




The Lost Children

Theresa Talbot

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First in a gripping new thriller series featuring investigative journalist Oonagh O'Neil. If you love Broadchurch you'll be completely hooked.

TV journalist and media darling Oonagh O'Neil can sense a sinister coverup from the moment an elderly priest dies on the altar of his Glasgow church. His death comes as she is about to expose the shocking truth behind the closure of a Magdalene Institution. The Church has already tried to suppress the story. Is someone also covering their tracks?

DI Alec Davies is appointed to investigate the priest's death. He and Oonagh go way back. Oonagh now faces the biggest decision of her life. But will it be hers to make? What secrets lie behind the derelict Institution's doors? What sparked the infamous three-day riot that closed it? And what happened to the three Maggies who vowed to stay friends forever? From Ireland to Scotland. From life to death.

The Lost Children Details

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Author : Theresa Talbot

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Genre : Thriller, Mystery, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review The Lost Children for online ebook

Debbie DiFiore says

That was one very complex ride

I just finished the story and I am sitting here kind of stunned wondering how to review it. It's emotional, depressing and quite disturbing. Just the thought of what those 'Magdalene ' girls went through is enough to blow your mind. I was raised Catholic and the whole question of Limbo and baptism was a part of that curriculum. I was taught that. I didn't know it had changed. This story takes you on a roller coaster of emotions ranging from disbelief to anger. There are parts that drag and quite honestly I still have questions that were not answered and small plot holes that have me bewildered. But I totally loved it. I honestly did not really see the twist coming. I was clueless. It was a maze of stories that didn't really come together until the end and when it did it broke my heart. Those poor women. This book has to be experienced first hand. I will definitely read this author again.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

THE LOST CHILDREN

(Also published as PENANCE)

(Oonagh O'Neil: #1)

Written by Theresa Talbot

APRIL 1st, 2018; Head of Zeus/Aria (466 Pages)

Genre: series, fiction, mystery, historical, Scotland, religion, journalism, adoption

RATING: 3 Stars

This is journalist, Theresa Talbot's first novel, and it is set in Scotland/Ireland 2000, and alternates between 1958. I really liked the characters, Oonagh, Alec and Tom, and am hoping we see more of the latter two in the next book. My only issue with this book and the writing was that it was too much filler and detail. There were chapters that could have been whittled down or deleted. Instead of building suspense it just slowed the book down. We have stuff going on in the past and "present day" in the novel but at times instead of tying together you feel like you aren't sure where it is going. The ending comes to the reader a bit sooner but that is because Talbot unpacks and ties of ending in a linear way - which was not a bad thing. I am ready for book two (slated for September 2018) and see what comes Oonagh's way. So much happened to her book one, you only hope things look up for her, but not too much for the sake of the story, lol.

I received an eARC from the PUBLISHER via NETGALLEY

My Novelesque Blog

Chandra Claypool (wherethereadergrows) says

A fantastic first in a series from Theresa Talbot. Rather than seeing this mystery/thriller through the eyes of

law enforcement, instead we see through Oonagh's eyes - a journalist who is looking into the Magdalene children and how they were forced into asylums by their family and the Catholic church where they were tortured, stripped of their dignity and suffered for their "sins"... mostly created by their own families. Sweep them under the rug. Sell their children. Out of sight. Out of mind. But what happens when they rebel and secrets come out YEARS later.

This definitely does not shed a good light on the Catholic church, priests and the means that people went to in the 1950s (really not that long ago) to put problem children in their place. There were some harrowing moments and hard reads in which we see the children abused, physically and sexually, by their own families. Tossed aside like bad meat. Told they were the sinners. How many times do you have to hear such things before you begin to believe it's true? Can you ever forget and let go of the torture that you went through - both mentally and physically?

Oonagh herself is going through her own issues - pregnant with her married boyfriend's baby. Unwanted, she questions her own decisions and remember how her father told her she'd know the Devil when she saw him. I personally love Oonagh - her tenacity, her flaws, her inability to back down and let go of this story - even almost at the cost of her own life.

