

The background features a complex network of white nodes and lines, resembling a constellation or a data network. The nodes are of varying sizes and are connected by thin white lines. The background color transitions from a deep purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The text is centered and white.

Cold Waters

Written by Debbie Herbert

Published by sanmarco-sf

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Cold Waters

By Debbie Herbert

Cold Waters Mods

From USA Today bestselling author Debbie Herbert comes a thrilling story of murder and madness set in the darkest corner of Alabama. Everyone thinks fourteen-year-old Violet is a murderer. After a summer-night swim with her best friend, Ainsley, Violet is found confused, wandering in the forest—and Ainsley’s never seen again. But without a body, murder charges won’t stick, so Violet is sent away. After more than a decade in a psychiatric ward, Violet returns to her broken-down hometown of Normal, Alabama, to claim her dead mother’s inheritance and help her overworked sister care for their unstable, alcoholic father. Violet, still haunted by that night eleven years ago, endures horrific flashbacks and twisted hallucinations while townsfolk spit accusations—and for all she knows, they’re right. As the summer heats up, details of Ainsley’s fate appear like a beast’s wild eyes, watching in the darkness, and grim revelations about Violet’s family threaten to devour her. Already on the edge of madness, Violet must fight to keep her sanity long enough for the terrible truth to burst from the cold, dark waters.

Wow! To say that I like Southern Noir is an understatement and when it done well, it knocks my socks off. Cold Waters, my Amazon First Reads selection for March knocked it out of the park and into the parking lot beyond. This is one amazing chilling, twisty, dark book!

When Violet was 14 years old, tragedy struck in the town of Normal, Alabama and the town blamed Violet for its loss. A young girl vanished without a trace, the last person to see her was Violet, who was found wandering in the forest where the two often explored and went skinny dipping in the murky lake that ran through town. After being declared psychologically unwell, in a fugue state, Violet was sent to the state mental hospital. Now she has returned to Normal, in more ways than one, to claim her meager inheritance left to her by her mother, and to help her sister care for her father. But the town has not forgotten that fateful day and nothing in Normal is quite normal at all.

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As Violet attempts to recall the tragic events surrounding the night that her best friend died, it appears that someone is making sure she is unable to do so even it means she loses what little hold she has on her fragile thread of sanity. The characters that surround Violet, generally, are the most vile characters I’ve run across in literature in a long while; but, they are as realistic as I have encountered as well. I felt as if I knew each and every one of them. They are the people who border on sociopathy, and some who are outright psychopaths, who go out of their way to ensure that others fail, whose only goal is

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make sure that they come out on top. And then there are those who think they are doing the "right" thing when, in fact, everything they do worsens Violet's situation more. It is a sad thing to think that the state mental hospital might have been safest place for Violet to spend a decade of her life but with friends and family like hers, it is the truth.

I honestly thought that this was going to be a paranormal book when I selected it. The confusion with any book set in the "deep south," is that it often is difficult to separate the south's folk tales, folklore and superstition from magical realism. What they believe in is so culturally engrained into the fabric of their existence that it is who they are without question, without their realization. The superstition in Cold Waters felt like home to me. It created a darker and more believable

atmosphere for the book and for me, as a reader, because it is what I know and what I lived for the majority of my life. While this is a book about murder and solving a historic crime, ultimately it is about this poor young woman finally having the opportunity to gain strength and opportunity to stand on her own two feet with the realization that she is not any less normal than the rest of us. Cold Waters is a book I highly recommend for those who enjoy multiple genres from suspense and mystery to women's literature to noir and southern fiction. ...more

Cold Waters Book

Violet returns to Normal, Alabama after 11 years away. She returns to claim her inheritance from her deceased mother's estate and help her sister take care of their ailing father. Violet left town after her friend Ainsley went missing. The locals believe Violet killed Ainsley, and now with Violet's return home, they believe the truth will finally be revealed.

