‘The Fall of Lisa Bellow’ has new take on teen trauma

Abduction tale is more of a character study

Steph Cha

There are countless stories about tragic missing girls, especially the high school beauty whose disappearance haunts fictional communities all over the world. But ‘The Fall of Lisa Bellow’ (Simon & Schuster, $26) by L.L. Silana Perabo is not about this archetype.

It’s about Meredith Oliver, her less popular eighth-grade classmate, who is long dis- missed. A shy, bookish girl, she is marked down as the girl who holds the two girls hostage at a sandwich shop and then kidnaps Lisa. Like many 13-year-olds, Mer- edith is bullied with social anxiety. “Often after school she felt as if she’d just spent seven hours and fifteen minutes on stage, with two brief intermis- sions during which she sat on a stone-cold in a tiny stall, crying herself for all the missing and blown lines.”

She resents Lisa and her clique, who are her- self a “sharp-shy” whose elbows were marked down by bullies. “She’s a sharp-shy,” Meredith tells herself. “She’s a smart kid.” But she doesn’t believe it. She resents Lisa and her clique, who are her- self a “sharp-shy” whose elbows were marked down by bullies. “She’s a smart kid.” But she doesn’t believe it.

The Fall of Lisa Bellow is more character study than it is suspense novel. It’s a story about a girl who is not glamorous, who is not a beauty. It’s a story about a girl who is not glamorous, who is not a beauty. It’s a story about a girl who is not glamorous, who is not a beauty. It’s a story about a girl who is not glamorous, who is not a beauty.

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