Looking forward to book two and continuing on in this series.

Dash fan says

4? A Gripping Read

The Lost Children is a story about the Magdalene Children and the connections between the Church and the vulnerable young girls forced into the laundry rooms.

I have read and seen the films about the Magdalene Children and the abuse and torture the young girls suffered at the hands of the Nuns and church.

This story was a little different.

Journalist Oonagh O'Neil was working on uncovering the truth behind the Institutions.

When Father Kennedy died suddenly questions were raised as to what his involvement was with the Institutions.

The story is written in two timelines. Present day and then the stories of the young girls in the past.

I preferred reading about the stories of the young girls. It was raw and heartbreaking and very real. The stories drew me in and I felt there pain.

I was eagerly flipping through pages to see what would happen next.

The present timeline stories seemed a little disjointed at times and it seemed to skip around the storylines. I didn't particularly like Oonagh she came across as spoilt and a little self obsessed.

Father Tom Findlay is Father Kennedy's stand in. But there is something not quiet right about him. Was he involved in Kennedy's death as it was suspicious?

He has secrets.

I did really enjoy this book I just thought the past stories strengthened the plot so much. It was gripping, thrilling, exciting, lots of secrets and lies to uncover.

Thank you to Aria for this copy which I reviewed honestly and voluntarily.

My Review is also on my blog website:

<https://dashfan81.blogspot.com/2018/0...>

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Aria for an advance copy of *The Lost Children*, the first novel to feature Glasgow based investigative journalist Oonagh O'Neill.

When elderly priest, Father Kennedy, dies at the altar Oonagh suspects foul play because he had something to tell her about, she thinks, her investigation into the Magdalene laundries and he has refused to co-operate with her before. Oonagh's friend, DI Alec Davies, takes charge of the investigation.

I enjoyed *The Lost Children*, not least because it is set in my hometown and it adds a certain something to the read when you can identify the streets and locations named. The plot is fairly complicated with a host of suspects and different motivations. It may just be my mood but I found disentangling some of the twists difficult, if not incomprehensible at times. It does, however, have a well disguised perpetrator and an unusual motive.

The narrative and timeline slip between Oonagh's present day account, well near enough as it is set in 2000, and Irène Connelly's experiences in the Glasgow Magdalene laundry in 1958. Without overly politicising the subject Ms Talbot does an excellent job of describing the conditions there - horrifying is being kind about them and the Church's desire to cover it up as much as possible, including the usual excuse of times were different. It makes for very interesting, if repulsive, reading.

I must admit that I did not find Oonagh a particularly likeable protagonist. She is a bit of a princess, prone to hissy fits when things don't suit her, and extremely secretive for various reasons. On the plus side she can be empathetic to victims but I never knew if it was genuine.

The Lost Children is a good read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

Sue Em says

Glasgow investigative reporter Oonagh O'Neil takes on the sordid history of the Magdalene Institute and the Catholic church back in 2000 when many revelations came out. Taut thriller with good characters that I hope to see in further books.

Thanks to netgalley and the publisher for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Linda Strong says

(Previously published under the title PENANCE (UK))

First in a gripping new thriller series featuring investigative journalist Oonagh O'Neil. Travel from Ireland to Scotland.

When an elderly priest drops dead on the altar of his church, it is thought to be a heart attack. But the medical examiner finds that the priest had in his body a substance that he was highly allergic to. Was it an accident? Suicide? Murder?

Oonagh O'Neil is a TV journalist looking into the truth behind the closure of Magdalene Institution. The priest had called her the night before he died ... so did someone want him silenced before he could talk to her?

With a little nudge from Oonagh, DI Alec Davies is leading an investigation into the priest's death. He and Oonagh share a history, but will they be able to work together to expose some long-standing secrets?

