



Cracked Hearts

Linda Masemore Pirrung

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Some cracked hearts mend . . . and some implode. For the residents of a usually quiet and peaceful neighborhood, life is about to change. Beneath the peaceful and seemingly law-abiding veneer lurks danger, violence, and a festering web of interconnected secrets, lust, and betrayal. Everyone has a secret, tucked away in a private place in their minds, safe from discovery. But dark forces at play will pry open these mental vaults, and soon no one's privacy will be protected. Hearts will shatter, lives will end, relationships will fall apart, and paranoia will sweep the shadows. Some will find perverse thrill in a forbidden love, and others will pay the price for it. Some will move from obsession to violence, and no one's life will be quite as logical as it was before. Every person who touches the life of another leaves a mark. Can neighbors Stephanie, John, and Meg help Ron, Hayley, and Dan conquer their inner demons in time? And will they ever learn the identity of the killer in their midst? Can Zach and Blythe's love survive the trauma? Does love truly conquer all—or does it destroy it?

Cracked Hearts Details

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From Reader Review Cracked Hearts for online ebook

Barbara says

This novel is about secrets, horrible secrets, and how a person can live with the helpless injustice of them. This story is complicated and messy and far from black and white / good and bad. This is about miserable people doing methodically crazy things in such a way that it not only intrigues and disgusts, but you don't know where your sympathies lie from one moment to the next. The characters are rich, well developed and relatable so much so it is hard to make a decision who you are rooting for. Normally, I don't care for books that switch back and forth from so many different characters in each chapter but in this case it was so well done and interesting and it added to the incredible suspense that I didn't care. After receiving so many recommendations, I had high expectations—Cracked Hearts lived up to them. It is loaded with suspense, mystery, love, and it tugged at my heartstrings. A book that can evoke such emotion is one to be remembered.

Suzanne says

This book is ridiculously creepy in places but as believable as if you lived it. I hated to put it down! From the beginning, the characters were completely developed and complex. At first I just couldn't believe what was happening but everything came together perfectly to keep you guessing and the surprises were endless, right down to the last shocking page. A beautifully written, fully developed piece of work!

Hope Phillips says

This complex and haunting storyline is an extraordinary high concept plot that kept me riveted throughout. It is a heart-rending, tragic and also hopeful story of unique characters, some who make poor choices and others who have been victimized and have heart breaking outcomes. This stunning suspense / thriller explores morality, desperation and loss and how damaging private sorrows of such terrible secrets can develop into frightening consequences. But it is also a portrayal of the extraordinary sustaining power of a marriage to bind two people together in love, through the most emotionally harrowing circumstances. If you like thrillers and also love stories, this is one that will keep you seated until you have finished.

Patrice Banner says

Intricate, detailed, well thought out and surprises at every turn; I couldn't put it down. This story is an insanely clever study of how people think and justify their actions and motives. It's unbelievable to think that humans can be capable of such sick, cruel and evil things described in this book. Yet, at the same time, I couldn't help but admire the brilliance of working these things in with the goodness, pure of heart and genuine decency of the characters. The inner lives of the characters are awfully robust and it's fun and interesting to peek into their minds. Not to fear, there is also a to-die-for love story in the midst. I highly recommend!

Eva Mann says

I felt every emotion possible in this book, the pain, the loss, the disappointment, the frustration, the joy, the heartache, the love, the grief, the excitement, the fear, the angst. OMG! What a story! I believed every word. It is captivating, intense, inspiring, relatable, and truly powerful and it leaves a mark on your soul that makes you reflect on your own life and how you live your life and who you associate with. I found myself questioning, what would I have done? How would I have handled this grievous situation? Who would I blame? Would I blame? There are many interesting relationships, some I wanted to jump into the pages and slap the characters senseless, others I felt such awe and admiration, envy even. This is pretty intense in places that comes with palpitations. A worthwhile read, for sure.

Sissy says

The characters were nicely developed and I loved the psychological groundwork to each character. The author introduces several stories which come together as the book progresses. The stories confront the complexities of human nature and the screwed up lives we live competing with the guise we try to render. This is proof that the "ripple effect" exists, that everything we do ripples through our lives and those around us in ways we may never know. The shocking thought-provoking ending was the icing on the cake for me. I got a bit bored when it dragged in a couple of places and the conversations got a little intense but all in all I can't see giving the book less than five stars. I will be looking for more books by this author.

