



## The Dollhouse

*Nicole Thorn*

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## **The Dollhouse** Nicole Thorn

Riley Cain. Layla Hall. Adalyn Mitchell. Kylie Michaelson. Those are the four girls kidnapped from their hometown over seven years ago, and they've finally broken free of their prison. Suddenly, they find themselves thrown back into society. Now nineteen, the girls have to try and acclimate to how their families have changed, as well as the world around them. Nothing is as it was. Riley soon meets Wilson, a broken boy living next door and trying as hard as he can to take care of his family. He seems to be the only one who treats Riley like she's more than a china doll, fated to shatter at any moment. The two grow closer, helping to soothe each other's pain. Riley just wants to feel human again, and she's willing to do anything to get there. The only problem is that Wilson doesn't want to go too far. He's torn between protecting Riley, and letting her find her own way. He wants to be the good guy, but he also wants to be the guy who gets the girl he loves. Wilson is stuck fighting what he and Riley both want, and he's sure it's for all the right reasons. Everyone thinks they know what Riley needs, but to her, it all just looks like another cage.

## **The Dollhouse Details**

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Author : Nicole Thorn

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## From Reader Review The Dollhouse for online ebook

### Susan Angela Wallace says

The Dollhouse By Nicole thorn is a romance and women's fiction read.

Riley Cain. Layla Hall. Adalyn Mitchell. Kylie Michaelson. Those are the four girls kidnapped from their hometown over seven years ago, and they've finally broken free of their prison. They were taken by a man whose name to them was only ever Master. He spent years perfecting them. Making them his little dolls, meant to love him and nothing else. Or so he thought.

A stroke of dumb luck supplied Riley with all she needed to end Master and free her and her friends from the hell they'd been living in. Suddenly, they find themselves thrown back into society. Now nineteen, the girls have to try and acclimate to how their families have changed, as well as the world around them. Nothing is as it was.

Fantastic read with brilliant characters. Full of twists and plots. A captivating read. Highly recommended. 5\*. I voluntarily reviewed an advanced copy of this book from netgalley.

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### Katherine Paschal says

Review on <https://smadasbooksmack.blogspot.com/>

Riley and three other 12 year old girls or "sisters" have been captives or "dolls" of the Master for years, so long they have lost track of time and pretty much who they were before they were abducted. In a last ditch effort, the sisters found a nail to use as a weapon, willing to get their freedom any way they can, even if it would cost them their lives. But Riley refuses to stop fighting, and in turn, she and the girls escape "the dollhouse" they have been trapped in, but have no idea what is waiting for them in the real world.

I will admit that I expected something very different from what I received in this story. I went into this book expecting some suspense and thriller qualities dealing with the kidnapping and murder, an intense mystery suspense novel, but instead this was a very emotional book about a damaged girl with PTSD learning to cope with trauma and fall in love- think more angsty New Adult story than the thriller I had in mind. It was not a bad story?, just not even a little bit what I expected or was in the mood to read. The first chapter of the book was full of drama, action, danger and my desired suspense as the girls attempted to escape their captor, but after the first few pages, that was the last of the heart pounding, edge of your seat read.

This was overall a love story focusing on Riley becoming a person again and learning who she is without someone dictating to her. At times she was the 12 year old child that she had been when abducted, and at other times she was a hard, far too knowing adult. The two sides of her clashed and left her uncertain of live or her place in it. (Also I hated how everyone wanted to cure her with medications instead of actually helping her- meds are band-aids at best!) Wilson was the bad boy who helped her heal, treated her like a regular adult, and not the child made of glass her parents expected. Wilson was a really understanding, patient character and I liked him well enough for the way he treated Riley and his brother, regardless of his shady antics aka job. But as a side note, Riley and he may not have been together if she had any other male options presented to her- there was a point Wilson literally says this and it was 100% true- she only met him and that

was it for romance. This girl has been locked up since she was 12 for 7 years and literally meets 1 kind boy and the story was over. It was almost a relationship of convenience (at least for her) but ok.

This is the first in a series of books (most likely 4!), each book dealing with one of the "sisters" and how they heal and tackle life now that they have been given the chance to be free. I recommend picking this up if you are looking for a romance dealing with damaged characters and tons of emotions.

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I received this title for reviewing purposes.