The author, herself, is a journalist, so what you get is a very credible story line with believable characters. Oonaugh is a complicated woman with some personal issues that need some work. She's intelligent and knows what she wants ..and usually always gets it.

The book moves from the present to the past and back again. It's written in such a way that it is easily followed and not confusing.

This is the beginning of a new series and I look forward to seeing Oonagh's adventures in the future.

Many thanks to the author / Aria / Netgalley for the advanced digital copy. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

Mystica says

The first in a series involving journalist Oonagh O'Neil and detective Davies this was a very emotional read. I had read about the Magdalene homes and laundries and thought this was a horrific way for the Church to behave. There are no excuses when it is said it was symptomatic of their times. Compassion or sympathy as a human being was never part of these places and this story revolves around the children who were born, forcibly adopted and lost forever.

Oonagh knows that something is not quite right when Father Watson collapses on the altar of his church. A cranky priest with whom she has had run ins before, Oonagh is perturbed because she was to have an interview with him on the day he died and she just has an instinct that he was about to go out on a big reveal. Was his death a cover up. When attacks escalate and Oonagh herself is a victim narrowly escaping death the Inspector does know that things are not what they seem. Having to tackle an influential church is a daunting

task and one that could get him buried as well.

The story tracks girls in general and one in particular - and the ramifications and trauma to the mind decades later. Unraveling it so that justice of some kind could be obtained for even one woman and some peace of mind is Oonagh's own aim. When her own convoluted love life gets in the way, it adds to the emotional roller coaster she is on.

Brilliant novel.

Jayasree B says

The Lost Children is a book that thrilled with its mystery and made me feel more than a little sad about the abuse. The writing was succinct and the dialect added a certain effect to bring the world of Glasgow alive in its pages. What The Lost Children does do in great effect is shine light on the world of all those who've suffered at the hands of the society, the religion and the people whom they believed and trusted.

For the entire review, visit [Frost At Midnite](#).

Sherri Thacker says

This is a gripping new series by Theresa Talbot but it didn't do anything for me. I just did not connect to the characters. I tried, I really did. Thank you for this complimentary copy of this book from Aria through NetGalley. Opinions expressed in this review are completely my own.

Fiona says

Most people catch up on their reading on holiday. I never have time to read on mine so I bought this to read on plane journeys. It's set in Glasgow in 2000 so I enjoyed knowing all the locations (although some have either moved since or been demolished) and really enjoyed the Glasgow humour. The dry wit of the hard-boiled lead detective, Davies, had me often laughing out loud, although he is a bit of a caricature and it was hard to stop him morphing into Taggart at times!

The storyline centres on the Magdalene Laundries, now infamous for their abuse of the young girls sent there, and particularly on Glasgow's Magdalene Institution (for the Repression of Vice and for the Reformation of Penitent Females) in Lochburn House, Maryhill, and the riots that led to its closure in 1958. The underlying theme of the book is challenging and emotional. As a crime thriller / murder mystery it had plenty of twists to keep me interested. I really enjoyed it and will look forward to the author's next book.

Paula Sealey says

This is a superior crime novel that I tore through as I couldn't wait to find out who did what and why! Theresa Talbot has produced a great character in Oonagh O'Neil, a gutsy and determined journalist with

heart. In 'The Lost Children', she is investigating the stories of young girls who were housed at the Magdalene Institute, a former home run by the Catholic church. The horror stories Oonagh hears from past residents compel her to continue with her plans to expose the dreadful events that occurred there, even when her very life is at risk! With the help of kind but conflicted priest Tom and old friend DI Alec Davies, she is in a race to reveal the long hidden secrets before it is too late.

The twists and turns in the story were excellent and recollections from the institutes past residents truly heart-wrenching. The characters were especially well written and I now have a soft spot for Father Tom; I hope he makes an appearance in the next book which I am already looking forward to! Mostly though, I'm excited to see how Oonagh's character progresses and what her next investigation will be. A first-rate start to a new series!