When Violet was 14 years old, she and Ainsley met up for a late night swim. That night, Violet was found confused and wandering the woods. Violet returns to Normal, Alabama after 11 years away. She returns to claim her inheritance from her deceased mother's estate and help her sister take care of their ailing father. Violet left town after her friend Ainsley went missing. The locals believe Violet killed Ainsley, and now with Violet's return home, they believe the truth will finally be revealed.

When Violet was 14 years old, she and Ainsley met up for a late night swim. That night, Violet was found confused and wandering the woods. Ainsley was never found. Violet has been in a psychiatric facility ever since. Violet doesn't remember the events of that night, but the locals believe she got away with murder. Coinciding with Violet's return home is the draining of the lake where Ainsley went missing. With speculation being that Ainsley's body may finally be found, Violet is haunted by her past and the occasional flashback of what happened that night.

This book is partly mystery about what happened to Ainsley and partly family drama. There is a lot of drama happening in Violet's life. She and her sister are not on good terms. Her father health is failing and his behavior is odd. Violet was close to her mother, but her mother's death has left her feeling alone. Also, Violet is not welcomed back into town with open arms.

This started off as a good story, but I was not feeling it by the end. It starts with a protagonist with no memory of the night that forever changed her life and a small community ready to turn on her. An unreliable narrator and a cast of unlikable characters always peaks my interest. Unfortunately, it didn't hold my interest at the end of the book. In the end, everything is wrapped up, but I was let down in how it was handled.

This was my pick for Amazon First Reads in April 2019. ...more

I have terrible luck with Amazon First Reads Books. I didn't hate COLD WATERS as much as I have previous months' choices, but I didn't like it either.

Violet's friend Ainsley disappears and Violet is suspected of her murder. She spends years in a psychiatric hospital and is now back in Normal, Alabama to help her (awful) sister care for their father who has dementia.

COLD WATERS is filled with unsavory characters from liars to mean girls (women) to sociopaths. Violet,

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who narrates a good portion of I have terrible luck with Amazon First Reads Books. I didn't hate COLD WATERS as much as I have previous months' choices, but I didn't like it either.

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COLD WATERS is filled with unsavory characters from liars to mean girls (women) to sociopaths. Violet, who narrates a good portion of the book, is the most likable.

Debbie Herbert took the plot in some interesting, but mostly predictable directions. Much of COLD WATERS is a downer, lacking tension and suspense. This is supposed to be book one in a Normal, Alabama series, though I can't imagine why a book two is needed. ...more

Cold Waters Game

I just wasn't that into it. I was all set to give it a 3, until near the end, when it turns out that every character is either: a murderer, covering up a murder, protecting a murderer, concealing evidence, planting evidence, framing innocent people, disposing of bodies, and/or stealing corpses. And these are the protagonists! And then they all live happily ever after. Hard no from me.

This Does Alabama NO Favors

Bless this author's heart, she wrote a book I'm sure exacted enormous amounts of effort, time, and determined hopes from her, and the most charitable thing I can say is "So THAT happened".

It's pretty awful.

Every sordid stereotype of inbred Alabama dysfunctional society crawls out from the dark pages of Herbert's tale. I didn't even grow up there and I'm still embarrassed for the poor place.

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Cold Waters Review

Cold waters hold secrets

This was my First Read choice for April, I love psychological suspense books so this was a no-brainer. The story goes back and forth between the disappearance of Ainsley and the present day. Violet has no memory of what happened and it has wrecked havoc on her mental health since that night.

By the end of the book many mysteries come to light, it is definitely a psychological nightmare. It's a page turner, well worth the read.

One of the worst books I've ever read

I chose this as the free kindle book and it was hugely disappointing. The story line was absurd and the characters were poorly developed. Huge waste of my time. Don't bother reading it.

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Cold Waters Wiki

Two girls go into the woods for a midnight swim but only one stumbles out incoherent and unable to remember what happened.

