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From the author of *New York Times* bestselling *Rock Paper Tiger* comes the most electrifying thriller of the Summer.

Michelle Mason tells herself she's on vacation. A brief stay in the Mexican resort town of Puerto Vallarta. It's a chance to figure out her next move after the unexpected death of her banker husband, who's left behind a scandal and a pile of debt. The trip was already paid for, and it beats crashing in her sister's spare room. When a good-looking man named Daniel approaches her on the beach, the margaritas have kicked in and she decides: why not?

But the date doesn't go as either of them planned. An assault on Daniel in her hotel room, switched cell phones and an encounter with a "friend" of Daniel's named Gary gets Michelle enmeshed in a covert operation involving drug runners, goons, and venture capitalists. Michelle already knows she's caught in a dangerous trap. But she quickly finds that running is not an option. If she's not careful, she'll end up buried in the town dump, with the rest of the trash. Now she needs to fight smart if she wants to survive her vacation.

Getaway Details

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From Reader Review Getaway for online ebook

Laura says

Yet another reason to not have a one-night stand: recent widow Michelle is on vacation in Puerto Vallarta, where she meets Daniel and, well, one thing leads to another. Which leads to a midnight robbery in which Daniel is hurt and their cell phones being accidentally switched, and suddenly Michelle is drawn into a situation about which she has no idea who is safe, who is lying, who she can trust and what is going on.

The level of suspense plateaus quickly and doesn't abate, but at no point does Michelle seem to find the nous to figure out what's going on and how to deal with it. She's more of a ping pong ball, bouncing between event and event, betrayal and betrayal - some character growth would have been nice.

ARC provided by publisher.

David says

Michelle Mason is just an average white chick from LA, getting over the recent death of her husband and planning the next stage of her life while chilling in Puerto Vallarta. Then she meets a hot guy and totally does the thing she never, ever does (don't they all say that?). Okay, I'm being a little judgmental, but the start of the book paints Michelle as being almost a stereotype of an entitled American tourist hanging out with the brown help down in Me-hi-co. The author, Lisa Brackmann, did this intentionally, I'm sure, but I was kind of waiting for the bad shit to start, and when it did, quickly, it took me a while to really feel sorry for Michelle, even though she was really only guilty of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The dude she slept with turns out to be a private pilot. "Private pilot" working in Mexico pretty much means only one thing, and Michelle, because she is now connected with him, finds herself being dragged into Daniel's affairs. Daniel, it turns out, is not just an occasional delivery boy for drug smugglers, but also has connections with "the Boys" - i.e., spooks, American black ops, the CIA, whoever. Michelle is dragooned into being a double-agent for a scary, charming fellow named Gary who just wants Michelle to report back and take the occasional picture.

Michelle just wants to go home and have nothing more to do with this mess. Gary, the Mexican police, and various other bad hombres have other ideas.

While my initial feelings about Michelle were kind of disdainful, she is just an ordinary woman who proves to be as resourceful and brave as she can be under the circumstances. Maybe she doesn't always make perfect choices, but she tries to do the right thing and she shows loyalty and courage.

The sequel to this book, which I accidentally read out of order, continues the adventures of Michelle, Daniel... and Gary. So know that if the ending seems to leave things a little up in the air, you have the option of finding out what happens next.

Ramsey Hootman says

Getaway is every international traveler's worst nightmare: inadvertently stepping into trouble in a country where you aren't familiar with the legal system and can't trust the local authorities.

Some (if not many) reviews of Getaway are going to accuse the protagonist of being "unsympathetic." What these reviews will actually mean is that the character of Michelle is not fulfilling the hysterical female stereotype. The reality is that some women are entirely capable of containing their emotional responses and acting in a rational, level-headed fashion when confronted with extreme circumstances. Brackmann has succeeded once again in crafting a fully three-dimensional female lead who is neither an emotional wreck nor a kick-ass man with boobs; Michelle is an otherwise average housewife who summons the inner strength to survive an impossible situation without succumbing to a victim mentality. In a word? Refreshing.

As was the case with her first book, Rock Paper Tiger, Brackmann's prose is terse and carefully crafted, excellent without drawing undue attention. Her descriptions are pitch-perfect, and every once in a while I would find myself stopping to admire a line that captured some little detail just perfectly (the smell of the garbage dump, for instance). I don't usually read for setting, so it's rare for me to say that this book absolutely put me on the spot, and I loved it. Be warned: the first few chapters will leave your mouth watering for a margarita.

