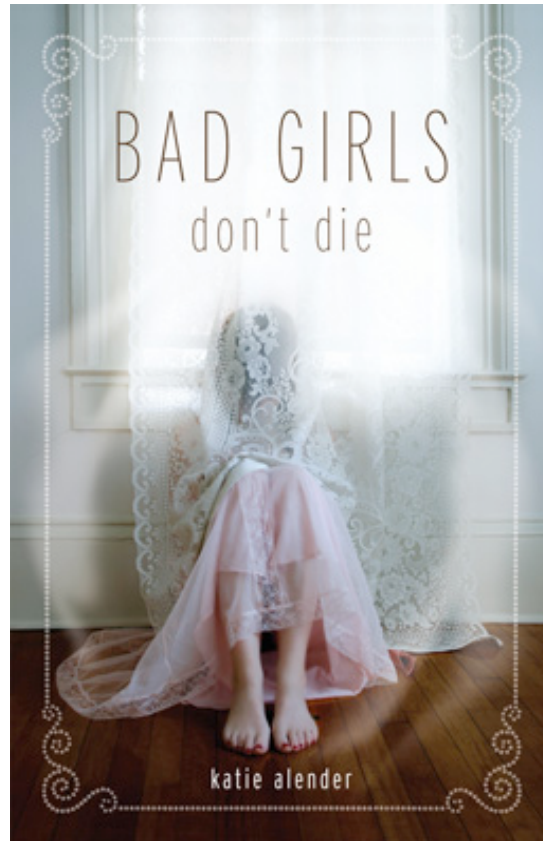


WARNING!
SERIOUS SPOILERS AHEAD!



Bad Girls Don't Die by Katie Alender
author commentary

for the Hardcover edition of the book

**** IF YOU HAVE NOT YET READ THE BOOK BUT ARE PLANNING TO,
THIS WILL RUIN A LOT OF SURPRISES FOR YOU. ****

*IF YOU ARE NOT PLANNING TO READ THE BOOK,
I AM CURIOUS AS TO WHY YOU ARE READING THIS,
BUT AT LEAST IT WON'T RUIN ANYTHING FOR YOU.*

FOR REAL, SERIOUS SPOILERS...

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PAGE	NOTE
1	Alexis has a Nikon, but when I took photography, I had a Mamiya that my stepmother had bought at a garage sale 25 years earlier. But I didn't use "Mamiya" because I don't think it's a brand many people recognize anymore.
4	My favorite pajama tops were always my parents' old tee-shirts. I don't have kids yet, but I save my old tee-shirts so they can wear them as pajamas.
10	The 80s movie I'm talking about is <i>The Breakfast Club</i> , which is rated R, which means I was only allowed to watch edited versions on cable TV, because I wasn't allowed to see R-rated movies until I was seventeen. Even the edited version is sooooo good.
13	An earlier draft of the book began with the sentence, "Pink hair is not a hat," and Alexis went on from there to explain that like a hundred people had said so to her already that day. But then I decided to add some interaction to show how people react to Alexis.
17	For some reason, when I was younger, things like seashells and little craft-store puffballs always had googly eyes glued to them, and little sticky feet. We had several around the house. Why was that worth collecting? And don't even get me started on those fancy candles that you're not supposed to light (because they burn down in like 15 minutes). I mean, is it a candle or is it not a candle?
19	I have a devil-horn headband that I basically wear every Halloween, because I always wait til the last second to try to come up with a costume. Not saying I'm as cool as Megan, but...
20	When I was little, there was a family that my family was very good friends with, and their last name was Goldberg. My primary memory of their house is a Rubik's Cube and the day the older sister got hit by a car and broke her leg.
24	I was one of four Students of the Year in eighth grade. Shockingly, it did not make me more popular with my peers. Go figure. It might have had something to do with how freakishly high I belted my denim shorts.
30	I played the tornado in <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> in fourth grade. Also, the stuff about Broadway is based on one of my friends, who is totally cooler than Lydia.
34	In high school, I was a total A/V nerd. I often directed the morning announcements. (The guy who is now my agent used to be one of our best anchors.) But nothing like this ever happened to us. Yeah, we got into trouble from time to time, but never got canceled.
36	My friend Jean is the one who started me saying, "Clearly." Jean is sad because she is not named in the acknowledgments. Maybe naming her here will soothe that wound: Jean, Jean, Jean! Thank you, Jean!