*I received a copy of the book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Amanda says

My initial thought on finishing reading this book was 'oh my days what a fantastic, but sometimes traumatic, read this was'. Well actually, my initial reaction used ruder language but the sentiment is the same. I absolutely LOVED reading 'The Lost Children' but more about that in a bit.

I absolutely loved the character of Oonagh O'Neill and took to her from the start. She is a television and investigative journalist, who is the darling of the media world. It's obvious from the start that she is keeping something back and that she has been through a hell of a time of it. As the book continues, we learn more and more about her, which helps to fill in her back story and helps to explain why she is the way she is. She is one feisty lady, who is like a dog with a bone when she gets a sniff of a story. If something doesn't seem right to her, then she investigates until she has satisfied her own curiosity. She isn't afraid to stick up for herself. She has a chequered love life. She has been having a fling with a married man, who is still sniffing around even after she has told him that she wants nothing more to do with him. Oonagh recently lost her father and she is still grieving for him. Oonagh is loyal and trustworthy but she doesn't not like being made to look a fool. If somebody upsets her then she is sharp quick to tell them. Oonagh has some strong friendships and one such friendship is that which she enjoys with Detective Inspector Alec Davies. They work closely together to investigate the case of the lost children and how appallingly young girls were treated in the Magdalene Institutions of Galway and Glasgow. This links into the disturbing case of a priest, who dies in suspicious circumstances. How are the cases linked? Was the priest killed and if so, who by? Will Oonagh and Alec get to the bottom of what happened to the lost children and will they expose the appalling treatment that was dished out in the Magdalene Institutions? Are Oonagh and Alex in danger and if so, from whom? Well for the answers to those questions and more you are just going to have to read the book for yourselves to find out as I am not going to tell you.

I have to say that this has to be one of THE stand out books of 2018 for me. ('The Lost Children' was released under the title 'Penance' in 2015). As soon as I started reading this book, I couldn't put it down and because I needed to know if Oonagh and Alec solved the case and if the victims of the Magdalene Institutions got justice, I became addicted to reading it. I was so mesmerised by the story that I didn't notice how quickly either the time was passing or the page numbers were flying by. I found myself feeling for the victims of the Magdalene Institutions and I was rooting for them. I felt as though I had been through the emotional wringer after I had finished reading this book because I found myself feeling all sorts of different emotions. I felt sad, angry, upset, irritated, hopeful and well you get the picture. There were several times

that I wanted to jump into the pages of this book to sort out certain characters. I won't say exactly which characters as that might be giving away a bit too much. I have to say that reading this book was one heck of a rollercoaster ride.

'The Lost Children' isn't entirely a work of fiction as the book is actually based on real life events. I am a passionate supporter of abuse survivors and I used to work in safeguarding. I am not usually affected by what I read but I have to say that some of the descriptions in this book actually moved me close to tears. I couldn't believe how badly some of the children were treated both at home and in institutions. I was also horrified to realise that this abuse was ignored, swept under the carpet or even sometimes condoned by certain people and by certain members of the Catholic Church. This just made me even angrier and I felt a huge amount of injustice for those who suffered. Sorry for my little rant there.

In conclusion, it seems wrong to say that I enjoyed reading this book as it deals with some pretty horrendous subjects and there are only a small number (thankfully) of people who would get pleasure from reading such things. What I will say is that I found it a fascinating and heart breaking read, in equal measure. I would definitely recommend this author and this book to other readers. This book is an important lesson in what really happened in these institutions and highlights the mistakes from the past that should never be repeated. I look forward to reading what comes next from this fantastic author. The score on the Ginger Book Geek board is 5* out of 5*.

Grace J Reviewerlady says

The Lost Children is a stunning read; not only good but really great! Theresa Talbot writes beautifully, drawing the reader in to this multi-faceted crime thriller bit by bit until, before you realise, it completely absorbs you.