It's hard not to compare Getaway to Brackmann's first book, Rock Paper Tiger, so... I will. Both books are excellent and I would recommend them without hesitation. Overall, RPT made it onto my list of "best books ever" (ie five star reviews) simply because I'm more drawn to the Chinese setting, and I enjoyed the broad scope of the plot. Getaway is more narrowly focused, set in just one or two locales and concerning a limited cast of characters. So although it earns four stars for my personal preferences, I think Getaway is the more perfectly crafted narrative. The plot is tight, had me turning pages compulsively, and I felt like I was "clued in" at all the right moments. The characters are all very memorable, and one especially freaked me out in a very visceral way. And the ending? Perfection. Truly.

I loved Rock Paper Tiger, but Getaway has proven that Brackmann is not just a one-hit wonder. Her books are now on my official "automatic-buy" list.

Pat says

Lots of folks go a little loco in Puerto Vallarta, land of sun, sand, tequila, and (if you're a lucky woman in need of some self-esteem building), a one-night stand with a handsome, dangerous man.

Michelle Mason is that lucky woman. A new widow left disillusioned and penniless by her rat of a husband, she's having one last fling on a vacation that had already been paid for before the SOB died and left her world in chaos. Or what she thought of as "chaos", because she's about to learn the REAL meaning of that word.

An accidental switch of cell phones with handsome ex-pat Daniel and suddenly Michelle is seeing the darker side of this vacation paradise. The side with quasi-official government men with guns, drug cartels, Mexican jails, bodies piling up around her, and secrets that can turn her into one of those dead bodies. Where do you

turn when your passport has been confiscated, your family has been threatened, you've been thrown into jail, and the only man you can remotely trust is the one who got you into this in the first place?

I've been waiting anxiously for Ms. Brackmann's newest book, after being so blown away by her debut, *Rock Paper Tiger*. *GETAWAY* is every bit as intense, real, and thrilling. Her real talent is in so realistically portraying a setting and then dropping a character that might just be you or me into this place. Then she twists the kaleidoscope and changes everything. She writes beautifully about the loveliness of a place, then unflinchingly turns over the rocks and shows us the horror that lies beneath. In this book, Michelle visits the dump in Puerto Vallarta (note: I believe this place is now closed and folks can no longer go there, but while writing the book, Ms. Brackmann visited the place. The sounds, the sites, the gut-wrenching odors, and the horror of children living in the squalor she writes so eloquently about are real).

My stomach churned as I followed the heroine into this nightmare. I kept asking myself what I—an ordinary middle class woman like Michelle—would do. I'd have been just as lost and horrified as Michelle. And I would hope that—like Michelle—I'd find the inner strength and gut instinct to claw my way out of the morass and survive.

In my review of her debut novel I called Ms. Brackmann "fierce". She continues to prove me right.

Barbara says

Lisa Brackmann has chosen a well known, but unusual, vacation area to set her mystery: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Her protagonist, Michelle, is a bit unlikely too, a newly widowed, rather spoiled and shallow woman from Los Angeles. She is broke and deeply in debt, yet spends money she doesn't have on this trip to Mexico. Sounds ludicrous, when you say it this way, but Brackmann makes it plausible with her excellent story-telling.

Michelle is in Vallarta (as it is called through most of the book), when she meets an attractive and interesting man on the beach, Daniel. He invites Michele to go to a restaurant with him and while they are eating, a friend of his approaches them. Daniel seems uncomfortable with the fellow, and Michelle thinks no more about it. Daniel walks her to her room and after a bit of a false start, they both drop off to sleep only to be awakened by two masked men entering her room from the balcony. Daniel is attacked with a gun butt, and Michelle narrowly avoids being raped.

After that, it seems that Michelle and Daniel run into each other, or Michelle runs into his friends without intention or plan. She also meets one of his friends, Gary, who approaches her and asks her to keep an eye on Daniel and report back to him. When she refuses, he threatens her. He also sweetens the pie with an offer to pay off her maxed out credit cards and gives her \$5000 in cash. Against her better judgment, Michelle follows Gary's orders.

