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Jennifer Jaynes

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When nineteen-year-old Tiffany Perron vanishes without a trace, the residents of rural Grand Trespass, Louisiana, launch a desperate search to find her. But few clues are unearthed, and before long another young woman disappears.

As locals continue to vanish, residents begin to discover that they might not know those closest to them as well as they had thought. Lies and insecurities quickly surface, leading everyone to question one another...and their involvement in the disappearances.

Meanwhile, an unstable, twisted killer is hiding quietly in their midst. Ever since his mother's murder four years earlier, he's been forced to raise his disturbed teenage sister. He's terrified of her—and of women in general—and his world revolves around his fear of and obsession over them.

In this *USA Today* bestselling thriller, debut novelist Jennifer Jaynes delivers a psychologically riveting page-turner that is packed with surprises and will have readers guessing to the very last page.

Revised edition: This edition of *Never Smile at Strangers* includes editorial revisions.

Never Smile at Strangers Details

Date : Published January 27th 2015 by Thomas & Mercer (first published November 16th 2011)

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Author : Jennifer Jaynes

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From Reader Review Never Smile at Strangers for online ebook

J. Kahele says

I went into this book blind, not even bothering to read the blurb. I like to do that with books, so that I only have the title to work on, it makes the story more intriguing and interesting. The prologue starts with a young boy, finding blood in his house and wondering where it came from, he glances out the window and see his mother naked in the rain...it's when I knew this was going to be a psychological thriller.

As I read, things began to get real interesting as the author delves into something that I have never seen done before, she begins the second chapter with the POV of the psycho who is bringing havoc to the small town, the killer, the kidnapper, the bad guy.

This gave me the creeps. I have read dark books, in fact, I just finished one just a few days ago and I actually didn't think I could read something more twisted than that. But this book was...very twisted. The author did a fantastic job of bringing us into a very different world, dark, twisted, frightening. Another book that will stay with me for a long time.

sue says

Never Smile at Strangers by Jennifer Minar-Jaynes

My rating: 4 of 5 stars

Let me start of by saying, I just cannot wait for book 2! I am friends with this author [Jennifer Minar-Jaynes] on Facebook, so I asked when book 2 was out. I really just can't wait to see what the next installment is going to be like. Another case? I do hope so.

Opening the first few pages and getting snuggled up to start this new thriller, I have to say, took me right into a path that I was intent on travelling down with this author and seeing what her characters were about. Part way through, I almost came unstuck, but you know, this goes to show, don't ever give up on a book if it lapses because I realized, it was allowing for my brain to catch up and reach a time in place in the story that took me to another avenue.

The bit that almost got me unstuck was when there was a chapter that I wasn't expecting with a POV from the perpetrators input. Soon as that sunk into my grey matter I was well away. Those then became the chapters that were exciting, I wanted to see what was going through his mind now, what was his past about, why is he acting this way?

The disappearance of one young person in particular took my mind to....is she dead? will they find her?

I can honestly say that I was flicking the pages of my kindle readily to keep reading this.

This is her debut novel? Really?? Is there room for improvement! Flippin' heck if this is her first thriller, my God we are in for a treat.

One of my fav thriller authors is Samantha Hayes, this author comes very close.

An author to keep an eye on.....most definitely.

I need to thank not only the author for a GREAT story but also Amazon Publishing via Net Galley for allowing me to read and leave my review of this great thriller

Keep on the edge of your seats guys

Sue says

“Never Smile At Strangers” by Jennifer Jaynes is an amazing debut Southern thriller , that combines everything that you want in a novel; mystery and suspense, intriguing characters, a great dark thriller and a believable plot. This book has everything! It is a definite winner, and the second best book I have read in 2015.

The tension remains high throughout the novel...while a twisted killer is on the loose!

Love this quote from the novel:

"You don't need to talk to someone to know them. All you need to do is watch."

This story really grabs your attention right from the start, and has you flipping the pages to see what would happen next, and discover the identity of the killer. I found that when I was sure who the killer was, I was wrong again. The author did a great job of keeping the identity of the killer a secret which not a lot of books accomplish, I usually figure it out rather early in a book, and then I'm disappointed.