Angela S. says

I'll have to say that I've never read anything quite like this! Once the reader gets past the horror displayed in this incredible novel, it is impossible to come away without feeling compassion, empathy and a little fearful of what is possible among man. Cracked Hearts is full of deep insight and intense and powerful emotions. It is an analysis of the struggle that is necessary to overcome unspeakable mental torment and it is not for the faint of heart. The dynamic between a set of parents is twisted and demented. This fact is at the root of some of the suffering displayed in this novel. A narcissist, who affirms his own self-worth by diminishing everyone else, has a deadly affect on the people around him. Why would people find it so unbelievable that someone raised in the appalling torment of hell wouldn't be a psychotic disaster? This is a book for people who struggle to break free from the dysfunctional family patterns. Emotions are raw and real. No matter how undeserving parents are, it is programmed into children that they must love their parents. Governed by all of these contradictory, conflicting feelings and emotions it magnifies the drama of real life and that's what makes exciting reading. The author dissects these lives and the reader lives them, the toxic effects of dysfunction at its best, and the emotions we're afraid to look at. There's a lot more here than this though. I didn't mean to paint such a sorrowful picture because the author also explores relationships with a delicate understanding and she has a gift for showing characters' strength without making them champions or heroes. She has an uncanny way of showing the good hidden in bad without demanding forgiveness and the bad in the good without condemnation. So much of the strength of this story is the cast of over-the-top characters, the least of which lies with the main protagonists. It depicts real life, all aspects of love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness and the balance of it. This is not in the "romance genre". I recommend it for men too. If you are a lover of idealized, fantasy love stories, you may want to look elsewhere. This is a great

conversation piece and would be a perfect book for a book club. It would inspire a lot of salacious discussion. Many issues in this book keep you motivated throughout until you reach an abrupt, to the point, nowhere else to go ending. With every turn of the page I thought I knew who the killer was, but I was wrong every time. It was a mystery until the end. The vivid descriptions made it easy to relate to the characters. I felt as if I were Steph, trapped in fear, desperate for love, yearning for appreciation and kindness. My heart was in my throat throughout this book, not knowing what to expect next, then that last page where my heart exploded! I sat in stunned silence for awhile with the book still open to the page with THE END written on it. It took time to absorb this book. I almost felt like, "Wow! Now what am I going to do?" Reading this incredible novel was an experience that I've found unequalled, so far.

Nan says

Some cracked hearts mend . . . and some implode. For the residents of a usually quiet and peaceful neighborhood, life is about to change. Beneath the peaceful and seemingly law-abiding veneer lurks danger, violence, and a festering web of interconnected secrets, lust, and betrayal. Everyone has a secret, tucked away in a private place in their minds, safe from discovery. But dark forces at play will pry open these mental vaults, and soon no one's privacy will be protected. Hearts will shatter, lives will end, relationships will fall apart, and paranoia will sweep the shadows. Some will find perverse thrill in a forbidden love, and others will pay the price for it. Some will move from obsession to violence, and no one's life will be quite as logical as it was before. Every person who touches the life of another leaves a mark. Can neighbors Stephanie, John, and Meg help Ron, Hayley, and Dan conquer their inner demons in time? And will they ever learn the identity of the killer in their midst? Can Zach and Blythe's love survive the trauma? Does love truly conquer all—or does it destroy it?

Truly thrilling in many aspects.

Georgee says

CRACKED HEARTS: is a compelling and intense novel full of fear, chills and mind-games that are truly unforgettable. There is so much dysfunction that you know there has to be trouble somewhere and is loaded with numerous thought-provoking issues. The complex moral dilemmas, the true to life, three-dimensional characters you start to think you know, set the author's writing to a level beyond what a reader expects from a "thriller". Add to that an intriguing storyline that is very tough to put down and a twisting plot that vividly brought back my own memories in my life that I had not thought about in years and you've got a bomb. This plays like true life, as unpredictable, and mysterious as that is. This novel is filled with just about everything from "A" to "Z", suspense, mystery, murder, sadness, family, forgiveness; oh yes; let's not forget love. This is truly an incredible psychological thriller.

Mia says

Cracked Hearts is such a beautiful, powerful and emotional book! This isn't an easy read but it touched me to my soul. This story really shows how people who have faced so much heartache and disappointment in life can feel again and find comfort in each other. It is intense but written sensitively. Stunning! Just stunning!

