



## After She Fell

*Mary-Jane Riley*

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A darkly compelling psychological thriller, full of twists and turns, perfect for fans of AFTER ANNA and THE GOOD GIRL.

There are so many ways to fall...

Catriona needs help. Her seventeen-year-old daughter Elena was found dead at the bottom of a cliff near her boarding school. The death has been ruled a suicide, but Catriona isn't convinced.

When her old friend, journalist Alex Devlin, arrives in Hallow's Edge to investigate, she quickly finds that life at private boarding school The Drift isn't as idyllic as the bucolic setting might suggest.

Amidst a culture of drug-taking, bullying and tension between school and village, no one is quite who they seem to be, and there are several people who might have wanted Elena to fall...

## After She Fell Details

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Author : Mary-Jane Riley

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## From Reader Review After She Fell for online ebook

### &#x1f52e;??Voracious says

My sincere thanks to NetGalley, Harper Collins UK (Killer Reads) and Mary-Jane Riley for an advanced review copy of 'After She Fell' in exchange for an honest review.

What a fantastic prologue and opening chapter this book has. It grabbed a hold of me and ensured I got very little sleep last night; I could not put this book down.

MEP Catriona is left devastated following the alleged suicide of her teenage daughter, who was attending a prestigious boarding school at the time of her death. She refuses to believe her daughter Elena took her own life, despite having been plagued with depression and eating disorders in her past. She enlists the help of her closest friend Alex, to investigate Elena's death and to uncover what she believes to be the truth - that her death was no suicide.

'After She Fell' is one of those books in which everyone is a suspect. Almost everyone surrounding Elena has an air of suspicion surrounding them and just when I thought I had everything worked out, up would pop another suspect. Brilliant stuff.

I enjoyed the characters, even if some of them were rather unsavoury. The author did a wonderful job of bringing them alive and giving them their individual personalities and quirks. Sometimes characters can appear 'wooden' and unrealistic; I'm pleased to say that with 'After She Fell' this wasn't the case.

This was a fast read for me. Chapters were occasionally interspersed with diary like entries from Elena in the months leading up to her death and it was advantageous to be able to see things from her point of view. It added to the intrigue and mystery.

I'd recommend this book to anyone who loves their mysteries and thrillers, anyone who loves trying to guess the culprit the entire way through and for anyone simply looking for a highly enjoyable read. I'm already looking forward to Mary-Jane Riley's next novel. 5????????? from me.

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### Clare Reader says

Got this book in a giveaway. A perfect book for those that like a book that always keeps them guessing. I couldn't put this book down. Definitely recommend and an author to look out for.

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### Rachel Hall says

3.5 stars

After She Fell is the second novel in the series featuring investigative journalist, Alex Devine, and as is so often the case, the book works fine as a standalone. I hadn't read the first which detailed a very personal

trauma in Alex's life and drove her to the anonymity of a life living in London. Mary-Jane Riley recaps on this history, evidencing Alex's determination to support her sister, Sasha. But it isn't just Sasha who Alex feels she has let down and as she heads into a meeting with her editor she is swiftly derailed by the news that MEP Catriona Devonshire is dangling a potential story and not just any story but a chance to also make amends with her childhood best friend. Alex and Cat were inseparable before they departed to university and perhaps if the events surrounding Sasha hadn't happened then the relationship would still be intact. Venturing to the home Cat shares with her new and significantly younger husband, Mark Munro, Alex is met by Cat's dogged resolve that her deceased daughter, Elena, would not have committed suicide. Cat knows that seventeen-year-old Elena was feeling positive and hopeful for a life after her time at boarding school and needs to know the truth surrounding her death before she can move on. It falls to old friend, Alex to travel to East Anglia to either discover the truth or confirm the inquests verdict...

After She Fell is a solid second novel, readable and well-written, despite being fairly predictable and weaving a tale which feels all too familiar; namely what the offspring of the moneyed elite get up to amid the cloistered enclaves of their exclusive public school. Although this feels like a prosaic tale, exhibiting the usual trials of growing up and the pressures of hothousing children, all of the characters are fleshed out well and After She Fell holds the attention. Admittedly, the suspense was limited and much of what played out wasn't a surprise, more a course of routine. Investigative work is limited and Alex Devine doesn't do much except stumble her way across revelations and showed a complete lack of guile. Indeed much of my disappointment in this story was how it seemed to simply fall into Alex's hands. Alex's arrival is met by plenty of locals, teachers and pupils willing to divulge the goings on in Hallow's Edge, the village that is the home of The Drift, yet as soon as a few people got ruffled that Alex was progressing a little too well, they took to openly threatening her, including physically assaulting her and placing silent phone calls to her cottage. Disappointingly she demonstrated complete ineptitude and there was nothing covert about her digging around and "asking the right questions".

