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Advertising: Naomi Blackburn, naomi.blackburn@patomimedialogroup.com Editorial: Rebecca Vnuk, rebecca.vnuk@patomimedialogroup.com

Advanced Review – UNCORRECTED PROOF

Stolen Secrets. Schulman, L.B. Boyds Mill Press. Print issue scheduled: December 1, 2017.

Livvy has been dragged across the country from Vermont to San Francisco on the eve of the 11th grade by her recovering-alcoholic pastry chef mother, ostensibly for a career opportunity. In actual fact, it's so that her mother can take care of Livvy's grandmother, who is suffering from Alzheimer's (and whom Livvy thought was long dead), in hope of inheriting a sizable amount upon her death. Despite her mother's insistence that she is better off staying as far away from her grandmother as possible, Livvy begins to get to know her as best she can and is intrigued by the mystery of her past in WWII-era Germany. The discovery of a few scattered pages of a journal written by an inmate of Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp in early 1945 leads her to speculate wildly about her grandmother's true identity and what had actually happened to her during the war. More than just Holocaust intrigue, **Stolen Secrets** is packed with complex family dynamics, gently exploring the effects of growing up with an alcoholic, as well as the specific dark circumstances that may have led to that particular coping mechanism in the first place. Livvy is a dynamic protagonist, wise and competent as well as insecure and naive. This is a lovely coming-of-age story that explores love, trust and, forgiveness.

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