Lucy Paskell says

As all Pirring's books, this one touched my heart but also played with my mind. The plot is grave, but the author manages to weave enough wit and warmth into this story to make it a thoroughly uplifting read. This is loaded with intensely different personalities, some characters are loveable, others are eccentric then there are some over-the-top weird. This is a frightening read which describes a world of emotional collapse and the determined efforts of families to survive through a relentless attempt to maintain vital connection. The failure of a healthy family structure, endurance of a coarse, abusive father are at the core to provide an eerily subtle residue of foreboding to permeate the storyline. This is a multi-layered story of underlying terror of a murderer, and at the same time a story of freedom that more than delivers on all levels. Between comfortable households and quirky characters, living a soap opera life, try to bring some sense of stability and safety to their neighborhood. It's the story of women who don't know their own strength. There is generosity of spirit and genuine respect for the anguish of a tormented child that provide plenty of suspense, mystery, darkness and light. There were lots of characters to keep track of, but it was worth the trouble! I thoroughly enjoyed CRACKED HEARTS! It's an entertaining read, with wonderful characters, humor, and enough suspense to make you not want to put it down until you reach the last shocking page. It was an amazing and incredible story!

Laura says

I was intrigued and disturbed by the premise of the story and curious to see the end. With its many twists and turns and fascinating, imaginative writing, this novel is worth the time it takes to read it. The author captures the real feelings of loss and internal pain. As soon as you think you know where the story is leading it takes another completely unexpected turn. The main characters feel like real people, their flaws and qualities are the same as people around us and probably know so we all must beware. There were lots of wonderful things and goodness in the book too to balance the shocking parts. It was impossible for me to put down. I thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

Tini says

Cracked Hearts is quite the thriller. It is compelling and intense and complex and parts will give you chills. The characters are very real and three dimensional, some you would like as friends but, look out; watch your back and don't trust too much. I was sitting on the edge of my seat the whole way through this incredible storyline. The plot twists every time you think you've got it figured out and wham! Something else hits you in the face.

Madison Pridgen says

~*~ NEW DISCOVERIES ~*~

I discovered this one by accident having read “Explosion in Paris”. Apparently this is Pirrung’s debut novel. I’ll have to say that this one kept my heart pounding and anxious throughout. The suspense was incredible! “Cracked Hearts” is somewhat complicated and compellingly hypnotic. The pitch-perfect plot propels the story to a frenzied climax that will haunt readers long after reading the last remarkable page.

Memories—the real culprit of the turmoil—are at the heart of Pirrung’s haunting debut. Pirrung handles what could have turned into a morbid and pitiful expose, brilliantly and challenges the reader on many levels, building to a chillingly unexpected climax. An intriguingly fresh psychological thriller with down to earth real, believable people, like you may have next door, lead the reader through a taut, well-constructed and mesmerizing plot. We don’t really know anyone. Remember that. Keep your eyes and ears open. This will tantalize you with bits and pieces of the puzzle of this strange neighborhood and a dysfunctional family. Pay attention! You don’t want to miss anything! I found myself holding my breath then gasping out loud; the next thing I was teary-eyed as I feverishly absorbed every exciting word. Amazing, to say the least!

The back cover says....Every person who touches our lives leaves a mark, influencing us in some way. But, who can say what lurks in the minds of man, when there are so many tortured souls around us begging for release?

Cracked Hearts provides a glimpse into a seemingly typical suburban neighborhood of multi-faceted characters seeking acceptance, respect, kindness, significance and value. Unrequited love, romance, jealousy and murder envelop their lives and keep them on edge. Can a stay-at-home mom, Stephanie Adams, her husband, Ron, and the other residents of the neighborhood conquer their inner demons? Or will one of them continue murdering, lashing out in response to memories of childhood abuse?

Some cracked hearts mend; others can’t. The mind is the one private place where no one else can see or hear...but dark forces CAN tamper with it...

The Preface: How strong are we? Do we have the power to overcome the dark entities in our lives that threaten to steal our peace and joy?

Cracked Hearts is truly fascinating.

Madison Pridgen,
A member of Between the Lines book club

Forever_love says

This book was a great read. Never a dull moment and keeps you engaged in every chapter. From the first word of her extraordinary story, the author had me hooked. I admire her dedication to this endeavor. I can hardly believe how much I learned. I thank her for her deliciously clever sense of humor that is skillfully woven into her story among the very serious focus on dysfunction and abuse. The cover photo drew me in, first of all, but the book was amazing.

Pamela M. says

Holy Crap! What a book! This is a wonderful little sleeper. I have not been able to forget the characters. I have found it hard to let go of. It is a puzzle that left me with questions that linger. If you don't mind mental exercise, this writer is worth reading. This book does a great deal to broaden our minds and open our hearts. I was impressed by this author's writing and her ability to have me rooting for the bad guy. I was blown away by how much I enjoyed this book. Don't get me wrong. There was plenty of hate to go around but when the victim becomes an abuser, there is the "what comes first, the chicken or the egg" question. Cracked Hearts is suspenseful from start to finish. There are several plot lines going on at once and at times; if you are not careful you could get confused, also because there are many characters to keep track of, kind of like a running soap opera. The story is strong and real with the complexity of the good and bad, the love and hate and the fear and security. I also liked the writing style. When style compliments the plot, I get excited. We all know people who care for no one more than themselves and don't appreciate what they already have. Their enjoyment comes from the game of conquering the unattainable only to prove to themselves they can. I think there is just about every personality type in this neighborhood, probably not much different than any of ours. This is a difficult book to read, in places, but impossible to put down. The identity of the killer was totally unexpected and then unexpected....again! A lot of red herrings strategically placed and in parts it is truly frightening. There is action, suspense, crazy, fun characters, a few adversaries, and even a love story to die for. It's fast. It's entertaining. It's "hard to swallow" scary!