### **Lisa Houston says**

Very good book. A must read for you all. You could feel the mepathy for poor Riley and 'her sisters'. Trying to fit back into 'normal' life after escaping from the Dollhouse. The writer did a great job of writing this book. The characters all fitted in great. Dont want to give to much away other than you really need to read this book to see for yourself how good it is

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### **Diana says**

What an AMAZING read. Pure gold. I hadn't read any other books from this author, but if they are like this one they sure are great. The book follows Riley, who has spent seven years of her life at the hands of a kidnapper who took her and three other girls to "play" with them as if they were dolls. When they finally escape, they find that their lives have changed, as much as in their families as in their heads, and have to kind of learn to live again.

There are also chapters written from Wilson's POV. Wilson is the guy next door and the only one who doesn't treat Riley as if she is weak or a broken doll.

The story between these two characters keeps on evolving during all the book, and it feels so real and so right!

But don't expect this book to be a case of a princess in need found by a prince charming. Think of this book as real life, messed up, with pain and anxiety, with fears and tears, and with some very dark parts. For all these reasons I loved this book.

The only reason I haven't given this book five stars is because of Riley's parents, who didn't seem very supportive of their daughter and didn't seem to learn anything, making the story a bit repetitive when they were on the scene. I get it was needed to explain the story, but for me it was like there were some ideas and/or topics that kept repeating themselves.

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### **Tiff says**

This kept me turning the pages, distracting me while I was brushing my teeth or trying to get things done. Knowing this is the first in a series makes me happy. I want to read more about Riley and her friends.

Also, thanks to a chapter titled "Your Stalwart Standing Fast", I now have the song Standing from the Buffy musical in my head.

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## **Samantha Sim says**

**Full review here:** <https://samanthascw.wordpress.com/201...>

**4.5/5 stars**

*“You can never really fix what’s broken.”*

The Dollhouse is the second book I’ve read that revolves around the issue of kidnapping. The first book was Room by Emma Donoghue which mostly tells the story of a mum and her son’s lives while they’re being held prisoner in a shed. The Dollhouse is different in the sense that it tells the story of how four girls try to fit back into their old lives after escaping from their prison. To be frank, I went into this book expecting it to be a lighter read as compared to Room, since it wasn’t focused on the gory details of the girls’ sufferings while they’re being kept as prisoners. Well, it wasn’t long before I realized that I was oh, so, wrong.

*“We’re heavy hearts, and anyone willing to carry us, even for a little while, should get a fucking gold medal.”*

This book reminded me that just because something is over and done with, doesn’t mean that the memories and experiences that come with it fade away as well. Not only do the girls have to deal with fitting back into society without the experience of ‘being normal’, they have to deal with PTSD as well as their newfound ‘fame’ and the attention of the media. And here we’re reminded of how vile and fake the media can be, just to get the ratings they need.

*“I could lie and pretend to be happy, and they would never see through the shattering glass I wore as skin.”*

We’re brought along the journey as the girls try to power through while juggling all the added stresses at the same time. Riley, who is the main character, felt like she was caged in once more, as her parents have been trying hard to do what they think is for her own good but is actually detrimental to her mental wellbeing. Her other friends each have their own issues to work through as well, but I don’t want to talk too much about those, I don’t want to spoil anything for those who have yet to read it.

*“They would want to pump me with chemicals to try and fix what was broken. I spent the last seven years being forced into a box, made to be what someone wanted me to be. I didn’t want that again. My cage was bigger now, but I still felt bars around me.”*

The details of what went on in their ‘prison’ was gradually exposed to the readers in different ways throughout the story, which was interesting, but also heart-breaking. Reading about their grooming procedures and the punishment they had to endure elicited rage and sadness in me, and my heart broke into a million pieces every time Riley showed signs of PTSD.

*“It doesn’t matter how many years someone tries to perfect you, all you become is some flawed, broken mess of a thing. Barely human anymore.”*

One thing I like about this book is the realness of it. Every emotion, every detail of their lives post-kidnap, is so raw, and fucked up, and real. Their anxiety attacks, their depression, their reaction to their ‘fame’. Even their new discoveries in life. Especially the part where Riley has just discovered masturbation and she went to Wilson (her love interest) to help her get the hang of it. I’ve been watching a lot of sex-positive YouTubers and I liked that Thorn did not shy away from such an important part of our daily lives in her book, because sexual pleasure is an actual thing that humans crave. This whole scene where Riley figures out what masturbation is, what sexual pleasure feels like, just makes the whole story even more realistic because that is exactly what we discover in life.