But the strength of this novel lies in its believable characters, and southern language. The characters come alive as you read each small detail unfolding. The imagery is vivid and enables you to sense the atmosphere of the various meeting places. The writing style is very easy & pleasant to read. I enjoyed the point of view changing and the reader getting a new perspective with each chapter, from different POV's including the killers. The short chapter format briskly moves the story along.

If you like murder mystery and suspense you will really like this book. This novel is full of surprises and will bring you down numerous pathways...until the identity of the killer is revealed. I have already downloaded the second book in the series, “Ugly, Young Thing”, and can’t wait to start it.

Judy Collins says

NEVER SMILE AT STRANGERS, by *Jennifer Jaynes*, a riveting dark southern debut suspense psychological, mystery thriller of small-town secrets.

Set in a small southern town of Trespas, Louisiana, a young woman turns up missing; however, could there be more to come? The town was so small it was little more than a post office, filling station, ponds, diner, tackle shop, church, general store, and an RC Cola billboard. *You could only hope to escape this small town for a better life.*

Everyone has a secret; there is tragedy, evil, darkness, anger, betrayal, obsession, incest, a mysterious crush; guilt, suicide, murder. Where did it all start, as the bodies continue to go missing?

As the book opens we meet a boy, standing outside his mother's bedroom door, but there was blood, lightning and his mother naked in the yard, eyes wild. Now an angry boy turns into a man, who has to care for his sister. Is he just a normal guy living in town hiding behind a façade, who tries to be normal?

We then jump to ten years later, we meet an array of characters (*get out your score card to keep up*):

Haley, Nineteen-year-old, has dreams, they all want to escape this town of Grand Trespas. Her boyfriend is Mac. Her father was killed in an accident seven months earlier. Tiffany was encouraging her to get out more. Then there is her younger fifteen-year-old sister, Becky and her friend.

Tiffany is dating a black guy, Charles, who is infatuated with her. Tiffany was also having an affair with Tom, a professor. Haley is not thrilled with the way Tiffany treats guys. Haley knows she lies and hard to keep track. Tiffany has a secret crush. Tiffany and Charles go missing. Her mother had forbidden Tiffany from dating Charles.

Erica, a loner and recluse-- nineteen-year-old aspiring writer befriends Haley. Haley finds Erica beautiful and mysterious. Ten years earlier her mom abandoned her to escape this town. She had left Erica the person who loved her most. Why hadn't she taken her along? Now she decides to write a novel based on Tiffany's disappearance – to connect with her novelist mother. If she made her mom proud, she would have to love her.

Rachel is a thirty-six mother of two, whose professor husband, Tom had an affair with Tiffany and the entire town knows about it. Then there is Chris, who owns Luke's Diner, who's daughter Anne died two years earlier in a drowning accident. Kim, a bully and Chris' manager, and Austin, the diner's cook.

In a town of boredom, mistrust, rampant alcoholism and malaise, there is also evil –murder, dysfunction; possibly starting decades earlier, with multiple homicides. Who is the killer and what is his, or her next move as the count rises? How do they connect?

Never Smile at Strangers is dark, twisted, and chilling; the suspense high with twists and turns, keeping you guessing when things are not as they appear.

Looking forward to reading **Ugly Young Thing**, coming March 3, 2015, as we continue the saga of sixteen-year-old Allie. She has already experienced a lifetime of horror, having lost her mother and serial killer brother to mental illness- now her new life takes a devastating turn.

A special thank you to Thomas & Mercer, and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

JDCMustReadBooks

Gary says

An excellent debut novel by Jennifer Jaynes that really captured my imagination. A fast moving thriller, full of interesting characters that pulls you in and keeps you riveted to the book until the end. Another excellent recommendation from my Goodread friend Sue who keeps supplying me with great reads. I am already looking at obtaining a copy of the follow up novel 'Ugly young thing'.

Brenda says

Erica had been unhappy for a long time – back ten years to when her beloved mother disappeared. She didn't get on with her father, and since he'd brought another floozy home, she was even more disgusted and angry. She was sure her mother was in New York, famous as a writer - she was determined to follow her when she could. Erica filled her spare time writing; sitting contemplating the peace and silence of the cemetery.

Haley wasn't sure how much longer she could continue with things as they were. Her father had recently been killed in a road accident and her mother was lost in grief. So Haley was trying to bring her younger sister Beck up more or less by herself, plus keep an eye on her mother. When Haley's best friend Tiffany Perron disappeared the clues were sparse. Was she a runaway? Or had something far more sinister happened to her?