Oonagh O'Neil is a tv journalist; well-liked, well respected and working on a story of her own. Her investigations uncover some really unsavoury stuff regarding the Catholic Church and it's involvement in the Magdalene Laundry scandal of the 1950's. The Scottish setting of this novel allows for some typical humour which is attached to the city, and the Glasgow 'patter' brings some lighter moments to the story. Although I was familiar with the locations dotted around the city, I was unaware that there had been a Magdalene Laundry situated there and was quite enthralled with the tale.

This is a debut novel, re-titled and re-packaged and it's one which should do well. The creation of Oonagh O'Neil is extremely well done - she is a real life character with flaws and a career which should lend itself to many more volumes to come. The pairing of Davies and McVeigh as 'polis' partners adds to the humour, and I really hope they continue to feature in the series. This is a terrific read - one which I would fully recommend to those who enjoy a crime novel which unfolds piece by piece and retains it's secrets until the end. A thoroughly satisfying book, and definitely an author I shall be watching for more from!

My thanks to publishers Aria for pre-approving my requests on NetGalley. This is my honest, original and unbiased review.

Heidi says

Mysteries linking present crimes to dark chapter in human history have always had a strange appeal for me, perhaps because it is interesting how the echoes of the past still reverberate and affect people today. In The

Lost Children, Talbot bravely tackles one of the darkest chapters in Ireland and Scotland's history – that of the Magdalen institutes, asylums for “fallen women”, girls pregnant out of wedlock or troublesome for society or the church in other ways. It is frightening to know that there were several hundred of these terrible institutions in England alone, and that the idea was so appealing to society that several other countries soon followed suit! Although I have read previous novels with similar themes, Talbot has a very unique voice and seamlessly weaves her tale into the present in a way that was both intriguing and chilling.

As expected, the theme of the Magdalen women and their lost babies was heartbreaking and infuriating, especially knowing that these events were still occurring in living history. According to the history books, the Magdalen Institution in Glasgow operated unchecked until 1958! Irene's fate made me want to weep and wail in anguish, with anger welling at the unfairness of it all and the smug attitude of other characters in regards to her plight. It is always a credit to an author for being able to evoke such a visceral reaction in her readers!

I liked Oonagh O'Neill, Talbot's gutsy and complex heroine – even though her taste in men was terrible! Perhaps this was one of the reasons the plight of the Magdalen women was so close to her heart. Unlike our typical fictional detective, Oonagh is an investigative journalist who is not easily intimidated or put off her scent. With a sometimes abrasive and secretive manner that hints at secrets of her own, Oonagh makes for an interesting main protagonist for other books to come in the series. I also expect to see her friend Tom back in future books, who provides quite a unique POV that made for interesting reading, giving the subject matter.

Talbot's career as a journalist stays her in good stead as she provides a solid background to her story, and her passion for her subject is obvious in the sensitivity with which she presents Irene's chapters. In an interview about her novel, Talbot stated that she finds it distressing that no one was ever brought to trial over the injustices inflicted on the innocent women incarcerated in the Magdalen Institutions, and that society turned a blind eye on the crimes committed to them. Even though her characters are fictional, she has used her book to give those victims a voice and to bring their plight to our attention. The paragraph about baby Patricia had me in tears and I felt like my heart was bleeding! Due to the subject matter, *The Lost Girls* is a somewhat sad and bleak story that prompts reflection about crimes committed in the past and how they affect generations to come. Tying this historical component to a present day murder gave it an extra twist that lovers of crime fiction will enjoy.

Whilst somewhat bleak and tragic, *The Lost Children* will appeal to lovers of crime with a historical context and readers who enjoy a strong female protagonist with a passion for justice and the courage to stand up for the underdog.

3.5 stars

Thank you to Netgalley and Aria for the free electronic copy of this novel and for giving me the opportunity to provide an honest review.

blog* *facebook* *instagram