*“Let me tell you a secret. No one has a damn clue what they’re doing. Not ever. They can pretend, but life is nothing more than a guessing game. Sometimes you guess right, and you move ahead on the board. Sometimes you guess wrong and fall flat on your face. You have to fall down if you want to learn how to pick yourself up again.”*

This book has also made me re-evaluate my whole viewpoint on suicide. I’m not going to lie; I’ve thought about suicide before. I mean, we all go there once or twice, right? But the thing that stopped me was my fear of pain. Not leaving behind people who love me, but because I was scared of pain, which was pretty cowardly of me, I have to admit. But this book talked about suicide, death and the responsibility we have towards the people we leave behind, and that has changed my way of thinking completely.

*“It’s easy to want to be alive, but it’s very hard to put it into action.”*

Oh, and can we talk about the romance??? It’s different from most YA romance, because here’s a guy, Wilson, with his own set of problems, who falls for a broken girl. And he has to control his own desires because he doesn’t want to take advantage of Riley. Brock Turner could learn a thing or two from Wilson, TBH. But then Riley is persistent on moving on to the next stage. So Wilson is stuck between moving forward and giving Riley some time to think about what she really wants. He doesn’t want to be the guy she jumps just because he’s the first available option, you know? The romance in this book is made more complex and interesting because of this conflict.

*“Maybe we’re both broken.”*  
*“Maybe everyone is broken.”*

All in all, this was a well-written story, plot progressed smoothly, except for the ending, which I felt was kind of rushed. The conflict was resolved too simply. I remember thinking, that's it? But other than that, great book. The characters were real, emotions were raw. The romance was complicated. It was a great read.

An ARC was sent to me by Curiosity Quills (thank you!) and this is my honest review.

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## **Dani - Perspective of a Writer says**

*Thanks to NetGalley and Curiosity Quills Press for providing me with an ARC in exchange for an honest review.*

1.5 stars rounded up to 2 stars because I really liked many of the elements around Riley...

Riley Cain.

Layla Hall.

Adalyn Mitchell.

Kylie Michaelson.

These 4 dolls, kidnapped and trapped in their "master's" underground lair, finally break free at a terrible cost to themselves. They return to their families no longer 12 year old but child-like adults. As Riley tries to adjust to life as a normal woman she can't escape the scars of their captivity and escape. Wilson, her next door neighbor, becomes her oasis in a broken life where everyone expects her to live the way they think is best.

I absolutely loved the powerful opening and the first 20% of the book. The setup was powerful and I settled in to read what I thought was going to be a moving rendition of a rather saturated trope. I quite liked this premise as I'm a fan of extreme emotional duress and reading about the powerful ways we can overcome such circumstances. I read these kidnapped girl stories any time I come across them and as a whole find most very good. When you focus on the individual journey it makes what is common unique! That was not the case here :( I really wanted it to be and with that powerful opening I thought this was for sure a 5 star book, the more I read the more stars I lost. In reality this is a no star book. It needs so much work, so much development and re-writing... There were special moments in the story that "won" back stars even though a complete story they did not make. I so wanted to give Riley the benefit of the doubt but the writing kept crashing and burning...

The first thing you ought to know is that this book gives readers an education on masturbation, and pleasuring one's partner without penetration. If I hadn't committed to read and review this book I probably would have DNFed it. These passages were pages and pages long and quite repetitive. It seriously made me uncomfortable. I know the character is 19 years old and is not hurting anyone... but this was too gratuitous. I personally know what sex is and don't need constant graphic representations, that's why I read YA fiction. And in no way were these scenes tasteful.

The sex scenes were not the only "plot" elements of a repetitive nature. There is this constant whining that

everyone is trying to "cage" her and keep her from healing her own way. That the only way she can heal is if she gets to do whatever she wants without consequences because she was a victim! This was so harped on I wanted to scream. The simple fact is she is 19 years old. She can leave at any time. She had 3 friends and a boyfriend who would let her stay with them. She didn't have to go back to her "terrible parents" and yet she continued to do so! She also made no effort to act like an adult or bargain with her parents. She never tried to sit them down and explain to them how she felt. When she did finally scream at her mother how she really felt it was so contrived a moment that I winced. And the ridiculous way her parents reacted was so outrageous it was not to be believed.