But when more disappeared, it seemed obvious to everyone that something dark had inhabited their little town. Was there a killer? And would the killer be found? Or would there be more people vanish before the truth was known?

Never Smile at Strangers by Jennifer Jaynes is this author's debut novel and a gripping and intense read it is! I thoroughly enjoyed it and raced through, finding it hard to put down. I've read the two novels after this one in The Strangers series; *Ugly Young Thing* and *Don't Say a Word* and loved them as well. I'm glad I went back to #1 and can't wait for the next in the series. Highly recommended to thriller lovers!

Jennifer Ricketts (Donnie Darko Girl) says

I won my copy of this book from the one of the giveaways here on Goodreads. I'm definitely happy I entered to win--I was rewarded with a well written, captivating story!

Both engaging and chilling, this novel pulled me in right away and never let go. I couldn't put it down, but if I absolutely had to, I wanted to get back to it right away! I absolutely had to find out what would happen next, and there were many times where the end of certain chapters had mini cliff-hangers. These uncertainties about what exactly would happen next added to the suspense building throughout the novel. Sometimes, I found myself starting to read a few pages ahead but stopped myself before I actually gave in to that temptation.

I vacillated between feeling empathy for the antagonist since she/he had obviously been abused as a child and feeling anger and disgust for what she/he had done to others. To me, that is the sign of an excellent mystery/suspense novel--when the reader is torn between contradictory emotions for the "bad guy/girl."

There are just so many shades of gray when it comes to the decisions and actions people make and why they make them. People are not necessarily all "good" or all "bad" but rather exist on a continuum between the two and have the capacity for both good deeds and evil actions.

This novel will make you think about human behavior and entertain you at the same time. For someone like me who is interested in and studied psychology, what more could I have asked for?

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

I just powered through this book!

19 year old Tiffany disappears after a fight with her boyfriend in a bar.

Locals think she has probably run off, but her best friend doesn't agree. She is afraid something bad has happened to Tiffany.

Then another girl vanishes, and relationships in the town start to crumble as lies and secrets are exposed.

This book kept me guessing right until the very end.

I have already started the second in the series.....Ugly Young Thing.

Thank you to Author Jennifer Jaynes, VIP reviews, Booklover Catlady Publicity for the gift of a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

Brenda says

I had trouble with this book. I wasn't feeling the Louisiana setting, and I'm not sure why that is. I also didn't connect with the characters. It felt, at first, like there were too many of them. The girls all seemed to blend together. I was almost halfway through, felt bored, and skipped to the last four chapters. It may be unfair of me to give a star rating because I skipped so much, but I did get the gist of the story.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

3.5 stars

This book is set in a small southern town. Full of closet drinkers and adultery. The author does a great job of describing small town life. You can almost smell the bayou coming from this books pages.

Tiffany Perron goes missing. Everyone should be spooked a bit, but teenage girls in this town may be a tad on the dull side. They still wander in the woods and hitch rides. I'm sorry. Someone goes missing in my town and my ass is packing my gun, and the cops-they virtually do nothing. Wait, this may be my town.

The characters are pretty well done in the book. There is one that I just felt the evil vibrating off of and she wasn't even the killer. (She is in the next book-woot!)

You also follow the killer's point of view in some of the chapters, I thought I had who he was figured out but I was wrong! I like when that happens. The book touches on his personal history of abuse but I would have liked more to see why he is the way he is.

Anyways, this book is not bad at all. It spooked me at several points in the story and made me lock my door.

I received an arc copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Linda Strong says

When a young woman goes missing in this small Louisiana town, everyone is torn between thinking she's run off or maybe something sinister has happened. Days pass and her family is fearing the worst. And then another young woman also goes missing.

Take your pick of suspects the married man who has had affairs with both missing women ... his wife a boyfriend? A young detective is dispatched to investigate and meanwhile, the body count goes up.

So who do you trust?

This was an excellent psychological thriller. Kept me turning pages until early morning hours. All the characters are very well defined. So many dysfunctional families in this little town. The secrets and lies that are hidden in the shadows and reluctantly show themselves.

This is definitely a page-turner packed with all kinds of suspense, surprises and will keep you guessing until the very last page.

