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HOAG

"The 9th Girl . . . is cannily plotted  
and peppered with some of the  
sharpest dialogue in the business."  
—ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY



## The 9th Girl

*Tami Hoag*

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# The 9th Girl

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**The 9th Girl** Tami Hoag

\* *This is an updated cover of this Kindle edition.* \*

On a frigid New Year's Eve in Minneapolis, a young woman is found brutally murdered—the ninth so far this year in a string of grisly slayings. Homicide detectives Sam Kovac and Nikki Liska fear that it's the work of a serial killer they call Doc Holiday, a transient who has brought his gruesome game to a new and more terrifying level. But as Kovac and Liska uncover the truth, they find that the monsters in the ninth girl's life may live closer to home. And even as another young woman disappears, they have to ask the question: Which is the greater evil—the devil you know or the devil you don't?

## The 9th Girl Details

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Author : Tami Hoag

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## **From Reader Review The 9th Girl for online ebook**

### **Wonderkell says**

This was my first date with Tami Hoag & I can tell you there will definitely be a long term relationship on the cards.

First character: I love Nikki Liska, the ballsy female homicide detective with a heart of gold. That she is a single mum struggling with all the guilt & fear that comes with being a working parent only endeared her to me more. Sam Kovac, her long term partner, is also a fantastic character even if a bit stereotypical as the gruff male detective. But what also surprised me was the depth of the supporting characters. The two supporting detectives are unexpected, one a deep thinking, sensitive man in giant size, the other an extremely intelligent & quick thinker. A particular aspect I loved about these four was the way they spoke to each other - yeah they give each other a really hard time & often tell each other to fuck off, but you just know they've got each other's backs. The depth of character in Nikki's son Kyle & his school companions, the parents of the victims, the protagonists & the victim herself was also great - sometimes chillingly so. The inclusion of poetry by the main victim. Gray, gave a unique insight into a troubled adolescent mind.

Now story: This one was interesting as there are more than one protagonist. One is given away early but that by no means did that reduce the suspense because there was a complex cat & mouse game going on that was muddled by the investigation in many ways. I did guess the other protagonists, but whether it was because I didn't want to believe it, I still held out to the end.

So overall a very enjoyable read & highly recommended!

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### **Crick Waters says**

I found this book to be not believable in every sense

As I said about the other Tami Haog book I read, Down the Darkest Road, this book is okay for an airplane ride. But that's it.

From the simple linear predictable plot to the bumbling undeveloped stereotyped detectives, there was nothing in this book memorable, challenging, or remarkable.

The book is 400 pages of dialog between detectives that goes like this:

"Happy new year, detective."

"What's happy about it?"

"Uh... nothing, I guess."

"I'm assuming there's somebody dead here. Should we be happy about that?"

"No, sir. I'm sorry, sir."

"Jesus, Kojak. Just 'cause you're not getting laid tonight doesn't mean you get to take it out on young Officer Hottie here."

"How do you know I'm not getting late tonight?"

"You're here, aren't you?" she said. "Neither one of us is ringing in the New Year with an orgasm. And I did have a date, thank you very much."

"Yeah, well, I've got news for you, if that's what you're wearing you weren't going to get laid either."

"Shows what you know," Liska shot back. "I'm bare-ass naked under this coat."

That on page 6. And so it continues throughout. Example from page 113:

"I was hoping for him to remember at least a partial tag number on the car," she said with a big sigh. "Valerie says we can try again in a day or two. Now that Jamar knows we're not going to make him put his underpants on his head and bark like a dog, he'll be more relaxed next time. Something might come to the surface for him."

"Yeah," Kovak said without hope. "Like if that chick in the backseat maybe had a pussy piercing. That's where his head was at."

"We can't pick eyewitnesses, Kojak," she said. "And by the way, that's where your head would have been too."

"My head's there now," Tippen remarked.

"You're disgusting."

"I'm honest. ""

"You're honestly disgusting."

And so goes the book.

The most interesting character in the book is the villain. Unfortunately, the villain in this book is a bit character and plays a minor role in the plotline, and in the end, is snuffed prematurely. In fact, it feels as if Tammy tired of writing this book or reached the publisher's page limit because the book ends abruptly. In fact, the case with which the book begins isn't solved by the main characters, the detectives, but ends due to the unbelievable, and I truly mean not-to-be-believed, ineptitude of the guilty characters in the storyline. The villain plays a bit part interwoven with this main thread, and like the main thread, the villain's thread self-destructs in an abrupt end without involvement of the main characters, the detectives.

A fast read. The plot is simple, linear, and easy to comprehend. The characters are trite, stereotyped, and repetitive. These characteristics combine to make a fast read, best-suited for mindless airplane entertainment.