To me this should have been a slice of life sort of story where events are less extreme and more like reality (after the inciting event, of course). I wanted to see her try different things with her parents to work it out with them. Yes, she would be sneaking out. Yes, she would stay over at her "sisters" houses overnight. She's 19 years old after all! But not once was this fact mentioned in all her conversations with her parents! I wanted to see a girl slowly spiral out of control and it was because of the people who loved her: her parents, brother, boyfriend and sisters that she made the effort needed for her to save herself. Instead I got a hodge podge of research that made no sense jumbled together. (This was especially evident when the "old doc" and Wilson quoted each other a couple times when talking to Riley!! At least re-write what Wilson said so it wasn't almost the same words...)

When someone deals with something traumatic and aren't getting help in a healthy way they try different things until one works then they do that over and over until it loses power (which takes some months at the very least) then they move on to other experiences that could give them the same emotions... With Riley she'd randomly do things supposedly in the name of "feeling something" but then she'd suddenly do something else. If people cut themselves and it works they keep cutting themselves. If they are nymphos then they have casual sex with WHOEVER will take them. If they don't eat then they eat and purge (this was one of the things she "tried" that made zero sense to me and was abandoned after mentioning it once - to top it off it was in contradiction to all she said in the beginning about wanting to eat since her master controlled her diet!!)

I don't want to go into anything more specific because I don't want to ruin the story so here is one comment I made when I was 30% through the book: *"Unfortunately this just got very contrived! You spent 7 years with a guy playing dress up dolls with you but supposedly you're "playing a game" with a reporter? And suddenly we're learning she resented her little brother for replacing her? I don't buy it!!"* And of course this line about resenting her brother is never mentioned again!! Nor is the playing with the reporter deal. Riley became this grab bag of reactions that made no sense together in the same person... Part of the problem was the constant stream of narrative style all coming from Riley and only occasionally broken up by Wilson. Wilson's POV actually made the book readable otherwise I would most definitely have DNFed it. He was quite lovely even if he was as random as Riley...

I realized that I didn't believe Riley's narrative... She's like a kitchen sink where all the thoughts got dumped in together when they should have been spread over all the girls. I felt like there was a mommy issue at hand here too. Three different fathers were all made to look like heroes and rather touching ones at that... but the only mother in the book was an over reactive monster of a woman who could not have raised Welly to be the lovely little boy he was...

A much better story would have followed all 4 girl's POVs. As we went back and forth between them and with the author ideas spread 4 ways we would have gotten a much better story. A series could have still been realized as we stopped at huge moments in this story to transition into another book. (Like what happened to Kylie as one break...)

Layla was a rockstar to me - I so wanted to hear the internal dialogue that she used to keep going and I wanted to know how her struggles were different from Riley's, Kylie's and Adalyn's. I found Riley to be the instigator of what happened to Kylie and it sickened me that she felt no guilt about that girl... I would have liked to read the reasoning from the girl's POV of what she did... Adalyn too was an intriguing character, how was her dad's treatment different from Riley's parents... When "forced" to develop these as part of the story instead of as a contrast to Riley it truly makes Riley seem ridiculous in her thoughts and actions. I was also terribly disappointed there wasn't more that happened with the "old doc" that would portray therapy in the proper light. He could have easily been a go between with Riley and her parents if she had only been honest with him.

The old man smiled at her. "You don't have to say anything at all. I just figured that you wouldn't want to waste your parents' money. Or, I thought that maybe you would be willing to talk to me. Since you were so willing to talk to the news."

"Everyone has something broken inside of them, Riley. We all just wear it differently."

"Hate is a thing that you have to holdfast to. It's not like love or joy. Those just come along, and you can't force them. Hate is fascinating because it can just drift away into the ether if you let it."

"Maybe we're both broken."

"Maybe everyone is broken."

I scoffed. "Why should I believe that I'm the thing that can make her happy?"

"Because she tells you that you are," he stated like I was stupid. "You don't get to decide if you make her happy or not."

He smiled when he got to me. "I would love to spend the day with my sons going on a wild goose chase for a toad. This is going to be a special day for you when you look back on it. I'd love to be a part of it."

"Why do you think I'm in love?"

He stared at me like I was an idiot. "Well, we can start with the obvious if you want." With a point to my full hands, he said, "We just spent almost three hours going from store to store so you could find her a toad. Tell me why."