The plot moves along quickly and solidly and is wonderful escapism story-telling. The characters are

believable and just mysterious enough to keep both Michelle and the reader guessing. Ms Brackmann feeds out the plot and the character's identities at the right pace. The final chapter is vague enough to allow the main characters to return, and it will be interesting to see if the author brings them back in another situation, and if so, where will it be? Vallarta is just the right background for a great mystery story!

Indy Quillen says

I purchased this book from the author at a book signing event and just recently read it. "Getaway" is the first book I've read by Lisa Brackmann, but I'm definitely a new fan. I loved the spare writing—just enough detail to put me in the scene and picture the characters—but never too much exposition.

Back when it was safer to travel in Mexico, I spent enough time there to recognize the authenticity of Brackmann's writing for location. And as for culture, even back then I remember night driving trips that had my heart racing as we passed armed Federales with automatic weapons alongside the road. I'll never forget my almost frantic eagerness to reach the USA border again.

Now picture a vacation trip that starts out sad to begin with, and not only never recovers, but falls into a nightmare that some might find unbelievable. But the author pulled me into that rabbit hole by making the character believable. She has flaws, she makes mistakes. She's human. The author did a great job of laying out how the events could fall into place in a logical way, one tiny misplaced step at a time. An easy 5-Stars for me.

Dana says

Add to the mix a tightly woven plot, believable and unique characters, and one of my favorite villains of all times, and you have an excellent second novel by the author of *Rock, Paper, Tiger*. I like Brackmann's heroines because they aren't action heroines. They're normal people thrust into abnormal and dangerous situations and behave accordingly. To quote another review here because it so perfectly encapsulates my feelings:

"Ms. Brackmann has a knack of creating characters that have faced trauma in their lives and as a result have become somewhat indifferent or ambivalent; and placing them in situations that forces them to pull on inner reserves and strengths to deal with it."

Michelle, the heroine in *Getaway*, doesn't start kicking ass and figuring out everything like some sort of Nancy Drew on steroids. Instead she behaves the way most people would when suddenly faced with having to make choices that could end up getting her -- or other people -- killed. She's confused, ambivalent about what she should do and who, if anyone, she can trust, and (very sensibly) scared. Nothing in her life to date has prepared her for the situation she finds herself in and I enjoyed -- and believed -- Michelle's internal monologue/thought process as she tries to figure out what to do next.

The ending is, for me, highly satisfying (no spoilers), very believable, and leaves plenty of room for a sequel without feeling like it was designed to insure one. It does, however, instill a subliminal desire for margaritas.

Maygirl7 says

Compelling thriller of an average upper middle LA "housewife" pulled through the looking glass into the world of thrillers that one normally sees on a TV screen. Brackmann did a good of conveying Michelle's predicament and how hard it was to know what to believe and who to trust. Only negative was that it ended so abruptly that I was expecting a new chapter rather than the acknowledgments. Guess that means there'll be another book to pick up where it stopped?

Kristin (MyBookishWays Reviews) says

You may also read my review here: <http://www.mybookishways.com/2012/05/...>

Michelle is in sunny Puerto Vallarta, attempting to escape from her troubles, including the mound of debt her recently deceased husband left her (hey, the vacation was already paid for), and wondering what kind of life will be waiting for her upon returning to LA. Unfortunately, escape isn't in the cards, since trouble manages to find Michelle in the form of handsome, mysterious Daniel. He's everything her late husband wasn't: lithe, sexy and definitely mysterious. Their first night together is a disaster, though, after armed men burst in on them in the middle of the night. Danny is injured, Michelle is scared, and when she goes to his apartment to return his belongings, a gruesome discovery leads Michelle to think that Danny may be part of something sinister. When an acquaintance of Danny's threatens her unless she spies on him, she knows she's in over her head.

If you're looking for a fast paced and diverting thriller, look no further than Getaway. Michelle is very likeable, and the author manages to capture exactly how it feels to be on vacation, at least in the beginning. You know what I'm talking about: the I'm-on-vacation-so-nothing-bad-can-possibly-happen-to-me feeling? Unfortunately, that feeling doesn't last for Michelle, as she spends time with Danny, becoming increasingly sure that he's into some pretty nasty stuff. I've been to Mexico, and it's a beautiful place to vacation. While I haven't been to Puerto Vallarta, the author seems to know her way around and perfectly illustrates the devil-may-care feeling of a coastal tourist town. What she also shows is the darker underbelly of drug and cartel violence that has been ubiquitous lately. You can't read the news without coming across an article on the cartel wars that have claimed thousands of lives, in increasingly gruesome ways. Her timing is perfect with this book, making it very relevant to current events and adding an additional layer of menace. Rapid pacing and tight plotting will keep you turning pages and even though it never manages a real romance between Michelle and the enigmatic Danny, the ending will leave you wanting more of this talented author. Lisa Brackmann is most definitely an author to watch!