For a woman who has coped with single parenting a child on the cusp of adulthood, Alex showed a soft spot for a wolffish grin, going weak at the knees at the first sight of any male, be it teacher or student or ex-lover, which did her no favours. When faced with a bit of mild flirting her ease of being won over was a disappointment. However, there was more than enough for me to warm towards Alex; humorous and self-aware enough to compel and with enough of a muddied past to show she has plenty of life experience. As a single parent to her own seventeen-year-old son, Gus, she knows all about the dangers and pitfalls of growing up. That Alex is worrying about her own son as he spreads his wings and travels to Europe, hoping to track down his father forces Alex to confront her own period of hedonism and the result of an intoxicated night in Ibiza and a one-night stand. The dangers of drugs and drink are a road Alex has also travelled and this knowledge works well and undoubtedly heightens her anxiety about what she discovers in the course of her investigation.

Written by and large in the third person, the occasional snapshots into the life of Elena, through the form of a diary in the weeks preceding her death provide a snapshot into her plight. Mary-Jane Riley exhibits real empathy and succeeds in delivering a convincing portrayal of a young girl who has overcome her demons and is ready to put her problems behind her. As someone who has had their own eating disorder battle and has overcome this, I found Elena's voice very heartening, showing that people can and do conquer the demons of their past. Riley also proved very effective in portraying the pressure cooker environment of a prestigious school and the exclusivity that can become a breeding ground for bullying. Admittedly, I do not think that the setting did this novel any favours as the public school sex and drugs story it all too familiar, but I will definitely keep an eye on how Mary-Jane Riley continues this series. After She Fell is very well-written and the characters all furnished with depth, but sadly the rather straightforward nature of the revelations and the simplicity with which they are prised out was its downfall.

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## Joseph - Relax And Read Reviews says

From the outset I want to say that this book is the second in a series. Sadly this is not indicated on the cover or in the blurb and I only realised when I was already reading the book. Being a strictler for reading book series in order, I found this a bit frustrating as I haven't read the first book yet. This mystery can be read as a standalone, however there are frequent references (and possible spoilers) to what happened in the first book. So, I would highly recommend readers to read the first book 'The Bad Things' before reading this.

### ***"The truth. That's all I want."***

Soon after MEP Catriona Devonshire married her second husband Mark, her teenage daughter Elena was whisked away to The Drift, "a posh boarding school for posh kids". One day Catriona receives the tragic news that Elena has died after falling off a cliff near the school. Having suffered from depression and anorexia in the past, an inquest into Elena's death soon concluded that this was a case of suicide. But Catriona is not convinced and wants answers. Has her daughter really relapsed and committed the unthinkable? Or did someone push her down the cliff?

### ***"There were too many people not saying anything. Someone somewhere had to know more."***

Catriona contacts her childhood friend Alex Devlin, a journalist, to look into her daughter's death. However, at Hallow's Edge, in North Norfolk, Alex's presence is not welcomed by everyone and her questioning and digging ruffles the feathers of some very nasty individuals who are not happy with her intrusion. She soon realises that the respectable school's beautiful exterior hides a very rotten core. Secrets, lies, bullying and drugs are rife in and around the school and nothing is what it seems.

This book is a well-written, tense read with believable characters and realistic dialogues. I liked Alex and her way of thinking. She's a strong-headed, astute and tenacious woman even though weighed down by her and her family's tragic past.

I liked the setting of the book in North Norfolk. The author's vivid descriptions of the coastline, the grey sea, the cliffs and the endless sky made me feel as though I was there feeling the cool sea breeze on my face.

The book kept my interest throughout as I was curious about what really happened to Elena. We have some chapters from the point of view of the dead girl, telling us what happened behind the school door and in the village when she was still alive. We also have some intriguing quotes from the point of view of an unidentified person which was very close to Elena. Who is this person?

There are many questionable characters in this story, and as I was reading I kept shifting my pointed finger from one suspicious individual to another. However when the truth was finally revealed at the end, it certainly wasn't what I was expecting.