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39	I drive a shiny green Prius, too! But I got mine way after Carter had one. I actually wanted a red or blue one, but all they had was green. When I got my Prius, I learned that Carter would not “shift into park.” He would press the “PARK” button. Or, if he is like me and always forgetting to turn his car off, he would just hit the “POWER” button. When did cars turn into cell phones?
43	Isn't it awesome when boys are smart about stuff? I love this part about Carter.
48	Mr. Teeth is based on my old blue teddy bear, who never really had a name. I think I called him Blueberry, but that was only when I was old enough to know he SHOULD have a name.
49	I had to do an ancestor report in fifth grade, except I... didn't do it. And my stepmother came to my school to drive for a field trip, and the teacher was like, “When is Katie going to turn in her ancestor report?” and I got in BIG BIG trouble. Stupid tattletale teacher.
52	This is based on a dream I actually had, about standing on an island and shooting alligators. I have a lot of dreams about alligators and boats. Usually in one dream, the alligator will do something mean to me, and then in the next dream, I'll do something mean to them. Like shoot them while they float around in the water. (Disclaimer: This does not mean I advocate the shooting of alligators.)
62	At my old house, we had a ton of black widow spiders. I used to kill them with my Swiffer mop, because you could aim the swiveling head to the right angle and then smush them. The first time I ever killed one, I had gloves, a pair of pliers, a small Tupperware container, and a plastic bag. I killed the spider, used the pliers to put it in the Tupperware, put it in the plastic bag... and then... started shaking uncontrollably. So now I just call the exterminator.
65	When I was just starting seventh grade, my family moved to a new house a block away from my old house. The people who sold it to us were total slobs and left so much junk behind. Grr! I can't remember if I left in the bit about the menagerie of creepy glass animals in one of the bedrooms. But there was totally a creepy glass menagerie in my bedroom closet. And they didn't vacuum or clean or anything, and they had done a terrible job of putting in the carpet and the wallpaper and all that. The day we moved in, I just sat on the floor of my bedroom and cried.
69	Victoria's name used to be “Cassandra,” but then I realized it was too close to “Kasey” and it might get confusing.
77	Miss Cardillo is named after my first editor at Hyperion, who left publishing to go to grad school.
82	When I was in high school, I was a big fan of <i>Star Trek: The Next Generation</i> . And I could name all the episodes. But NOT all the episodes of all the spin-offs... so I'm still cooler than Devon. Right? Right?

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87	I hate falling dreams! I also hate dreams where you're supposed to be able to run but you can't. However, I have awesome floating and flying dreams.
93	See, Kasey wants them to be ruined! She did it on purpose. Well, the ghost made her do it.
95	If this were a TV show, and I mentioned Pop-Tarts, I'd probably get a ginormous box of Pop-Tarts for mentioning them. But I don't think authors get corporate kickbacks. Oh well! I prefer a more protein-based breakfast anyhow.
97	I was supposed to read <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> for eleventh-grade English, but I never did. Sorry, Ms. Kanu! I didn't read <i>Grapes of Wrath</i> either, but a few years ago, I went back and read it and loved it. So that one's resolved. I'm a big Steinbeck fan now.
98	My house had cracked orange vinyl sofas when I was a very little girl.
104	We covered Gestalt in my senior year photography class. I didn't really understand it back then, but the teacher thought my photo was okay. I'll have to see if I can find it.
108	Remember how Miss Cardillo was a tribute to my editor? Her first name was Margaret... Hence, St. Margaret.
113	I grew up in south Florida, where it's soooo hot all the time. I remember coming in from PE classes and always using the cool metal parts of the desks and chairs to help cool down. I wonder what it must have looked like, a whole classroom of kids rubbing their sweaty heads on the legs of their chairs. Ah, youth!
119	My first phone was a Snoopy phone. I gave it to my best friend Tina in eighth grade. It did, indeed, yellow with age.
122	Yes, if you are not careful with your thermostat switch, you will break it off. I learned this the hard way.
125	Kasey's teacher's name, Ms. Lewin, is a tribute to my delightful editor.
130	I really like this little vulnerable moment with Megan, where she says "she" instead of "he."
130	I had a history teacher named Ms. Makely. The man who is now my agent was her total pet. She hated everyone else, but he could get away with anything. Her class was sooooo tough, and she lectured so fast I actually invented a shorthand to take notes with. It was like a secret code. It was quite cool, actually.
133	This bubbling brook-slash-drainage ditch is based on the one at Johnny Carson Park in Burbank, CA, where my friends and I used to have picnics all the time.

