How does a respectable young woman fall into Los Angeles hard-boiled underworld? Shadow-dodging through the glamorous world of 1950s Hollywood and its seedy flip side, Megan Abbott's debut, Die a Little, is a gem of the darkest hue. This ingenious twist on a classic noir tale tells the story of Lora King, a schoolteacher, and her brother Bill, a junior investigator with the district attorneys office. Lora's comfortable, suburban life is jarringly disrupted when Bill falls in love with a mysterious young woman named Alice Steele, a Hollywood wardrobe assistant with a murky past. Made sisters by marriage but not by choice, the bond between Lora and Alice is marred by envy and mistrust. Spurred on by inconsistencies in Alice's personal history and possibly jealous of Alice's hold on her brother, Lora finds herself lured into the dark alleys and mean streets of seamy Los Angeles. Assuming the role of amateur detective, she uncovers a shadowy world of drugs, prostitution, and ultimately, murder. Lora's fascination with Alice's sins increases in direct proportion to the escalation of her own
relationship with Mike Standish, a charmingly amoral press agent who appears to know more about his old friend Alice than he reveals. The deeper Lora digs to uncover Alice's secrets, the more her own life begins to resemble Alice's sinister past -- and present. Steeped in atmospheric suspense and voyeuristic appeal, Die a Little shines as a dark star among Hollywood lights.

**Personal Review: Die a Little: A Novel by Megan Abbott**
This is a terrific and dark read about an obsessive brother/sister relationship and the lady with a shady past who threatens it. I'm not going to make this a long review. I don't want to reveal too much, but if you like noir, you'll be rewarded with this book. It has all the seaminess and sharply drawn characters you expect to find in noir. The story is told by the sister who reveals more of her character than she realizes. The Raymond Chandler influence is obvious, especially as it's set in 1950's L.A. However, you'll also find a lot of James Cain in this. The author is indeed a student of film noir

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