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## **Brenda says**

Jamar Jackson drove the twenty-passenger white Hummer to make extra cash while he studied. This particular night was New Year's Eve in Minneapolis, it was freezing cold and his passengers were in various stages of drunkenness. With one eye on the semi-naked activities in the back, and one eye on the road, his concentration levels weren't at their peak. Suddenly a vehicle cut across in front of him, bouncing through a pot-hole; the boot flew open and to Jamar's horror the body of a woman fell from it, straight into his path...

Homicide detectives Sam Kovac and Nikki Liska were immediately called to the scene; the consensus was that the serial killer dubbed “Doc Holiday” had struck again. This would be his 9th victim since New Year’s Day – but her injuries were horrific and with half her face gone the media dubbed her “Zombie Doe” instead of the usual Jane Doe.

Struggling to identify the young woman, Kovac and Liska were drawn into the monstrous activities of someone who seemed to think it was all a gruesome game. The evil which lurked nearby was beginning to encompass them, with the task force being drawn in several different directions at once. With Liska also have problems with her teenage son, Kyle, their desperation to find the killer before he struck again was intense.

Would they find “Doc Holiday” before he killed again? Would they identify “Zombie Doe”? And would they uncover the truth? As another young woman vanished, they asked themselves these questions and more, intensely frustrated, furiously angry but deeply fearful.

Tami Hoag is a brilliant thriller writer, and never fails to produce! This was gripping and intense, incredibly fast-paced with unexpected twists throughout. A thoroughly enjoyable read, one I have no hesitation in recommending highly.

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## **Alex is The Romance Fox says**

#4 in the Sam Kovak & Nikki Liska series The 9th Girl is such a sad and shocking story.

Detectives Sam Kovak & Nikki Liska follow a trail of smoke and mirrors after a body of a young girl is thrown out of the trunk of a moving car that may be the latest victim of a serial killer, who has eluded capture for some years, named “Doc Holiday”

Characters well-developed and realistic. Liska’s home-life with her kids felt so real to me. How to deal with her young sons on an everyday basis....trying to be a good mother...questioning if she was doing the right thing for them.

The one character that pulled me in completely was Penelope Gray, the victim of the most horrific, cruel, intense and brutal death and the pain she suffered most of her life. Her loneliness, hopelessness, her cry for help that no one did anything about. Heart-rending.

Great dialogue – especially between Kovak & Liska – they have a lovely chemistry and really good connection.

The plot was good, though a slow start soon picked up pace that had me turning the pages wanting to find out who killed Penny Gray.

When the murderer is revealed at the end, I was...beyond SHOCKED and HORRIFIED. I surprise I NEVER expected.

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## ♥Rachel♥ says

Disturbing and chilling and that wasn't even the serial killer part...

Liska and Kovac are teamed up on another case. The grisly murder of a teenage girl just might be the same girl who went missing from Liska's son's school. This could be another victim of a serial killer they've encountered in the past, Doc Holliday, but Liska and Kovac are not ones to overlook other solutions.

There's not much romance except between Liska's teenage son, an artistic outcast happy in his own skin (loved him!!) and a girl who has compromised her values somewhat to blend with the "in crowd".

A cop procedural type mystery that took me a little to get in to, but fiercely grabbed my attention about a quarter way through! The narrator did well with the male voices, but his female ones were a bit lacking.

This review is also posted at The Readers Den.

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## Ware says

Sometimes the obvious answer isn't necessarily the right answer. When a pothole pitches a mutilated teenager from the trunk of a vehicle into the path of a stretch Hummer one New Years Eve in Minneapolis's it looks like the work of a serial killer dubbed Doc Holiday. Homicide detectives Sam Kovac and Nikki Liska get the high profile case and set out to identify the victim and then find the killer. In the meantime a serial killer basks in the publicity this killing has generated and sets out to commit a signature crime.

Any mystery featuring serial killers, mean girls and bad moms can't be bad. And the 9th Girl is much more than merely good. Kovac and Liska face enormous challenges even as a city lives in fear of the evil in their midst. Liska's other full-time job, that of single mother to Kyle, an artistic soul who is willing and able to fight back, ties neatly into the plot.

The end will surprise you even when you are sure you see it coming. You may, but you don't see all of it. Those surprises make the 9th Girl the perfect vacation companion this summer.

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## CD {Boulder Blvd} says

I enjoy the Kovac and Liska series and did enjoy the 9th girl. I do want to note that The 1st Victim was a prequel to this one, but you don't really need to read it to enjoy this one. In fact The 1st Victim was more like a long prologue as it didn't have an ending.