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135	Someone pointed out that the bloodstains in the tile thing is also in <i>Ordinary People</i> , which is one of my favorite movies. But I hadn't watched the movie for ten years before I wrote this, and I couldn't remember that line, and getting bloodstains in your grout is a real possibility if you spill blood on said grout, so I think I came by it fairly and left it in.
138	I had to close my eyes and pucker up when I auditioned for the play <i>Tom Sawyer</i> in fifth grade, after my stunning turn (get it?) as a tornado the previous year (get it? Tornados turn). I didn't get a speaking part, and neither did my friend Tina, and the teacher had promised us that, as fifth graders, we would get speaking parts. So Tina and I went and, with great dignity, explained to the teacher that she had gone back on her word and we couldn't be part of Drama Club anymore.
143	Re: it being Mom's car. Remember what Dad's fortune cookie said? I'll wait while you go back and look. Go on, page 55. By the way, if you're writing a book report, the fortune cookies are examples of <u>foreshadowing</u> .
155	More Pop-Tarts! Pop-Tart company, are you reading this? Hello? Do you make Protein-Tarts? Meat-Tarts? Send me some of those!
157	Mr. O'Brien was my science teacher in ninth grade and my class's faculty sponsor all through high school. He was the BEST teacher. We all adored him and hung out in his classroom before school and whenever we had free time. Seriously amazing teacher. He even helped me write my article that was published in <i>Sassy Magazine</i> : "So You Want to Live on Mars?"
160	My school also had a cool security guard. I can't remember his name. Officer... somebody. Dude, security guard at an arts school. Easy job much? No wonder he was so cheerful all the time.
165	I have a cousin named Kayli and a friend named Kayli, and it's also the name I thought I invented when I wrote a book in seventh grade. I could have used "Katie," but that would be a little cheesy... don't you think?
165	Confession: I've never actually seen <i>Children of the Corn</i> . Too scary.
166	I'm a little confused by my writing here: "noises, or sounds..." uh, note to Past Katie, aren't noises and sounds the same thing? Alexis doesn't think it's weird: "of course there'd been noises, sounds..."
167	"I could be a very good pretender." I like this line a lot.
169	The name of the character in the romance novel: <i>Home Is Where the Heart Is: a Darcy Sloane Mystery</i> came from a contest I did on a website where people could win the right to name a character in my book. The winner has daughters named Darcy and Sloane. I've lost touch with her, but I hope she finds out about the book.
170	Señora Gregory is named after Tina Gregory, one of my best childhood friends, whom I've already mentioned.

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179	I have a Sweet Sixteen ring. It has a pearl. In an earlier draft, I had a line about how Pepper's ring was so expensive that she wore a cubic zirconia copy and kept the real one in a safe. But it wasn't really relevant.
182	This "jazz hands" line was one of my agent's favorite lines in the book from the beginning. I wish I knew what kind of tree it is that does that. But it totally does look like jazz hands. Is there anything prettier than a brisk, breezy fall day?
183	See? Telling the truth is often your best option. ;-)
184	I try to avoid going into too much detail about what characters look like, because I'd rather the reader decide for herself. But I always pictured Kasey as being very pretty—prettier than Alexis. And I think in this scene she'd look especially pretty.
188	The Cheshire Cat reference... at one point, someone thought this might be too obscure. I just mean that she talks in circles and never actually answers a question.
195	The "new, smaller messes" line has always been one of my favorites. It's really telling about Alexis that she just assumes she'll always end up causing trouble.
205	I really like this bit of Megan's dialogue, as a glimpse at her character: "I'm sorry, Alexis... I didn't realize you were the only person on the planet allowed to think for yourself."
206	A long time ago, Megan's grandmother was more like a stereotypical grandma—slow, shuffling, sweet, scared. But then I decided to make her a corporate shark. I think it works much better, especially when you consider how it would affect Megan's upbringing.
212	People have commented that they're surprised Mrs. Wiley would tell Alexis something she wouldn't tell Megan (about the photography). I sort of see it this way: Mrs. Wiley has specifically decided to protect Megan by not telling her anything about her mother. But she's not as guarded around others. And Alexis touched a nerve when she mentioned photography. There's a fair chance she would be thinking a lot about Shara anyway, since the anniversary of her death is that week. So she probably just got lost in her own thoughts and didn't think about what she was saying. I always pictured Shara as being a bit of a rebel; maybe Alexis even reminds Mrs. Wiley of her.
219	The leaves making scraping noises against the car used to happen to me all the time when I had my first car. It was super creepy. I guess I either haven't noticed it since then, or my cars are thicker and better made.
226	I love how Megan spends all this time at carnivals where psychics sit around in tents, LOL. Another one of those things I noticed after the fact.