Bri says

The beginning was a little slow for me. I was afraid I wouldn't get into the book but I kept on going. I hated being being drug into the story and not given any information - like Michelle, but i totally understand the Author's point - Brilliant! My heart did not "race" until the trunk and beating at the dump to which I was thoroughly excited to see who it was, why it happened, and what was to come next. The last few pages put me back on my toes as I was expecting a relaxing ending that Michelle was getting back to her old life only

to be spun around and waiting again! The ending wasn't what i was expecting exactly, but I do like how its left to the reader to make everything alright or get all crazy that something else happened in/to that plane! I would still recommend the story to anyone who likes adventures.

Rogue Reader says

It's no wonder that Lisa Brackmann's second blockbuster of a thriller is my favorite read so far for 2012.

Getaway is set in exotic Puerto Vallarta, and the opening pages find Michelle Mason wallowing in self pity. She's lost and lonely, drunk and maudlin. Michelle is on vacation in Mexico, a vacation planned before her husband was revealed as a bankrupt, lying cheat who conveniently dies of a heart attack. Now Michelle has an unreal past and a confused, confusing future. She's easy prey it turns out, in this popular coastal resort with a veneer that barely conceals the underbelly of police corruption, drug trafficking and threats.

No one is who or what they seem in Puerto Vallarta, and Michelle is at the mercy of any event and person that she comes into contact with. Michelle doesn't know who to trust and in fact, she trusts no one. As Michelle spirals into increasingly complex circumstances, she becomes more focused and more aware of her situation, gradually gaining more control over her life.

The expatriate American community is filled with characters and misfits, and there's just the right sort of interaction with and exposure to the local population that adds authenticity and humility to the writing. The dump scenes are particularly well drawn. I really enjoyed the ending of the book, so ambiguous and fraught with possibility. It's a perfect beginning to the second Michelle Mason thriller.

I can just see author Lisa Brackmann enjoying sunsets and margaritas, lazing on the beach and dreaming up the people and schemes that make up Getaway. She's taking a well-deserved break after the endless excitement that began in 2010 with the success of Rock, Paper, Tiger. I can imagine that later she quickly exchanged her gauzy cotton wrap for shorts and sneakers and makes her way among the hidden alleys of the city. She's scribbling furiously, taking notes, photographing what she finds, seeing conspiracy everywhere and with her keen insight, reveals the chaotic danger that rots just below the surface of beautiful Puerto Vallarta.

Keep it comin', Lisa. I love it!

Deborah Gray says

Michelle is widowed unexpectedly, amid the discovery that her husband lost all their money and she is left penniless. As a sort of last hurrah and the need to escape from her depressing reality, she decides to go to Vallarta, a trip already booked and paid for when he was alive, a vacation they were planning together.

Almost as soon as she arrives Michelle is embroiled in suspense and danger, careening from one awful experience to another at the hands of what appears to be the criminal underbelly of Vallarta's tourist scene. Fueled by margaritas she tries to understand what is happening to her, but Michelle really cannot tell who to trust and how to get out of a situation that is fast unravelling. Even the man she slept with on that first night, the victim of a mugging in their room, is starting to look like one of the bad guys, and the police who set her

up are no help at all. They may even be at the bottom of all this.

There are those who would say, "this couldn't happen to me; I wouldn't be this passive", but I saw the main character as a reasonably intelligent, somewhat sheltered middle-class woman who is thrust into a nightmare that was conceivable and well constructed. The author answered each question that arose with a plausible explanation. Just when you thought she should be able to escape you could understand why not. Just when you thought she should be able to tell who she could trust, another curve ball was thrown. I found this second book from Lisa Brackmann to be a fast paced thriller I couldn't put down until the end.

Judy says

Lisa Brackmann's first novel, *Rock Paper Tiger*, captivated me with its exotic location in modern China and its damaged but resourceful heroine, Ellie Cooper. *Getaway*, though a perfectly acceptable beach read (literally) just doesn't have the same amount of kick. It felt to me like the author was under the pressure inherent in writing a second book; as though she had an editor and a marketing director hovering behind each shoulder.