Many thanks to the author / Booklover Catlady Publicity who furnished a digital copy in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

Alice says

3.5-4 stars

I've always been interested in watching mystery and thriller movies and tv series, but not in reading books of this genre.

Well, my interest changed a few months ago, that's why when I saw this book on NetGalley and I read the title, I knew I had to read this one.

This story is set in Grand Trespass, a small fictional town in Louisiana.

Haley Landry is having a tough time lately; her father died and she has to take care of her mother who has given up on living, and her sister.

Plus, her bestfriend Tiffany has disappeared. Everyone assumes she has simply run off with a boy, but not Haley. When another girl goes missing, they finally start investigating about it.

As the story went on, it felt like I was one of the inhabitants in this town.

At the beginning it was a little bit hard to keep track of all the characters and I found it slow, but it picked up after a while.

I loved the fact that we could read the culprit's pov, **that we could learn the reasons behind his actions.**

I figured out some things, but not the major twist. I will definitely read book two in this series. **This doesn't end on a cliffy and it can be read as a standalone.** It's currently free on Kindle Unlimited.

And please, remember this: Never smile at strangers.

Arc kindly provided by NetGalley.

PattyMacDotComma says

CHILLING MURDERS IN A STEAMY BAYOU SUMMER.

Mystery lovers, take a break from those dour, wintry, Scottish detectives and prepare to wander through the steamy bayous and backwoods of summertime Louisiana to find a girl who's disappeared – right after telling her best friend about a mysterious new fella she's a bit sweet on.

You should enjoy the visit. A dark figure lurks in the trees, dashes across moonlit yards, souvenirs things from houses, and generally adds to the odd history of this sleepy town.

We suspect abduction, because our story opens with a monstrous woman who leaves a murderous legacy - her son. The townsfolk, however, know nothing of this, so pretty much dismiss the girl as a restless runaway and get back to their gumbo and jambalaya.

We know the name of the son's sister, a teenager in a hurry to grow up and who taunts and tempts him constantly. Theirs is a peculiar, fraught relationship, and his past is so bloody that it seems she'll push him past his limit and her number will be up soon, too.

Different characters tell the story, sometimes through flashbacks or dark dreams, which help set the eerie tone.

As we meet them, mostly teen girls (who, like all teens, want to be anywhere else but home), we see they are potential targets. They hitchhike, escape to the woods, or sit alone in the cemetery. There's not a lot to do except hang out and gossip at the bar or the diner, their main crossroads during the summer school holidays. There are boyfriends, men, pickup trucks, dirt roads - everything you'd want in a Southern mystery.

There's little parental interference, because so many parents are gone, or as good as, through horrific accident, mental collapse, abandonment (disappearing to the Big Smoke to seek a career), and neglect. As the town becomes increasingly nervous about peeping-toms and stalkers and maybe a killer, the girls become more and more vulnerable.

The suspense builds, the law starts sniffing around, and the finger of suspicion points in different directions until . . . but I'll leave that to you to enjoy finding out. And I think you will.

For me, a 3 and a half star good read, especially for a debut novel, and I look forward to more from this author

Thanks so much to the author and publicist for a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

I am a new fan of Jennifer Jaynes and her writing and not without good reason. I read the second book in this series first (not realising it was a series) and whilst it was fabulous to get a bit of background from this first book linking to the second, both could be read no problem as stand-alone books.

I really enjoyed this read, ***I felt it was a bit darker and more sinister than the next book in the series and I love me some dark and sinister stuff.*** Oh yes indeed. This was a USA Today Bestselling novel and a stunning debut novel from the author. It's a really gripping series with a nice mix of psychological thrills, family dramas, secrets, creepy people, killers and crimes. It blends together in the book blender for entertaining reading.

When nineteen-year-old Tiffany Perron vanishes without a trace, the residents of rural Grand Trespass, Louisiana, launch a desperate search to find her. But few clues are unearthed, and before long another young woman disappears.

As locals continue to vanish, residents begin to discover that they might not know those closest to them as well as they had thought. Lies and insecurities quickly surface, leading everyone to question one another...and their involvement in the disappearances.

Meanwhile, an unstable, twisted killer is hiding quietly in their midst. Ever since his mother's murder four years earlier, he's been forced to raise his disturbed teenage sister. He's terrified of her—and of women in general—and his world revolves around his fear of and obsession over them.