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228	I have a soft spot for this bit where Alexis thinks about the stale cookies. It's scarily easy to forget about others when we get all caught up in our lives. When I was little, I used to hang out with my elderly neighbors all the time. But then there comes an age where you just have "better" things to do.
230	Am I allowed to be amused by Mary saying, "I don't know if I would say hurt, but they did die"? I am. So sue me.
233	I still remember the smell of the library in my hometown. It always seemed so cool and refreshing and huge in there. It was like a haven. Or a spaceship.
235	Ha ha ha, even as recently as the ARC (advanced review copy), the line in the news article was, "found by neighbors wandering on Whitley Street." And it hit me that it sounded like the neighbors were just wandering around on the street. Whoops! So we fixed it.
235	The article presumes she escaped out the back door, but in the flashback/dream we learn that Shara pushed her out the front door. I guess the reporter had a good reason for assuming it was the back. ;-) Totally not the author forgetting which door.
236	So. 989. The street address of a place I once worked that was pretty high on the dysfunctional scale. (I reference that in the acknowledgments, too.) Not that the place was evil, per se, but I needed a street address and that's what popped into my head.
242	Most librarians who read the book are appalled by the idea of hiding paranormal books away in a locked room, just because people think kids shouldn't read them. For the record, I think it's pretty appalling, too. (Although I totally respect parents' individual rights not to want their kids to access certain material, for the record.) Luckily, Miss Oliver is sneaky and anti-establishment enough to let Alexis see them anyway.
248	I really like this moment, when Alexis realizes that for years people have been dropping hints that her house is creepy and terrible.
250	This exchange, in fact this whole bit, is pretty telling about Claire Warren's relationship with her daughters. For dinner, she's microwaving taquitos at nine o'clock. When she speaks to Kasey, Alexis can hear right away that there's something wrong with her sister ("Kasey's emotionless staccato"), but the mom doesn't pick it up. Parents, pay attention to your children or they might turn into possessed homicidal maniacs!
251	For the record, messiness-wise, I was MUCH more of a Kasey than an Alexis. My parents used to call me "Hurricane Katie," because I could turn a clean room into a messy room in about four seconds. Still can. It's a special talent I have.
252	The movie with the kid is <i>The Shining</i> . Warning: it's scary!




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254	Confession time: what Alexis does with the paper, transferring Kasey's writing, would never work. I'm sorry. I pulled a MacGuyver here ("I'll just build a ladder out of staples and Snickers bars!") I'm admitting this because I don't want angry letters from photographers telling me I'm dumb.
256	After the final changes had gone back to Hyperion, I was sitting around one day and nearly had a panic attack when I realized that I wasn't sure if it was possible for Alexis to transfer the backwards writing to forward (normal) writing, the way the book says she does. There began an exciting (panicked) experiment with writing backwards and trying to prove it was possible. It is. Luckily.
262	I have a treasure box full of knickknacks. I've instructed my husband that if we ever have to evacuate, that box comes with us. It's just full of stuff that would seem like junk to anybody else. It's small, just the size of a shoebox, and yellow.
263	"Because home is where the heart is..." Hey, that should be italicized. Oh well. We'll fix it for the paperback.
265	I always thought this was one of the creepiest things in the book. To come out into the hallway and just find Kasey standing there, waiting. Waiting is scary.
269	Thank you for this important piece of information, helpful City Hall security guard!
277	Megan's address, 1026 Primrose Ave., is a reference to my wedding. I was married 10/26 at a place called Primrose Cottage. Seriously, when you're a writer, you run out of names for places and people and roads. Plus, it's fun to put in little inside jokes.
282	I like to think that Mary really did go see Miss Oliver. And they got to be good friends and hung out and drank tea together.
283	I suppose I could have used more inside references for the list of names, but the only one that really means anything is "Schmidt" - my maiden name.
290	The name Francine Besser used to be Francine Whitsell, after one of my long-time blog readers, Mary Witzl. But we realized pretty late on that it sounded a lot like Whitley and might imply a connection that doesn't need to exist. So I had to change it (Besser is another Hyperion editor's surname). Incidentally, when I was writing the newspaper articles, I purposely tried to make them sound like a gossipy small town newspaper rather than a larger, more dignified publication.