This was my first book by Mary-Jane Riley and it won't be the last, in fact now I'm looking forward to going back and reading the first book in the series to have a complete picture of Alex's story.

With thanks to HarperCollins UK, HarperFiction for approving my request to read and review this book through Netgalley.

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## **Sarah says**

5 stars

Huge thanks to Mary-Jane Riley, HarperCollins UK, HarperFiction and NetGalley for this copy in exchange for an honest review.

Death, drugs, secrets and lies in a school. Wasn't like that in my day!

The mystery is good, the characters well written, some I wanted to punch really hard in the face but that might just be me!

I worked out the twists in the story but that didn't stop me from enjoying it, I wanted to see when the protagonist worked it out!

Thoroughly enjoyed it!

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## **Laurel-Rain says**

Catriona needs help. Her seventeen-year-old daughter Elena was found dead at the bottom of a cliff near her boarding school. The death has been ruled a suicide, but Catriona isn't convinced.

When her old friend, journalist Alex Devlin, arrives in Hallow's Edge to investigate, she quickly finds that life at private boarding school The Drift isn't as idyllic as the bucolic setting might suggest.

Amidst a culture of drug-taking, bullying and tension between school and village, no one is quite who they seem to be, and there are several people who might have wanted Elena to fall...

My Thoughts: I was immediately caught up in Alex's quest to find answers. Soon after she settles into the cottage provided by Catriona Devonshire, she is threatened, hassled, and even beaten up.

I liked Alex Devlin, and enjoyed a previous book in which she dealt with the aftermath of a family tragedy.

Set near London, After She Fell was a story that had me rooting for the main characters. I liked how Alex persisted in her attempt to find out the truth, and how she managed to keep going despite the efforts of the people of Hallow's Edge to block her.

What, if anything, does Elena's stepfather Mark have to do with events? How are the teen druggies involved? Are the posh girls somehow connected to how things play out? What responsibility did the school head play in what happened?

Our first person primary narrator was Alex, but we alternately see Elena's perspective providing us with clues, just weeks before she died. As we follow the bread crumbs, we finally realize the truth in the story that kept me engaged throughout. The pace was a bit slow at times, but the characters intrigued me. 4 stars.

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### **Shona Booky Ramblings of a Neurotic Mom says**

I thoroughly enjoyed The Bad Things and I hoped I would enjoy this one too, however I have tried several times to read this book but each time I find myself struggling to stay focused. As I haven't been able to finish the book I can only leave a 1 star rating.

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### **C.J. Carver says**

I took this book on holiday with me and what a perfect holiday read, especially for anyone who enjoyed The Girl on The Train or I Let You Go. Great characters, great plot and great atmosphere too - it made me want to head for East Anglia immediately! I shall very much look forward to the next in the series.

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### **Pat says**

3.5 stars

Catriona Devonshire, an up and coming member of the European Parliament, is an old friend of our intrepid investigative journalist, Alex Devlin. Six months ago Cat's daughter, Elena, was found dead at the bottom of a cliff in Hallow's Edge, Norfolk, where she had attended an exclusive private school. The inquest has just been completed and returned a verdict of suicide. Elena had a well documented history of anorexia and depression.

But Cat is not convinced. She claims her daughter was fully recovered and asks her old friend, Alex, to investigate. So Alex travels to Norfolk and asks around. It is soon apparent that many people have something to hide and the school has turned a blind eye to a host of inappropriate activities. Alex is warned off and threatened. It seems no one wants the truth to come out. Can Alex cut through the bullshit and lies and find out how Elena really died?

This was good but not great. The dialogue was quirky and amusing at times but, although it was a decent mystery (the gist of which I guessed straight away), it wasn't as pacy as we have come to expect from the eponymous thriller.

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### **David Gilchrist says**

I received a copy from Netgalley for a honest review. Set on the coast of East Anglia. Following a tragic incident that the mother does not believe to be an accident. She brings in a long time friend to investigate. The setting is captured well, the story is told well. A very compelling and difficult book to put down once started.

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## **Patti says**

It was OK, not exceptional, not bad, just...OK.