I'll save you the trouble and quote the best lines from the book...

**BOTTOM LINE: A Hot Mess of Potential, Wasted.**

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**Paula Phillips says**

I had been looking forward to reading this book, after all, I do like my Dark Fiction stories, and The Dollhouse sounded quite promising. Four girls were taken seven years ago when they were all twelve years

old and held captive. Now seven years later they have escaped their captors and are free. The four girls Layla, Riley, Kylie, and Adalyn, return to their families and learn how to cope in the real world as adults. The transition to the real world and back to reality is hard, and they have difficulty adapting to their new lives and their instant fame as The girls who escaped the Dollhouse. The story is written from Riley's POV as she was the mastermind behind their escape and the "strong one." I have to admit this story however frustrated me, and I felt let down as her parents treat her like this fragile butterfly and a little girl, and I get that she was kidnapped at 12, but she is now 19 years old. Riley has captured the attention of her next-door neighbor Wilson, and the pair explores their sexuality together as Riley learns. The girls though treated as dolls should have known a bit about sex even though they weren't exposed to it while kidnapped. Can the girls survive living in the real world or will it get too hard for one of them in particular? I had hoped personally for a bit more story about the kidnapping and what went on while she was kidnapped, or the parents search for their daughters rather than the blossoming relationship between Wilson and Riley and snippets of their adjustment which neither of them wanted to talk about. I think my expectations were more of Pretty Stolen Dolls series by K. Webster rather than like the TV show Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt without the comedy aspect.

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### **Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says**

Chapters read: 4 (and an Interlude)

I'm really not sure what made me request *The Dollhouse*, considering that there were some red flags in the description.

I liked the first couple of chapters fairly well. Riley's POV is decent, and the concept has promise. It's not bursting with voice, but it was good enough to keep me fairly engaged. However, then I got to the first interlude, the interludes being from her love interest Wilson's POV. The things Wilson thought about her made me one hundred percent against this romance, and based on the book description and reviews I think the book's going to spend most of its time on this.

Wilson on Riley during their second interaction:

When her arms stretched out, she leaned forward. Then there was cleavage in my face. Just... right in my face. Soft parts very close to my mouth, and I imagine she wouldn't be okay with that if she realized. The girl was messed up in the head, and I was a bastard for even thinking for a second about her cleavage. Even with it in my face. I was forever a predator, and I wasn't sure if she would ever be capable of being more than prey.

All the reviews mention the book's focus on how she likes Wilson because he doesn't treat her like a doll, but prey isn't any less problematic.

"And it wouldn't kill you. Unless you were really stupid with it. And if you were, then you kind of have the death coming."

*Oh, don't start getting cute with me, baby.*

The threat inherent in this thought combined with the infantilization disgust me.

Basically, I don't want to read a romance between this creep and Riley. Hell no.

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### **Raven says**

Wow! This book is amazing! I received this book from curiosity quills for an honest review. I haven't had the chance to read anything by Nicole Thorn yet and didn't even read the synopsis to be honest but after the first page I was hooked! I finished this book in one sitting it was so good.

This book is mainly in the perspective of Riley Cain, who for the last 7 years has been held captive with 3 other girls, Layla Hall, Adalyn Mitchell, and Kylie Michaelson. The first chapter is the story of how they escaped and the rest is about healing and trying to assimilate back into society after trauma. The other side of this story is a blooming friendship/romance with her neighbor, Wilson, who has his own shady past helps her through the healing process. I absolutely adored this book and recommend for those who need a thrilling fast read.

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### **Annamaria says**

#### **"Freedom was mine, so why did I feel so sick?"**

I read this book almost 3 months ago, it doesn't really feel right to be reviewing it now that all the details have totally slipped my mind but I received its ARC and it doesn't feel right snobbing it either. The concept of this story is really fascinating and, for someone who really loved Room it felt the right read to dive into. The book starts with a group of 4 girls, Riley, Layla, Adalyn and Kyle, with Riley being the protagonist of the story. The girls have been kidnapped when they were mere children, now they're 20(ish) and are kept captive inside a house by a man who treats them like they were Barbie dolls: he brushes their hair, makes them put pretty dresses and heels on and even bathes them.

