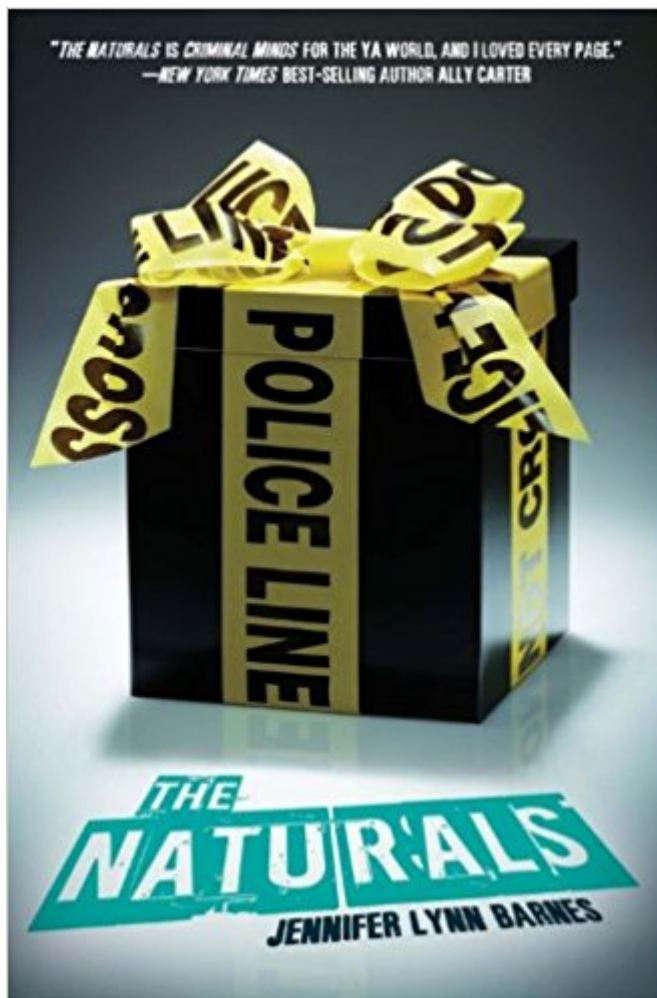


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The Naturals ((The Naturals #1))



Synopsis

Seventeen-year-old Cassie is a natural at reading people. Piecing together the tiniest details, she can tell you who you are and what you want. But, it's not a skill that she's ever taken seriously. That is, until the FBI come knocking: they've begun a classified program that uses exceptional teenagers to crack infamous cold cases, and they need Cassie. What Cassie doesn't realize is that there's more at risk than a few unsolved homicides-especially when she's sent to live with a group of teens whose gifts are as unusual as her own. Soon, it becomes clear that no one in the Naturals program is what they seem. And when a new killer strikes, danger looms close. Caught in a lethal game of cat and mouse with a killer, the Naturals are going to have to use all of their gifts just to survive. Think *The Mentalist* meets *Pretty Little Liars*-Jennifer Lynn Barnes's *The Naturals* is a gripping psychological thriller with killer appeal, a to-die-for romance, and the bones of a gritty and compelling new series. Praise for *The Naturals* "The Naturals is *Criminal Minds* for the YA world, and I loved every page." -New York Times best-selling author Ally Carter* "[A] tightly paced suspense novel that will keep readers up until the wee hours to finish." -VOYA (starred review)"This savvy thriller grabs readers right away." -Kirkus Reviews"It's a stay-up-late-to-finish kind of book, and it doesn't disappoint." -Publishers Weekly"In this high-adrenaline series opener...even a psychic won't anticipate all the twists and turns." -Booklist

Book Information

Series: The Naturals

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Disney-Hyperion; Reprint edition (October 7, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1423168313

ISBN-13: 978-1423168317

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.8 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 207 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #42,122 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Mysteries & Thrillers > Law & Crime](#) #82 in [Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Romantic](#)

[#96 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Mystery & Thriller](#)

Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-The FBI recruits Cassie Hobbes, 17, to be one of the Naturals, a group of teens with innate

crime-solving abilities. Cassie learned how to read people from her mother, a performing psychic who disappeared five years ago and is presumed to be dead. With her father overseas in the military and her large extended Italian family in Colorado, Cassie sets out on her own to Washington. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Seventeen-year-old Cassie Hobbes has always had a gift for getting into people's minds. Maybe she inherited it from her psychic mother, and maybe she would ask her mother about it if she hadn't disappeared five years ago, leaving only a bloody crime scene behind. So when tapped by the FBI to join an elite, secret team that solves cold cases related to serial killers, Cassie doesn't hesitate. Relocated to the D.C. suburbs, she meets a team of "Naturals," teens with gifts ranging from reading emotions to detecting deception, and becomes the FBI's newest profiler. In this high-adrenaline series opener, the latest spree of serial killings turns personal for Cassie when they grow increasingly more related to her mother's presumed death. And when it's obvious someone in the FBI may be involved, how can she trust or hide her emotions among the professionally trained Naturals? Grisly details and intermittent glimpses from the killer's point of view sustain the high level of suspense. Even a psychic won't anticipate all the twists and turns. Grades 8-11. --Angela Leeper --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This book is disturbingly good. I say "disturbingly" because it's like you're in a serial killer's head, which feels twisted, but fascinating at the same time. If you get squeamish about graphic violence then this might not be the best for you (it describes murder scenes, victims, etc.) but if you like an intriguing mystery that feels real, then this book has the killer hook, pacing and writing to pull it off. I'll warn you that it has some love triangle leanings, which probably aren't strictly necessary to the plot, however most of the book is focused on their abilities and the mystery aspect, so the angst is brought down to a bearable level.

