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Kiernan, Caitlin R. Drowning Girl

India Morgan Philips, Imp to her friends, is insane. And she knows it. The diagnosis of schizophrenia came as no surprise to her; both her mother and grandmother suffered from similar disorders, both ending their lives as suicides. An artistic, troubled young woman, Imp tries to control her disorder with medication and therapy, but those only go so far. Her obessions?or intrusive thoughts, as her therapist wishes her to call them?sometimes get the better of her. This is the case when she meets Eva Canning, a woman who so strongly evokes a painting called ?The Drowning Girl? which Imp had seen as a child that she throws Imp into a fever of artistic madness, compelling her to draw Eva?s face over and over and repeatedly scrawl the words to Lewis Carroll?s ?The Lobster Quadrille? over everything at hand. But who is Eva? A hitchhiker? A mermaid? A werewolf? The charimatic priestess of a doomed cult? In Imp?s fevered brain, Eva is all of these things and none of them. And so, in a desperate attempt to find her way through the labyrinth schizophrenia has made of her own past, Imp sets down her story?or stories, as her memory plays tricks on her?in a complex, layered, and utterly compelling narrative.

Haunting and magical, *The Drowning Girl* questions our understanding of reality. Kiernan?s Imp knows, in a way most of us do not, that she is an unreliable narrator in the story of her own life. What in our life and memory is true and factual, and what is a compelling or comforting fantasy we tell ourselves to cover over the truth? *The Drowning Girl* does not provide easy answers to these most fundamental questions.

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