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291	So the indoor plumbing reference in this article ties together some of the backstory, but I guess I wasn't clear enough on it. Back when Alexis is telling the story in the basement, she sees old pipes overhead. Later, she looks closer and sees them stamped with a skull and crossbones. These are intended to be the original pipes from when the house was first built. They're marked with skulls and crossbones because they were lead, which is dangerous if ingested in high quantities (a Roman emperor named Nero went mad after drinking out of lead cups). Sarah Forsythe was just a little girl, so the lead in the water affected her cognitive functions, which is why she started talking to her doll and going crazy in the first place. The last sentence of the article refers to health and behavioral issues. Mystery solved!
295	I think blue is the coolest color for numbers on an alarm clock. Sadly, my alarm clock has red numbers and works perfectly, so there's no reason for me to get a new one. But when I do, maybe I'll get one with blue numbers... dare to dream!
307	A couple of reviews have mentioned that Alexis doesn't seem to care much that her dad is in the hospital. She never even goes to see him. In an old draft, she did, and there was a big confrontation scene with Kasey in the hospital room. But that scene turned into the scene in the bedroom where Kasey reveals her "friend" and Alexis finally realizes Kasey is possessed. And there just wasn't room in the timeline of the story for Alexis to get to the hospital. So that's why she doesn't go see him. Once she realizes Kasey is evil, she has to spend all of her time dealing with that.
308	So both Alexis and Kasey "croak" in this chapter. I'm not sorry. I find that word hilarious.
313	I hate to paint characters as "bad" or "good" or "snobby" or "rude." Lydia sort of comes across as just plain rude here, which is regrettable to me, because everyone has shades and layers. But in this case, I needed someone to move the action along. If there's a sequel, I'll give Lydia a chance to redeem herself.
313	Taylor Derry is based on a girl I know named Taylor who happens to be awesome. I wrote this character based on her and we both had a good laugh about the peace sign thing at the end. Real life Taylor would probably not go around throwing peace signs. But this is fiction.
315	I think Megan half-heartedly waving her pom-poms is kind of a funny visual. I know she's sad, but in retrospect, it's kind of funny. Or maybe just funny to me.
315	This whole sort of outcome, where the cheerleaders are helpful and the Doom Squad are kind of jerks, is not designed to make the goth kids look bad. I just had to kind of go to the extreme so Alexis could get her expectations walloped.
318	Speaking of floats, Carter, shouldn't you be on the student council float?

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323	This moment where Alexis realizes her interest in photography might have seeped into her from Shara's influence? Yeah, it took me like five drafts to make that connection.
323	If this book gets made into a movie, the doll-destroying scene is going to be my favorite scene, I just know it.
324	"Want another one?" Kasey asks. This probably came from my subconscious due to the fact that since we saw <i>Analyze This</i> , my friends and I often ask each other, "You want a fresh one?" which is one of the funniest movie lines ever. Seriously. The whole movie theatre lost it when Billy Crystal said that.
336	I get a kick out of the burning attic line. Without it, that "free" stuff would be melodrama.
339	Okay, so the bit about property values was written before the economy went kablooeey. And no offense to the Warrens, but their shiny white condo sounds a little nutty. I guess they've earned the right to decorate how they please.
342	I guess there's no reason for Megan to have short hair here. In an earlier draft, evil Kasey/Sarah cut all of Megan's hair off to avenge the doll's haircut. But that's gone, and Megan has a bob anyway.
345	Carter apparently smells amazing and always has very clean clothes. It's strange that he smells like laundry detergent here, actually, since he's presumably wearing a rented tux. Ha ha ha. Maybe he washes his hair with laundry detergent.
etc.	<p>I love my cover. It was designed by Beth Clark of Hyperion. The photo, as far as I know, is just a stock photo. A lot of people ask if I'm the model. Nope. On the ARCs, you can't tell that the title text is brown, not black. I love the brown. I love everything about the way the book looks, including the little decorations on the chapter heading pages and the shiny pink writing on the spine of the book (under the jacket).</p> <p>I think that, at its core, this book is about trusting people and making connections. It's so easy to get hurt and close yourself off to things and people. But it's important to stay open. You can still be a free-spirited, freethinking person AND give people the benefit of the doubt.</p> <p>Many thanks to Matthew Elblonk, Ari Lewin, Hallie Patterson, Margaret Cardillo, and all of the others who helped bring <i>Bad Girls</i> to life, and especially to <i>you</i>, the reader!</p> <p>  </p> <p>k.</p> <p>katie -at- katiealender -dot- com http://katiealender.com</p>