A decade later, a skeleton is discovered and old secrets come to light.

There were many narrators in this story which might have been confusing but actually added to the insight into the characters' psyche.

The central character earns sympathy off the top though it's unclear exactly her role in her friend's disappearance. Is she guilty or was it all an accident?

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The central character earns sympathy off the top though it's unclear exactly her role in her friend's disappearance. Is she guilty or was it all an accident?

Getting to the answer was satisfying for us as readers but oddly enough the character does not realize the truth. Interesting way to end!

...more

Charles van Buren

TOP 1000 REVIEWER

2.0 out of 5 stars

Very predictable

April 7, 2019

Format: Kindle Edition Verified Purchase

This review is of the Kindle edition:

Cold Waters

Publication date: May 1, 2019

Publisher: Thomas & Mercer

Language: English

ASIN: B07HF4SCB7

Not my usual sort of book but the author lives in Alabama and the book is set there in a town named Normal. And the description promised that the town is anything but normal. It all happens right next door in Alabama and is described by some as South Charles van Buren

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Not my usual sort of book but the author lives in Alabama and the book is set there in a town named Normal. And the description promised that the town is anything but normal. It all happens right next door in Alabama and is described by some as Southern Gothic. Free from Amazon First Reads. So why not try it? That was a mistake. A very predictable, long and hence tedious read. The only real suspense is whether the killer will get away with it. ...more

Cold Waters Virginia Class

It left a bad taste in my mouth. They kept trying to convince us the protagonist was a good person, a little too hard. Maybe she was a good person in bad circumstances, but how could she live with the way this book ended? I agree with many of the reviews - flat characters, too many tropes, badly planned and too many unbelievable twists. There weren't any characters we could like... they were all pretty despicable. SPOILERS:, but I kept expecting Violet to grow some balls and go to the police wit It left a bad taste in my mouth. They kept trying to convince us the protagonist was a good person, a little too hard. Maybe she was a good person in bad circumstances, but how could she live with the way this book ended? I agree with many of the reviews - flat characters, too many tropes, badly planned and too many unbelievable twists. There weren't any characters we could like... they were all pretty despicable. SPOILERS:, but I kept expecting Violet to grow some balls and go to the police with the few truths she knew. Ugh - I liked it up until they brought her mother back from the dead and was on her side until then... then it all just got out of control - unbelievable and no strength to any of them

Also an Amazon First Reads - Read the book in a day ...more

Unfortunately this just didn't work for me; I felt that the characters were all flat, confusing and unlikable, the twists weren't twists at all and the revelations were dull.

Cold Waters Submarines

I've wavered over how to rate this book for a few days. There was a lot to like about it but some things that I wasn't so keen on, in the end I decided to round up to four stars because it is basically a well written psychological mystery mixed with a bit of Southern gothic, and as a recipe it works well.

The main character truly frustrated me, for her inability to see through the things going on around her, but in hindsight I'm sure the author has a much better grasp on the mindset of someone in I've wavered over how to rate this book for a few days. There was a lot to like about it but some things that I wasn't so keen on, in the end I decided to round up to four stars because it is basically a well written psychological mystery mixed with a bit of Southern gothic, and as a recipe it works well.

The main character truly frustrated me, for her inability to see through the things going on around her, but in hindsight I'm sure the author has a much better grasp on the mindset of someone in her mental state than I do, so it's probably an accurate account of how she would be thinking. On the plus side it did inspire a lot of empathy, I truly felt sorry for her and angry with the people who were wronging her. There were very few "nice" people in this book. Almost everyone had an angle and was manipulating poor Violet for one reason or another.