Well, this was quite fun! I really enjoyed the introduction into this world Barnes has created. I'm a massive fan of Blacklist, Blindspot and a few other crime shows, especially about FBI, so this is bound to be a great series for me as it progresses. (Though I've yet to watch Criminal Minds, which Jae, Sue and Almera are probably frowning upon, but this will be a summer of binge-watching, I'm telling ya!) I think the plot could have been a little thicker? The mystery kept me guessing and I actually had another suspect in mind, but the outcome made sense; most of it at least. The

characters and their dynamics are a total sweet spot for me, though! My favorite out of the crew has to be Michael, because he managed to make me laugh and smile and his commentary is simply the best. The rest of the team is on their way of being super duper awesome too, so I really hope we get to know them more as the books go on. The romance is pretty subtle regarding the other aspects of the book. I kinda ship Cassie with (view spoiler) but I'm not opposed to the idea of Cassie and [spoiler]. I just feel like the last one is a little trope-y, but it makes sense as to why it would/should/could happen and it probably will happen, so it's prime time I get fully on board as well. (Maybe in next book, hah!) As for Cassie, she's a decent main character, though a little lackluster in the "memorable characters" department. The rest of the characters just outshine her a little, I guess. I do like her though! She isn't perfect, but that's not what I'm looking for either. She's bound to make mistakes on her journey of self-discovery (and solving the future cases), but I have a good feeling that with the help of her new-found friends she will be just fine on her path. Really intrigued to find out more and can't wait for when I have time to sit down and explore what happens next! Overall rating: 3.5 out of 5.0

This book was very entertaining, although hardly a very memorable, thought provoking novel. And that's fine, sometimes you just need a light book to read fast. I liked the premise of a group of teenagers with special profiling abilities like the team from Criminal Minds, although you'll find that for all the praises and celebration these kids' talents receive through the book, they are not as wonderful or natural as they seem to be. Maybe that's unfair of me, but when it came to the big twist at the end, you realize that when it matters they are all pretty useless. The author tries really hard to create complex characters with dark backgrounds. She succeeds at times, and fails at others. Particularly with Cassie, the protagonist. Cassie has a tragic back story and all the elements to be interesting, but she's not. In fact, I'm tempted to describe it as a clear case of a Mary Sue. As soon as she shows up in the house, the two boys in the team are of course interested in her, for no clear reason other than she's the protagonist. Then comes the biggest, annoying problem in this book: a love triangle that will clearly drag through the series with constant "I don't know what I want" from our damsel... Who likes love triangles? I find it hard to care in this case. The twist is very predictable and kind of ridiculous, but at least it opens interesting possibilities for the next book. I won't give up on these kids just yet, but I hope we can see more of their abilities put to good use and less useless teen drama.

I thought this was a very engaging book with enough suspense and suspects to keep me guessing.

Right up until the big reveal, I kept changing my mind. That speaks well for this suspense/mystery/thriller because that doesn't happen very often in a head so full of plots and predictions. I liked the characters, who represented a variety of personality types with their white, black, and gray sides. I liked the concept. No, I didn't really believe the concept could happen, but I was able to suspend disbelief and just enjoy the ride. The plot moved quickly and there were no noticeable lulls, but there were some sketchy relationships. That might be due to the fact that these kids are all suppose to be masters of deception and detection and thus made themselves really hard to read, or it might be the fact that I smelled a more than awkward love rectangle early in the game. I honestly wasn't bothered by the Anita Blake/Stephanie Plum they are going to pass each other around relationship set-up, but I would have enjoyed a more clear-cut romance. Don't want to write it myself, though, so I'll take what I can get. I particularly appreciated the fact that Cassie wasn't forced to join the team and we didn't have to listen to her sullen resentment - it is a breath of fresh air in the YA genre. She did pull some tern pouting when she didn't get her way, but nothing on the scale I expected. Overall, I enjoyed this book, and I think my high school readers will as well, particularly those who enjoy watching Criminal Minds or just interesting if implausible teens hunting murders read. Language and situations are appropriate for high school, but as an adult reader of YA, I got a kick out of it as well.

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