**"People can't be perfect. Trust me on that one. It doesn't matter how many years someone tries to perfect you, all you become is some flawed, broken mess of a thing. Barely human anymore."**

When they rebel he chastises them harshly and doesn't allow sharp objects in fear that they'll commit suicide. One day though he doesn't pay enough attention and the girls manage to finally escape. Their release into society though doesn't go the way they expected.

**"My cage was bigger now, but I still feel bars around me."**

One of the first things the girls hadn't taken into account was that they were going to be separated once free from the "dollhouse". They had to return to their parents, of course, but none of them lives this experience positively. They're not used to be apart, they're the only ones who truly understand how they feel while none of the parents truly can.

**"They wanted the Riley that was taken that day after school, and they refused to believe that she was dead."**

Although, again, the premise being truly fascinating I think it got lost in the overall angst of the story. Riley

is childish, she hasn't been given the opportunity to grow up in a healthy way and you can see that through her actions and thoughts but after a while the redundancy of it all becomes pretty tiresome. Plus, when she meets a boy that doesn't treat her like the *broken girl* or like someone who needs to be pitied she gets all lost in him that the psychology that could have been explored in more depth isn't given enough space. And I found him *waaay* too patronizing. In addition, once separated, the reader doesn't care about the other girls anymore, I couldn't recall their names and really didn't care for what they were going through which is a pity. The ending was out of the blue and felt like it didn't belong in the narrative at all but by then, and I'm sorry to admit it, I was just speed reading at this point.

As a feature in all of my reviews I'll say it again, I'm not great on romance driven stories, if I'm reading a book that from the synopsis sounds like a thriller or an adult fiction, finding teenagers in love that are confused by how their ormons are reacting to the other one is not really my jam so the reason I gave this book 2 stars is really a personal one and not a totally negative opinion about this book.

I was kindly granted the ARC of this book from LibraryThing.

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### **Faouzia says**

I would like to thank NetGalley and the publisher for a copy of this book.

This was a very interesting and touching book. It offers another perspective and explores the other side of kidnapping. It explores the lives of victims who escaped after years of imprisonment and how they tried to adjust to the fact that they are back to life.

Riley, Layla, Adalyn and Kylie were kidnapped when they were 12 years old. As far as the world was concerned, they were supposed to be dead. But, by luck they managed to escape from the "Dollhouse", the place where the Master kept them and treated them like his Dolls.

The girls spent their teenage years in this prison and it was really interesting to see how each one of them faces the world again.

It was sad, but not depressing to see all that struggle on their side, how every memory from that Dollhouse affected them, but also how this affected their families. I enjoyed the book, and the different character, the struggle with every choice and the fun/nice parts that came from adjusting to life. The other thing i liked was that there were not a lot of description of the horror they went through, the story was about how they tried to enjoy life again. I felt that the story held a message of hope. and it was nice.

The story was written from the point of view of Riley, the girl who took the chance to free herself and the girls, and some chapters were told by Wilson, the boy next door who had also his share of tragedies. The only reservation i had was that i thought the struggle of Riley to adjust to life was centered much more than necessary around Wilson. Still, I liked the relationship they had.

I enjoyed the book very much.

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### **S.L. Perrine says**

I have no words. I have loved everything I've read by Nicole Thorn and Sarah Hall, so it's no wonder I loved this book.

I have to start with the fact that this is NOT my usual read. I read fantasy and paranormal. This was so far outside my reading comfort zone that I started it and was afraid I wouldn't be able to finish it. How wrong I was. I could hardly put it down.

Four girls are kidnapped and held for seven years. Probably the most volatile time in a young girl's life. When they break free of the man that held them, they all had to learn how to be 'human,' and be 'alive.' How is that possible? For Riley she found help moving on by being close to the girls she was held captive with, and the boy next door. Trying to make sure she heals, is all her parents seem to want for her, but they don't realize they are just forcing her into another box.

The relationship between Riley and Wilson seems so right. He says and does all the things her parents should have in the beginning. Letting her come to terms with how she felt on her own, and not trying to force her into being something they wanted her to be (just like master did). She feels cornered and does some pretty outlandish things, but for what she went through it's reasonable.

Nicole did a fantastic job describing the despair of her character. The fear that bubbles just under the surface, as well as the never-ending feeling that she simply couldn't go on. It felt real and moved me to tears. The relationship with her 'sisters' was endearing, as was the way she fit right in as an older sister. This is by far the best writing I have seen from Ms. Thorn. As always I am eager to read more from her.