I like that there are multiple bad people and suspects on who killed Gray. The author did a really good job of showing how difficult it can be for young people who don't quite fit into the high school cliques. Gray's life was very sad and the people who should of supported her, blamed her for all the problems. As a reader, I really felt sorry for Gray - not only for her death, but for her life. The portrayal of the supporting cast was really good in this book. Ms Hoag also showed how sometimes the "popular" kids aren't really likable.

This book also delved more into Liska's struggles of trying to be a homicide detective and a mother of teenagers and how difficult it is when the two sides of her life (cop and mother) collide.

The serial killer aspect was interesting, but it did take a back seat to the focus on the ninth victim and not the previous 8 victims. (Which worked well for me.)

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## **Barbara says**

In this fourth book in the series Detectives Kovac and Liska are on the trail of a vicious serial killer. The novel can be read as a standalone.

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When the mutilated, acid-burned body of a teenage girl falls from a car's trunk a serial killer called 'Doc Holiday' is the prime suspect. This sadistic murderer has already taken eight lives in a ritualistic fashion and police fear the teen may be his ninth victim. Detectives Sam Kovac and Nikki Liska investigate the murder of the unidentified girl - dubbed 'Zombie Doe' by the media.

Turns out 'Zombie Doe' is Penelope Gray, a high school classmate of Liska's son Kyle. Talking to students reveals that 'Gray' (as her friends call her) was at a teen hangout the night she disappeared, as was Kyle and a number of other students - some of whom were bullies who tormented both Gray and Kyle. Questioning Gray's mother and her fiancé reveal that Gray was a troubled teen, angry about her parents' divorce several years before, who was prone to acting out and staying away from home.

The homicide detectives pursue evidence on the assumption that Doc Holiday killed Gray, wanting to stop him before he claims another victim. The book intersperses some first person scenes of Doc Holiday planning/committing his crimes with the story of the detectives' investigation. Liska's problems raising two sons as a single mother - one of whom is a witness in the case - also plays a part in the story.

The characters are realistically depicted, the police investigation proceeds at a good pace, and the ending is almost satisfying.

All in all an okay mystery book.

You can follow my reviews at <https://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot...>

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## **Debbie "Buried in Her TBR Pile" says**

In the mood for another who done it & a serial killer on the loose. I liked the lead female detective's struggle between job, kids and frustration with "no responsibility" ex. Interesting story with quite a bit of commentary on teen culture and acceptance. 3.5 stars

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## **Wesley says**

2.5 Stars. Pass.

Pretty good ending and I was satisfied with the way Hoag built the suspense. However, it didn't really pick up until at least halfway into the book, which was too slow for my tastes.

I was a bit bored by the first half. The concept wasn't interesting enough for me. The victim, who was murdered in a way that made her resemble a "zombie", is pretty much what the first half of the book rides on. While it certainly wasn't a cut-and-dry murder, it didn't offer anything else that drew me into the story. It was like I was supposed to be intrigued based solely on zombies being mentioned in the book, riding the coattails of recent movies and TV series based on them.

The murder and murderer don't really get much more interesting throughout. The intrigue halfway through and onward comes from the placement of characters, where everyone stands in relation to the victim.

All in all, it wasn't my favourite Tami Hoag novel as it didn't excite or interest me from the beginning unlike her previous books, but the story's conclusion sort of makes up for it. Sort of.

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## **Keri says**

4.5 Stars! Very well written, tight read! I did figure out who did the deed, but getting there was a wild ride, as we explore the depth of teenage angst and drama. (all too real in my life right now.) If you haven't read a TH this is a good book to start with, as this book could stand on its own quite easily. Liska and Kovak have been partners for a long time, but this book didn't have a serial feel to it.

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## **Patrice Hoffman says**

Tami Hoag has done it again with her latest novel *The 9th Girl*. The "it" is make an exceptional read that's full of twists, turns, suspense, and some really dead bodies. *The 9th Girl* begins with the body of an unrecognizable girl coming from the trunk of a car on New Year's. She is believed to be the 9th victim of a serial killer dubbed the Doc Holliday. All of his victims are discovered during or around holidays and have similar MOs. Nikki Liska and Sam Kovak are called into the crime scene and immediately get on the case.

The investigation takes Liska and Kovak into the seedy, underworld of high school politics and family secrets. All the evidence suggests that "Zombie Girl" may have been killed by Doc Holliday, but there's so much going on in *Zombie Doe's* life that anyone is potentially her killer. The investigation brings Liska to question her own parenting she struggles with the idea that she isn't around enough for her two sons. One, Kyle, a very teenage son who may have known the victim or last saw her.

Hoag manages to sprinkle in a lot of cop babble that's genuinely funny in a very serious novel which is a breath of fresh air. The characters all work well together and compliment each other. Liska takes center stage in *The 9th Girl* and her struggle between the badge and being a good parent is very relatable to any



working single parent.