As a mystery, it wasn't the hardest to figure out although I didn't necessarily see all the twists or complexities of the plot. It became more of a "how can this end well?" rather than a "whodunnit". That doesn't detract from the story, though, and I did enjoy it in a slightly masochistic way. Good writing, well developed if slightly melodramatic characters, and a plot that has you rooting for the underdog all make this a very worthwhile read. ...more

I'm a fast reader, but COLD WATERS by Debbie Herbert made me read like greased lightning â€” I couldn't turn the pages fast enough to find out what was going to happen next. Especially with one of the sneaky, conniving, and manipulative characters â€” the personification of evil. Twists? Yes! Characters you love to hate? Most definitely! Rooting for the underdog? Absolutely! I highly recommend this book!

Cold Waters Gameplay

The company we keep is as important as our mental state and Cold Waters is proof of this concept! "Before you diagnose yourself with depression or low self esteem, first make sure, that you are not in fact surrounded by A-holes." Sigmund Freud

Toxicity in the family, overstepping personal boundaries, crossing the line of the 'norm' is what this book capitalizes upon with a young lady accused of murder and a cover up worthy of an Oscar. It all happened when Violet was 14 in Alabama while skinny dipping The company we keep is as important as our mental state and Cold Waters is proof of this concept!

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Toxicity in the family, overstepping personal boundaries, crossing the line of the 'norm' is what this book capitalizes upon with a young lady accused of murder and a cover up worthy of an Oscar. It all happened when Violet was 14 in Alabama while skinny dipping when Ainsley her best friend fell off a cliff.

For the legal beagles this means without a body charges were not forwarded.

What was provided was inheritance after Violet was released from the psych ward which may have been the safest place for her.

It's a real problem when those around you are highly toxic and disturbed but try to create this fog that appears to take you down resulting in questioning of your own sanity.

After all she spent a decade getting treatment so it's hard to know right from wrong and truly know what she deserves.

The empathy for Violet was not present and in fact she was more the scapegoat in this narcissistic trait disordered family.

Meanwhile affairs, paternity, sexuality, and plotting one's demise all come to the forefront in this amazing new thriller by Debbie Herbert.

Thank you to Debbie, the publisher, Netgalley, and Amazon Kindle for this ARC in exchange for this honest review. ...more

As I slowly learned the truth about a troubled woman, I became totally caught up in her life where questions about the past and present keep mounting. I have read many of the prior books written by Debbie Herbert, and was thrilled to get her latest release. She has a knack for creating original plots plus unique characters, and the first story in the Normal, Alabama series is a great example of her talent. There are numerous uncertainties from the very start of COLD WATERS, and as each unknown fact is eventually divulged, my thoughts became increasingly engrossed in uncovering what actually happened that tragic night.

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When the friend of Violet Henderson disappeared one night after the two teenagers went for a forbidden swim, most folks in her hometown of Normal, Alabama thought she had more than likely killed her friend. But a crime could not be proven, and she is committed to a mental hospital because of her abnormal behavior after having no memory of that night. Eleven years later, Violet comes back home since her father is not well, and she also would like to get her share of money from when her mother passed away. What was supposed to be a short stay turns into a visit filled with disturbing recollections and revealing facts.

Colorful details let me experience the circumstances that occur in the story as though I am there, and what the characters are feelings at each moment is also made perfectly clear. Violet has been tangled up in way too many bad incidents in her life, and the events that take place when she comes back home are often extremely stressful and lead to her feeling much self-doubt. I especially felt sympathy for her when everything seemed so hopeless. With all the possibilities for what is happening, my own guesses were constantly changing. Debbie Herbert tells the situations from the point of view of various characters and different time periods, thus letting me realize what really occurred and who was involved. COLD WATERS is grippingly suspenseful with intriguing developments. ...more

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Cold Waters Update

Got this books as my March Amazon First Reads and absolutely loved it! Iâ€™m so happy with my choice! Iâ€™m not sure how thereâ€™s going to be a second book with how it ended but I guess I will wait and see.

Probably 3.5 stars. I wouldn't really call it a "thriller"... more like a mystery. It played out pretty much as expected, but was still enjoyable.