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## **Bookread2day says**

There are so many ways to fall. The daughter of a top politician took her own life after a history of depression and eating disorder. Cat Devonshire was described as an up and coming member of the European Parliament. The body of her seventeen-year-old daughter Elena Devonshire was found at the foot of cliffs in Hallow's Edge, North Norfolk, close to the school where she was a pupil. Catriona Devonshire thinks that her daughter Elena was murdered. Cat's old friend Alex Devlin arrives to investigate what really happened to Elena. Alex has her own problems her sister Sasha is in a secure unit, she had been responsible for drowning her own 4 -year-old twins. But Sasha believes she also murdered someone else. It is easy to imagine the characters as Mary Jane Riley has the gift to make her characters seem real-life.

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## **Suze Lavender says**

Seventeen-year-old Elena was found at the bottom of a cliff and it is assumed that she jumped. Only her mother doesn't think this is true, she believes her daughter had no motive to kill herself. Because she needs someone to find out what really happened to Elena she contacts her old friend Alex, who is a journalist with many contacts. Elena went to a posh boarding school and as soon as Alex starts talking to people to gather information she knows something isn't right.

Elena had some problems in the past, but nothing in the months before the accident indicated that she was suicidal. When Alex finds out there's a lot wrong with the school she's in danger herself. Will she be able to find out the truth or will she be driven away by the same people who might have wanted to harm Elena?

After She Fell is a gripping story. As soon as I started reading I became so curious that I didn't want to stop. Mary-Jane Riley uses different points of view, which means the reader has the chance to get to know both Alex and Elena. I liked that angle, it's a good way to make the reader feel close to the victim and to really care about what happened to her. Elena is such a strong girl and it was sad that she had to fall off that cliff. After many twists and turns and several startling revelations there's a surprising ending. I had my suspicions, but the finale was something I didn't expect at all, which I enjoyed very much.

Mary-Jane Riley is great at building tension in her story. After She Fell is a fast-paced page-turner. Alex is an amazing heroine, she's tough, she isn't afraid to speak her mind and she doesn't stay away from dangerous situations. She also has a vulnerable side which makes her extra interesting. She has a difficult past, something she can never forget. That makes her even more capable as she can deal with almost anything. I loved that about her. The main characters are all intriguing and nothing is what it seems, which is what I liked most about this book. After she fell is a great thrilling story about complicated situations, dark secrets and terrible bullying. You need a strong stomach for some of the scenes and if you have it you'll love this story.

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## **Maggie says**

Catriona was an MEP with a fairly new husband and a daughter at a prestigious boarding school. Her life was hectic but satisfying but when her daughter is found at the base of a cliff she refuses to believe it was suicide. Investigative journalist Alex had been her best friend and seemed the ideal person to try and find out what had happened to Elena.

Set on the East Anglian coast, the author captures the feel of the place. Her characters are interesting and the story fast paced. I really enjoyed this book. It is the second book featuring Alex Divine but I didn't find that a barrier to my enjoyment of the story.

Thanks to Netgalley for giving me the chance to read and review this book.

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## **Claire says**

Actual rating 4.5\*

I finished The Bad Things, the first Alex Devlin book and dove straight into After She Fell, I didn't even stop for a breather!! After She Fell takes place a couple of years after the events of its predecessor so Alex's life has changed, she's moved to London, new job and her son has gone travelling. As she reconnects with an old school friend whose teenage daughter Elena recently died in suspicious circumstances, we learn a little more about Alex's past. But unlike The Bad Things, this story isn't so much about Alex, it's about Elena.

As Alex goes investigating the teenager's apparent suicide, the story time-jumps back and forth to the weeks running up to the unfortunate event. With each chapter both in the past and the present, there are hints as to what happened to Elena but as with all good thrillers, you have to wait for the grand reveal when Alex has put all the pieces of the jigsaw together. Alex doesn't realise what nerves her prodding and poking will hit, creating a more of a sinister feel to the story! You prod a beehive, you're going to get stung...

I highly recommend reading The Bad Things before After She Fell. The latter can be read as a standalone however there are references to events in the former which would spoil that story and as I said in my review for The Bad Things, no one likes a spoiler! I really enjoyed After She Fell, I felt it was better than its predecessor. I really didn't guess what was going on until it actually happened! Plenty of intrigue to keep me addicted!

I do hope we see more from Alex Devlin, there are things in her personal life I want to see develop and I really enjoy reading about a journalist investigating crimes!

A big thank you to Mary-Jane Riley for sending me a copy of After She Fell. It was the first paperback I've read in over five years and has reignited my love for physical books.

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