

## Not Yours to Keep

A Novel

by Zelly Ruskin



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Fiction - Suspense

336 Pages

Reviewed on 05/30/2024

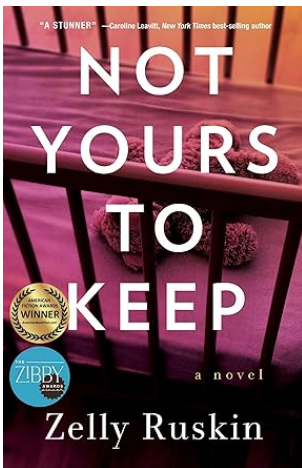
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## Book Review

**Reviewed by Asher Syed for Readers' Favorite**

In *Not Yours to Keep* by Zelly Ruskin, Billie, dealing with fertility issues, manages her work at an adoption agency. Her husband Tyler has practical worries over finances, but, despite their issues, they affirm their desire for a child. Then there's Anne, a woman haunted by dreams of her abusive father, battling alcoholism, lying to her boss, and prone to stalking. In Billie's work, Madison is a woman anguishing over possibly relinquishing her baby for adoption. Billie wants a baby, Madison has a baby, and the wheels start turning. However, the past tends to bubble up to the surface at the wrong moments, and the explosive revelations in the Billie, Tyler, Madison, and Anne quartet tie together in a horrifying action.

I was pretty sure that I knew where *Not Yours to Keep* was going to take me but was so surprised with the direction in which Zelly Ruskin spun the tale. For someone who reads a ton of novels, it felt like a masterclass in an author's ability to completely subvert expectations in the best possible way. All of Ruskin's characters are fully fleshed out, which is accomplished through both a forward-moving storyline and some flashbacks to the days of youth. Anne turned out to be the character I cared for the most, but I think much of that has to do with how visceral Ruskin made her experiences feel. It's very hard not to feel desperately sorry for her, and an example is how one single lost envelope can change the course of an entire life. Overall, this is a well-written, engrossing, and fast-paced story with a little bit of everything for readers smart enough to pick it up. Recommended.



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### Author Biography



Zelly Ruskin is a former social worker and adoption consultant. Her career, combined with her personal experience with fertility issues, inspired her novel, *Not Yours to Keep*. Zelly loves traveling, is a (sometimes) artist, and volunteers for brain aneurysm awareness. She writes women's fiction spiced with suspense about motherhood, relationships, loss and love.