In conclusion, Tami Hoag kept me guessing until the very end. Although the ending may be a little too neat for some, I find it acceptable. Fans of Tami Hoag will need to add *The 9th Girl* to the Kovak/Liska series. For those living under a rock and not familiar with her work I recommend that fans of Tess Gerritsen, Lisa Gardner, or suspense thriller lovers go out and get it. *The 9th Girl* will make you question who can you really trust? And is any of it worth being accepted as opposed to just being you.

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## Julie says

*The 9th Girl* by Tami Hoag is a 2013 Dutton publication.

Kovac and Liska have been working a serial killer case for nearly a year now. The one they call "Doc Holiday" because he plans his killing around holidays. It's now New Year's Eve and a young girl has been killed apparently trying to escape from her kidnapper. It is assumed that since it is a holiday she was a victim of Doc Holiday. But, Liska isn't presuming anything. The first order of business is finding out who the girl is.

Meanwhile, Liska is going through some hard times at home. Her oldest son is a quiet, studious type that is having some trouble at school. She is really concerned about him when it appears he may have known the victim and he's been in a few scapes with the more popular kids.

Kovac works to keep Liska focused on the investigation as details emerge about the victim's home life . A difficult and unpopular girl that was screaming for attention and help, but was tuned out by everyone close to her leads Liska to suspect the she may not be the 9th victim.

I have had this book in my TBR for over a year, but my reviewing responsibilities have forced me to put this one aside for awhile. I am a big fan of this author and this one did not disappoint. As a parent I remember the anguish of worrying about your kids as teens. They keep secrets, lie, and share precious little about what is going on with them. Liska is going through that phase with her son and her ex-husband is no help at all. Her partner is also a bit dismissive, reminding her that her son is alive, home, safe, and so she should be happy with that and focus on her job. It was a just a little annoying. Her son is quite mature for his age in many ways despite an active fantasy life. But, I didn't like how everyone blew off her concerns. Thankfully Liska has a mind of her own and will find the time to think about where her priorities lie.

The investigation reminds us of all the dangers young people face, not just from the obvious monsters out there, but from peers and figures of authority. Teachers and administrators who also lean toward the affluent or gifted or beautiful students and roll their eyes at those with the guts to express their individuality. These kids are often dismissed as difficult when maybe they are the ones that could actually make a difference in our world if only someone took the time to encourage them.

As a veteran of mystery thrillers, I knew something was off about this case. I wasn't buying the serial killer angle either, but that doesn't mean our guy wasn't still out there or that we had heard the last of him. Far from it. I did have a few things figured out, but there is an OMG moment in there as a twist is thrown in you won't see coming.

Kovac is a still a good guy, he's just doesn't understand the bond between a mother and her children. He's seen the worst of the worst and is jaded, but he does care about his partner and in the end he redeems himself just a little bit.

As far as I'm concerned Tami Hoag is one of the very best in this genre. This one is another excellent effort by Tami. This one gets 5 stars.

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## **MightyA says**

After reading 2 thrillers, *A Thin Dark Line* (a stand alone story) and *Ashes to Ashes* (1st book in *Kovac and Liska series*), by Tami Hoag, I am hooked. *The 9th Girl* (4th book in *Kovac and Liska series*) didn't disappoint.

The plot is cleverly delivered, with a shocking twist and satisfying ending. All characters are slowly and well developed as the story progresses, with fun bantering and intelligent dialogs. It was a little slow in the middle (in Audiobook standard, in my opinion), but the suspense is great.

The way the story is told in *The 9th Girl* is very different from the *Ashes to Ashes*. I would highly recommend reading the 1st book in the series first to have a thorough understanding on all the characters involved, then proceed to other books in the series (not necessarily in sequence), although each character's background is briefly mentioned in the 4th book in the series.

I listened to audiobook format; David Colacci's performance is to die for!

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## **Paula says**

On New Year's Eve, homicide detectives Nikki Liska and Sam Kovac investigate the brutal murder of a teenage girl whose body pops out of a trunk of a moving vehicle after hitting a pothole in the road. The detectives wonder if this is another victim of the still-at-large serial killer, Doc Holiday, who is known for committing murders on holidays. As they investigate further, there is also the chance that this may be a stand-alone crime, since the victim was not well-liked and not looked upon too kindly by many of the people in her life.

The story was enjoyable and interesting and also had a subplot dealing with high-school bullying. Liska and Kovac made a great team and worked well off each other. I really liked Nikki's son, Kyle, who stood up to the bullies and wouldn't give in to them. There was a varied cast of characters, many of the type that you love to hate. The story was well paced so that it remained entertaining throughout.

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