This one had me guessing for quite some time as I played amateur armchair book detective and the author does a good job of ensuring enough twists and re-directions are in it to not have you guessing easily who is who in the game of sinister murders.

We hear from different perspectives, and by it's conclusion I realised why this worked really well in the complete picture that led to the reveal at the end of the book. It's got plenty of page turning pace, a tight and intriguing plot, as you sink yourself into a world of characters, none that you will be sure of by the last chapters of the book. Who can you trust?

I loved the sinister undertone that ripples under the surface of the book, lurking there ready to grab

your ankle and pull you under when you are going for a gentle swim in what looks like a serene environment. It's a book you can yell at "don't do that!" "run!" which is always great for waking your husband up as you read to the finish line at 3am in the morning.

The characters are very good, many flawed and plenty complex, most importantly you will change direction on many of them over and over, some of them will not be who you think they are. I guarantee it. I think the characters play a huge part in why this book is so great, they really add to the sense of the unknown.

The final chapters and the ending were fantastic, I was on the edge of my seat, well no, I was propped up in bed, but you know what I mean! I was busting for it all to come together and the author did not let me down with a wishy-washy sappy disappointing ending. She kept the tension going right to the last pages. Very nicely done.

A recommended book, read this, then straight on to the next in the series is my advice dear reader. 5 paw prints for this one from me, the lady who loves books and cats. I can't wait to read more from Jennifer Jaynes and see what else she can give us from that brilliant imagination she has.

You can find this review and lots of others as well as booky stuff on my Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/BookloverCat...>

Many thanks to the author and the publisher for a copy of this book to read and review, much appreciated.

The Pirate Ghost (Formerly known as the Curmudgeon) says

(Revised/Edited)

The Set up

In the small town of Trespass Louisiana, south of I-10 in a part of the world where small towns still exist, a beautiful young woman turns up missing with very few clues to what happened to her. As things unfold, we find that there are a lot of people in Trespass who have secrets, and a lot of people for such a small area that have suffered personal family tragedy... and one person, whose secret, involves killing, death, anger and guilt.

The Issues

A small circle of young ladies, who are not necessarily friends, but, who have faced diversity and now need to learn how to grow from adolescents into adulthood.

What Worked Well

Okay, first, I have to acknowledge that, the general feel of the small "country" town struck me as right and well done. It's just a "feeling" and sometimes authors get it right, sometimes they don't. In this case, the general small town setting worked for me. The setting reminded me of growing up in Natchitoches Louisiana in the 1970s in an era where there actually was a "wrong side of the tracks" and despite the 1959 Supreme Court Decision in "Brown Vs. the Board of Education" segregation seemed to have a natural process, even if it was rooted on fear of people with different faces and what they might do to those unlike them. This book

was not about the 1970s, but the setting was authentic enough for me to be brought home, down country roads to a place I once called home. Though by all accounts, the 17,000 residents of Natchitoches would be a booming metropolis next to Trespas, this still reminded me of current Ringgold, Castor (where my mother still lives) and Coushatta Louisiana, which may be in the northern part of the state, but, are certainly "small towns" that exist today.

Like they say in the real-estate business, it's all about "Location, Location, Location" and in this case, the "Location." is a winner.

Second, Artistic darkness and misery- I had to finish the book to see if what I was reading was "artistic", meaning there's a point to it, or a larger allegory and tableau that these sad and tragic stories were all part of. I also needed to finish the book to see if there was a point to it. Art without a point is, at best, doodling, even if its written words in a book. For me, I need to be able to sense some type of "healing" or a growing sense, as the book develops, that all these people have, gain, or learn to have some control over the quality of their existence. Had they simply found the bad guy out and returned to their "work-a-day dreary worlds" the art would have disappeared into the doodling for me. As it turned out, the art was not an illusion cast by an articulate author it really was "Art" and very enjoyable.

I think the fact that had to read the entire book before I believed in the artistic side of it and the fact that I wanted to keep going speaks to the beautiful dark side of life found in the weave of plot and story. The path to making the dark and dreary something that is good to read is sometimes a knife's edge to walk. It's easy to lose people who can only take so much emotional pain and suffering. The dark side of life as drawn in this book will not appeal to some people, it did work for me but I did have to stick with it to the end to believe it.