I was offered a copy in exchange for an honest review but turned it down. I'm so glad I have the paperback on my shelf for future reading!

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### **Ella Mae (thebookishgoddess) says**

You may also find this review on [The Bookish Goddess](#).

**\*\*\* A copy of this book was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review. \*\*\***

*The Dollhouse* has always been such an interesting concept. If I hadn't known any better, I'd say this sounded a lot like the end of *Pretty Little Liars* season 4 or 5 – I think – when the Liars get trapped in a Dollhouse by A. It reminded me so much of that, which I thought was pretty interesting. This story, I find to be quite sensitive. So if you're uncomfortable with the ideas of rape or child molestation, I wouldn't read this book if I were you. It's not evidently shown, but it is mentioned and some might find it disturbing. I did, though; but I pushed forth.

Plot progression here was great. The first chapter had me going. It was vivid and just downright a great opener to a story. The writing style was so easy to get by, and I like it. But things fell apart in a certain way when the families of the girls finally came. That, and the way I just honestly felt a huge disconnect towards Riley and Wilson in this story. For Riley, I understand that she's "trying" to get by after everything that had happened. I know she's trying to stay a little positive here and there, but it just didn't feel real to me. It felt off the moment she starts talking to her six-year old brother ever so normally (who was, by the way, born during the time of which Riley was in the dollhouse). You would think if you were in Riley's little brother's shoes, that you'd ask your sister numerous questions (even just the basic stuff, without the mention of the

dollhouse) and feel a little disconnected with her since you've literally just met her. But in here, Riley and her little brother hit it off almost immediately. I just didn't find any of it believable. In fact, I didn't find any of what Riley was feeling in all of this believable. I didn't exactly like her character because she acts so ungrateful towards her parents. And no, I sadly cannot buy how she can so easily open up to Wilson; **a complete total stranger**. She opened up far too easily. *Far too easily*.

Wilson, I didn't exactly like either. I get his stand on being compassionate, but Wilson, as a character, just made me feel uncomfortable. I hate the way he talks to Riley. I get that the premise literally states that Wilson doesn't treat her like a broken doll, but he isn't exactly treating her fairly in this matter. I don't like him. I don't like his approach about Riley. I would feel degraded if a guy thought about me in the way that Wilson would like he does to Riley. He was just a big **nope** in this story, and for the main character.

Overall, it was fine. Give or take a quarter and a half fine. The concept of the book is great, it's got a great pace going, writing is easy and fantastic – but the execution sadly fell flat on me. I wish it had more focus on Riley's relationship with the three other girls than that of with Wilson. I think that would have made more sense, or that I would feel more of this book with the emotional journey of the girls. Wilson and Riley's relationship unfortunately just didn't do it for me. It's an okay read, but it's sadly just not my cup of tea.

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### **Nikki "The Crazie Betty" V. says**

Have you ever seen that Netflix show "The Unstoppable Kimmy Schmidt"? Well, this is that story, only much more realistic. Riley helps her and 3 other girls escape from a crazy man who has kept them hidden in his house for 7 years pretending they are his "dolls". Now, before I go any further let me get this out there, this is not a story of girls being sexually assaulted. There is definitely assault and humiliation and abuse but the abuser is more about keeping his dolls pretty and perfect and has no desire to "defile" them. In case you have triggers I wanted to make sure that was out there.

This story is essentially dealing with Riley and the 3 other girls as they try to re-acclimate to the real world and how everything and everyone around them has changed. Learning how to trust, love and live all over again with no concept of what it is to be an adult, or how to have adult relationships. There are moments in this book that are truly heartbreakingly as everyone tries to keep Riley in a different type of cage; afraid to let her anywhere out of their site. To Riley, she feels like she freed herself only to be captured again. It's an interesting story on how everyone deals with something like this, not just Riley, but also her parents, and the new brother she meets when she comes home. Nothing is how she remembers it and after living so long in a dollhouse, she isn't sure how she feels about it. The relationship that develops between her and her neighbor Wilson is so sweet. And not the sugar coated YA sweet, but the kind of sweet of someone who doesn't understand at all what Riley is going through, but is willing to move heaven and earth to understand her as much as he can. While everyone else can't see past the little girl she was when she was taken, Wilson wants to treat her as the adult she wants to be and is trying to become.

I truly enjoyed this story and will gladly read the next book in the series.

*ARC received from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.*

