking for the next mark, the next job, the next person to steal from: money, art, bonds, nothing is safe. Grace is used to this, for it's the only life she's ever known. However, sometimes, she wishes she were just a regular teenager, able to have friends, to have a life of her own. It's always the same, though. They move in, set up house, find their mark and pull their con. Then they move on, leaving everything and everyone behind. Or, in Grace's case, almost everything. She knows it goes against the code of the con-artist, but she has a small wooden box containing items from her different pasts to remind her of who she was and who she is. Grace knows that it's wrong to hold onto anything from a previous con, but she holds on to her keepsakes nonetheless as if she's gathering pieces of herself. Everything changes when they find themselves in Playa Hermosa. The mark is a wealthy family and the heist will be their largest yet. She has one job: get close to the son, Logan, to find an

in into the family. She integrates herself into school, makes friends with others and all is going according to plan. What she didn't count on was falling for Logan. He was supposed to be just another part of the heist. She had used boys to achieve her means before, but had never fallen for one. This time, the emotions she feels for Logan are all too real. She has trouble distinguishing between the Logan she loves and Logan the mark. Things begin to unravel for Grace when one of the other high school students finds an old high school photo ID that Grace was stupid enough to take to school with her. She had been using it as a talisman of sorts to give her strength. Now it could mean her downfall... In short, I was blown away by this book. *Lies I Told* isn't just a novel that you read. It's a novel that you feel, that seeps into you; one that leaves you feeling a kind of shell shock when it's over. What I loved most about it was the underlying sense of unease worked all throughout the novel. You can't escape the sense that something will go wrong. That's an incredible feat for any author to carry throughout a whole novel. Michelle Zink manages to do this with aplomb, never letting up the suspense for a moment. Add to it one of the most moving young love stories I've ever read and you've got yourself a winner. This is Zink's first novel that has no fantasy elements whatsoever and it's an incredible success. You can tell that she's done her research for this novel, nothing feels too heavy handed or fake. She brings you into a family of con-artists and it's like we're there with her. We sense the danger, the unease, the upset. What really worked for me was the characters and how real they were. Logan, Parker and Grace were the stand outs for me. Logan goes beyond the standard book boyfriend in the YA genre and is a real man, full of compassion and honesty. Parker is a surprise for me. He knows what he must do but fights against it. He's in a constant state of breakdown. Grace is the real stand out for me, though. She isn't really a heroine but an anti-hero. However, you can't help but feel for her, following her along on her struggle to do what is right and what her heart wants. Michelle writes so well that you can't help but be pulled into Grace's plight, loving Logan right along with her and dreading what she must do. This was a thrill ride the whole way through and the ending will leave you breathless. *Lies I Told* is really the best book that Michelle Zink has written, and I've read them all. This is Zink's most accomplished novel, her most adult YA. It deals with themes that aren't normally dealt with in YA literature and succeeds because of this. I can't wait to read *Lies I Told* all over again.

All you have to do is read the back cover and you're hooked! Zink leaves every chapter set-up so that you just have to read another! Prepare to put some time aside to read this one, you won't want to leave it and come back. You'll want to finish the whole thing in one sitting, which I did. smile emoticon Personally, I felt a little like the main character, searching for a "type" of family but I never

fought once you get what you want, it may not be what's best for you and I experienced that with the main character, Grace. She taught me that if you get what you wish for but cannot be authentic, you're not only telling lies, being a liar, but you become a lie. This is a book you have to read more than once because you know you'll discover things you didn't the first time!

Wow! I really love this book! From the first page, I was captivated by the story. Grace is a sympathetic and likable character. Even when she was making bad decisions, I was rooting for her to succeed. The con was fun to read (I love a good con), and the suspense of "will she get caught?" had me turning pages late into the night. The writing is also very good, and I really enjoyed and appreciated it. The ending is a bit of a cliff-hanger, and I am dying to get my hands on the sequel.

An excellent read!!! Very excited for the sequel release in November. The book pulls you in from the beginning. Grace is easy to like and you find yourself hoping everything will work out for her. This book is suspenseful and intriguing. I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

I ate up this book so fast, it left me hungry for more!! It was perfectly and beautifully written. I can't wait for more from this author!

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