Amber says

This is a clever and bizarre read. It is very different and got my attention right away with strong and interesting characters. I enjoyed the writer's style. This gritty, spell binding story gets in your head and heart in a way that can be a little alarming. It's a book really about relationships ultimately with the underlying creepy chill of a murderer in the midst. There are lots of surprises and plenty of suspense with an ending that will leave you breathless.

Jade A. says

This story chilled me to the bone. It is an amazing story that drags you through every emotion possible. I don't typically read these kinds of books. I am more of the "happy ending" kind of a girl. It packs a powerful punch in many true to life gritty situations that need to be addressed and how source events evidence themselves in unhealthy, dangerous coping mechanisms. This is such a clever intricate plot, a spider's web of intrigue and misleading clues that have you thinking that you figured it out....but no, around the next bend you flip flop to another conclusion. I was on edge throughout experiencing toxic relationships and chilling manipulations of sociopaths, but also feeling empathy for many of the seemingly genuine characters that are made to suffer by disreputable people. Read carefully. You don't want to miss any hidden gems. Expect the unexpected.

Taylor says

Where has this one been hiding? I am glad I started this on a weekend! This was disturbing in many places and dealt with topics I normally shy away from but the reviews intrigued me. This one just really spoke to me. It will grip you from the opening scene and hold your interest until the end. It is hard to review the plot of this book without giving away any spoilers. Stephanie Adams is the main focus of the story and from the very beginning we are shown her sheer terror. Cracked Hearts features relatable flawed characters but you can't help but love them in spite of their imperfections. Their childhood experiences have shaped them in similar ways, despite their different environments. Throughout the story, the characters show a lot of personal growth over a twenty year period in terms of learning to let in the people who love them. The author has a unique way of carrying readers away into the dangerous world of her own creation and of misleading them and of making them bond with her characters, even the bad guys. The author creates masterful psychological portraits and she seems to understand perfectly the internal world of her characters. She describes, in detail, their ways of thinking and acting and she paves the way that will either lead them to their recovery or a means to an end. She showcases strong female characters with depth, which I love. It is indeed the women who rule the day in this well-crafted thriller. The stories within the story all meld into one. We see the story unfold from several different points of view and I really think that helps tell the story in a more thorough way. You get to see all the different sides come together for a more detailed reading experience. This was a fast read; you just have to know what happens next. The twists were just enough to keep you guessing, really it was perfectly executed. There are several major conflicts raging throughout the story with the lesser worries weaving in and out, helping the plot to meander towards the conclusion. I really enjoyed the writing style. The author gets inside her characters' heads and shows you what makes them tick. The narrative moves right along, making you laugh out loud sometimes and shudder in horror in others. Some characters' childhood background was beyond unimaginable to have produced a functioning adult capable of love, considering the ways in which they had come to cope. Intense and disturbing, this complex riveting page turner exposes more than we could possibly imagine as we get a glimpse into a dark, tormented world and the twisted psychological damage a parent can inflict on a child.

There are many skeletons in many closets, demons praying would be left behind. Cracked Hearts is a pulse-pounding, earth-shattering thriller that will take you on the ride of your life. But pay close attention, because not everything is as it appears.

Heck of a story, I have to admit. The author's plotting was fantastic. She had me stumped and second guessing myself up to the very last pages. The family scenes had such a ring of truth about them. I've enjoyed watching all of the relationships grow as well. And the child predator story is a real eye opener. I knew (or thought I knew) what was going on but every time I thought I had it figured out, the road twisted sharply and I had to re-think it.

Cracked Hearts is a real page turner, guaranteed to keep you reading past the time you should shut off the light. If you like suspense, you'll love this one. Do yourself a favor. DO NOT READ THE LAST PAGE before you get to it chronologically or you will ruin it for yourself! Believe me when I tell you, IT IS WORTH THE WAIT! WOW!

Lacey Palmer says

Amazing roller coaster of emotions I couldn't begin to put down at any section of the book! Allow yourself time because once you start there will not be a pause to run to the bathroom!