Michelle Mason, the heroine in *Getaway*, is her own problem as well as the weakest link in the story. She is using a vacation paid for by her recently deceased husband as a respite from her troubles. That's about all he left her except for a mountain of debt after his financial house of cards collapsed in the economic meltdown of recent years.

Though Michelle numbers among females who live off a man's money without asking questions, she is unconvincingly clueless for a mid-thirties 21st century Los Angeles native. After she lands in a highly treacherous situation between sexy but mysterious Daniel and slimy Gary, she dithers for so long and makes so many bad decisions, I found myself hoping right along with her for the one who is good in bed to rescue her. How could she not know that a guy with deep pockets who brags about having secret government connections might be able to track her through her cell phone?

Now I've waited way too long to tell you that the story takes place in a Mexican resort town and involves that country's brutal drug cartels and their investment capital bedfellows. It's a tense thriller and Michelle's future appears to be doomed. To her credit, she is pretty good at gut-level instincts and she gets tougher and smarter. She went to Mexico to work out how to live a more authentic life but I'm afraid she just might be one of those women who has to rely on luck.

And why am I getting all moralistic and snarky with Lisa Brackmann? Because she proved she has got a lot more to offer in *Rock Paper Tiger*. I understand she is writing a sequel, so perhaps she just tossed off *Getaway* in order to stay in touch. That cool. It was fun to read. But I want Ellie Cooper back.

Sia McKye says

Sia McKye OVER COFFEE

Tropical beaches, too many margaritas, add a sexy tempting stranger, and you have an engrossing tale filled with danger and excitement.

"WELCOME to gorgeous Puerto Vallarta, Mexico—home of margaritas, sunset beaches, a shady American ex-pat community, and a barely-hidden drug syndicate. This will be the most dangerous vacation of Michelle's life..."

I have been looking forward to reading **Getaway** since I first heard about the setting and premise. **Getaway** didn't disappoint me. It's well written and believable. This is the sort of situation that could happen all too easily to an unsuspecting vacationer. **Getaway** was so absorbing that I finished it a day and thought about long after "the end". If you like thrillers with an authentic setting, realistic characters, and the twists and turns of deadly peril, then **Getaway** is the book to read this summer.

Ms. Brackmann has a knack of creating characters that have faced trauma in their lives and as a result have become somewhat indifferent or ambivalent; and placing them in situations that forces them to pull on inner reserves and strengths to deal with it.

Case in point, Michelle Mason. Recently widowed, Michelle is facing, thanks to her dearly departed husband, social scandal and financial ruin—the end of the easy life she has become accustomed to. Puerto Vallarta was supposed to be a vacation and a time to reflect upon what she was going to do with the rest of her life. Instead, like Alice in Wonderland, she gets dropped down the rabbit hole into a world where nothing is what it seems to be. Drug wars, the DEA, and where good guys aren't always good and trusting the wrong people can get you killed.

Michelle's journey pulls her out of her apathy and into fighting for survival against the odds where she can trust no one but herself.

What follows is an edge of your seat, believable, and tightly woven story of suspense and danger, played out in the steamy underbelly of Mexico—where *winning* means you live.

Leighton Gage says

How's this for a nightmare scenario?

You're a woman alone, on holiday, in a developing country where you don't speak the language. A crooked cop plants some drugs on you and hauls you off to jail. A countryman comes along to spring you, but it soon turns out that he's in cahoots with the cop.

You can't leave, because they're holding on to your passport. And, unless you agree to spy on a guy you hardly know, but with whom you've suffered a violent assault in your very own hotel room, they're going to fling you right back into the pokey.

Me? I'd play along.

And so does Michelle Mason, the protagonist in Lisa Brackmann's *Getaway*.

Getaway is set in the resort town of Puerto Vallarta in Mexico.

Brackmann paints it as a place of luxury hotels and considerable charm, but with an ugly underbelly.

Corruption and drug-dealing are rife. Human lives are cheap. And Michelle's early troubles, the ones I've described above, soon pale when she's confronted by what comes next.

Michelle is an engaging character, and Getaway is a cracking good yarn, a wild-ride that never lets up.
Not even in the last paragraph.
Is that a cryptic statement?
Yeah, I suppose it is.
But you'll find yourself agreeing with me after you've finished the book.