Characters - The characters seemed real. There are some points to make about lifestyle coming up, but the main character group, 4 young ladies leaving the lives they had as children and adolescents and trying to figure out how to grow into the adults they would become, even with all the regret and anger at their situation, still seemed like a warm, human place to be, since, you had to be in somebody's head while you read the story. I liked the underlying theme of each girl learning how find the step they needed to move from being a responsible youth to a functional adult.

Villain - I liked the way the villain was written and, the times we saw life through his eyes, thoughts and fears worked for me. There are some areas this could have been stronger bit, if I had to say worked or didn't, I'd surely want to include this character as one that "worked." There is more I liked about the villain than not.

And maybe the most subtle thing I liked, or the hardest to hang on to until the end of the book was how the characters developed into strength by making the wrong decision. Human beings learn so much more from mistakes than we learn from success. Not so much "failure" but mistakes in judgment that bring consequences that must be lived to fully understand the depth and difficulty that comes with each wrong decision.

I also like the use of a traditional third person, past tense point of view. I've finally found a couple of books where first person present tense point of view worked for me, but I was beginning to think that the FPPT was a developing trend. I'm glad to see that traditional styles can be fresh, new and authors are still happy to use them.

What Did Not Work As Well

For one, this should have been longer. I don't know how much longer, but I think the story needed more

room for the killer-mystery to develop and get resolved. I loved the detailed invitation to become immersed in the four leading ladies and how the characters felt when that happened. That did not leave enough room to develop the catch the killer plot. If I had to make a choice, I'd go with the same as the author, and work on those wonderful characters. I'd still rather have had room for some police work to be part of solving the mystery.

Not just that, the back stories for each character, if you followed them back and, like I can, imagined their plot themes to be roots, stretching into the dark soil, these roots came from the same stalk and that stalk was linked to the villain. That's not mentioning the several connections that were mentioned but not made between each leading lady and the sub-group of supporting cast around them. (I can give examples but I don't want to spoil things.)

More pages would have also allowed only adult main character the chance to do something effective at the end of the story.

That crucial connection between main characters is part of what helped me understand all this darkness and misery was really "art," not just smoke and mirrors. Much of how the character's pasts were linked did not get fully joined in the story. It's more like the author pointed at an intersection in the map and said "this is where this path joins that one" then kept on walking without showing us where and how that happened.

Characters- this was about young adults, in their late teens (18-19) mostly. (One of the main characters was clearly an adult but, I think this applies for her as well.) Too many cigarettes, not enough information about drug use (villain/villain's family) and though the door was opened for us to see alcohol as one of their bad decisions, the author did not take the few sentences needed to completely step through and explore that in a way that helped us understand the healing in the end of the story.

We also flipped between characters too much and it was easy to lose the timeline for a while.

Spiritual references were made but not realized and worked out. This may be connected to the "too short" issue, but there were some spiritual references made as well as some supernatural themes hinted it, but none of this was used. I liked where the hint came, and wanted to see more of the role these things played with Erica and Pamela and of course, the connection between Mack and Haley and Haley's father's death (and Haley's mother's belief in her father's ghost.) I liked the idea, but all we got was the vague idea, not the kind of wonderful detail other aspects of life in Trespass got.

Weak crime story- There should have been stronger characters involved in the actual police work, and we should have gotten updates through them more than we did. Erica and the Detective teaming up came too little too late and, turned out to be more of a distraction than something helpful. If not police, maybe Haley, Rachel, and Erica should have gotten more of a role in solving this thing than they had. Hell, even Huck and Finn saw Indian Joe stab that guy right?

The Bottom Line

Bottom line- This is a good story, artistic, well written and a good read. It's too dark for everyone and sexual/violent scenes/images may not be for everyone either. That said, it's still artistic in nature and a wonderful expression of how life and becoming adult is sometimes like the sun rising past the horizon turning darkness into light, weakness into courage, and hopelessness into hope. The crime story could be stronger but the strength of this story is in the lives of each character as they slide together like interlocking

fingers and the observance of success, growth from childhood to adulthood when done right is always a good read.

4 stars, not 3.5 because, even though there were issues with the story, this was well written and polished as a final product and, the overall effect of the book must be taken as a whole, to get the full, good effect. Overall, it's better than 3.5.. 4 and I look forward to the sequel...though it's overdue.
