



The Ice Cradle

Mary Ann Winkowski , Maureen Foley

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Sleepy Block Island seems just the place for ghost whisperer Anza O'Malley to find some much-needed peace and quiet. But with troubled spirits dead set on making their voices heard, rest is in short supply!

February 1907, Block Island. Residents of this tiny Rhode Island community awaken to a scene of tragedy: During a midnight blizzard, a New York-bound steamer carrying 157 passengers has been destroyed at sea. Volunteers rush to the beach to organize a search-and-rescue effort—but for most of the passengers, hope is already lost.

A century later, residents of the island are busy preparing for the summer season and debating the merits of a proposed wind farm near the beach. No one expects that those long-forgotten passengers may have something to say about the project, but the restless spirits are furious that their final resting place may be disturbed—and turn to Anza to help them protect it. If spirit-world preservationists aren't enough, Anza also has to face the uncomfortable possibility that her five-year-old son, Henry, has inherited her gift. And then there's that handsome fisherman whose charms are proving difficult to ignore.

What began as a simple island sojourn turns into a week of chills, thrills, and ghostly intrigue in this gripping second novel in the Ghost Files series.

The Ice Cradle Details

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From Reader Review The Ice Cradle for online ebook

Kara says

I received this book as part of the Amazon Vine program.

From the moment I began to read this book, I could not put it down. Anza is a single mother who works as a book binder. She is offered a job on Block Island to chronicle the history of the Larchmont disaster; a steamer that sank off the coast of RI killing almost 200 people. Anza also has the ability to see and speak to ghosts as well as opening the door for them to cross to the other side. This ability places her in the center of a violent wind farm debate between the pro wind-farm islanders, anti wind-farm islanders, and the ghosts determine to keep their final resting place at sea.

As a born New Englander and a lover of history, I very much enjoyed this book. The authors did a wonderful job researching the Larchmont disaster. Through the voices of the ghosts, a horrible moment in New England history comes to life. They also do an excellent job at discussing both the pros and cons of the wind-farm debate... a very heated topic among New Englanders.

This book is fast moving and hard to put down. The book is wonderfully written. I would recommend it to any lover of mystery, suspense, and the paranormal. I can't wait to read more books by the authors.

Sally says

The main character is a book binder - what a fantasy job! That drew me in. This book is by a paranormal investigator who was the consultant for the CBS series "Ghost Whisperer." That was one of those shows on my viewing schedule.

The setting - Block Island off Rhode Island - I want to go.

A romance buds.

Dave says

"The Ice Cradle" is the second novel from "The Ghost Files", a series of novels by Mary Ann Winkowski and Maureen Foley. These novels are about Anza O'Malley, who is a ghost whisperer that can see and speak with ghosts, and even has the ability to open a portal to allow them to cross over. Not too surprisingly, there is a lot in common with this type of story and the TV series "The Ghost Whisperer", as Mary Ann Winkowski is a consultant for the series. I did not read the first book in the series, "The Book of Illumination", so I cannot compare the two, but as this book is supposed to be a stand-alone novel, that was not a big concern.

The premise of how Anza interacts with the ghosts will be familiar to anyone who has seen the TV series. For myself, I found it too much like the series and felt the authors should have differentiated it more, after all it is not a book affiliated with the series. The story itself is rather bland. Anza takes a job putting together a book about a ship disaster in Rhode Island. She moves temporarily to Block Island to work with the museum there to pull together the resources, and gets involved with the lives of the people she works and lives with,

as well as the politics of the island. Needless to say, there are several ghosts she has to deal with as well, principally a young girl (Viveka Riegler – a.k.a. Vivi) who befriends her son Henry, and Baden whose brother's great-grandson owns The Grand View Hotel where Anza is staying during her time on the island.

The ship disaster has produced a large number of ghosts, but Anza only interacts with a few. Far too much effort is spent on describing very small details in Anza's life and her inner thoughts which often don't move the story forward. This is the biggest problem with the book, and something which the authors need to work on to make their novels more interesting and worth reading. Another problem is with the reactions of others when Anza finds it necessary to discuss her supernatural ability. I found it rather unbelievable that people would have such small reactions to such a claim. As it stands, I would only recommend this book to those who are very interested in this type of ghost story, and frankly I believe one would get more entertainment out of one of the episodes of "The Ghost Whisperer" than they would with this novel, and I am one who usually prefers the written word to TV or the movies.

Tracey Allen at Carpe Librum says

The Ice Cradle is the second in the Ghost Files series by authors Mary Ann Winkowski and Maureen Foley; the first being The Book of Illumination. Anza O'Malley and her son Henry return in this novel, when Anza accepts a bookbinding commission on a small island community, Block Island.

One of the elements I really like about this series is the main character's occupation of bookbinder. Weaved throughout the story are references to bookbinding techniques and materials that are irresistible to book-lovers and bibliophiles.

Anza has been hired to preserve, bind and exhibit the letters, reports, photographs and artefacts surrounding the sinking in 1907 of the passenger steamship Larchmont just off the coast of Block Island. Of the 200 passengers, only 19 survived and those with an interest in preserving history will enjoy these elements of the story.

When Anza arrives, she walks into an island divided over wind turbines. She learns that half of the island's residents are in favour of the construction, the other half against, and an ghost informs her that they plan to build the turbines right where the wreckage of the Larchmont lies on the seabed!

All this is happening at the same time her young son sees his first ghost, and Anza is trying to find reasons local fisherman doesn't stack up to Henry's Dad.

This is a fabulous read, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, although you will need to be open to paranormal themes to enjoy this one. The Ice Cradle is terrific as a second installation in the series but also works as a stand alone novel. Light and easy, with a feel good ending, most readers will enjoy this one. I look forward to the next in the series!

Cheryl says

Anza O'Malley and her six year old son, Henry live in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Anza works at home as a

book binder. While this job sounds interesting it does not pay much. So when Anza receives a telephone call from Caleb Wilder with the Historical Society, Anza is all ears. Caleb wants Anza to research a tragic accident that took place back in 1907.

There was a steamer called Larchmont that was traveling from Providence to New York City. The steamer crashed with a schooner, The Harry Knowlton. Most of the passengers aboard perished. While researching the crash, Anza's son, Henry meets a little girl by the name of Viveka "Vivi" Riegler. Vivi was a passenger on the Larchmont.

The Ice Cradle: A Novel from the Ghost Files is book two in this series. It can be read and enjoyed as a stand alone novel. This book was better than I had hoped it would be. If you are expecting scary than look else where. Though if you are looking for a mystery mixed with a bit of Titanic and the Ghost Whisper than this book is worth your time. I like that Anza just didn't communicate with ghosts but she also had the ability to help them pass to the other side. This book kept me intrigued the whole way. Though to be honest I actually could have done without the romance. Luckily there was not a lot of romance happening in this book. It just felt like it was forced some that Anza needed to be attracted to someone. Overall, I did enjoy this book. I plan to check out book one, The Book of Illumination: A Novel from the Ghost Files.

Kelly says

Using the real-life Larchmont disaster as background, Mary Ann Winkowski and Maureen Foley tell the story of a modern woman, Anza, who travels to picturesque Block Island to assemble the records of the shipwreck into a cohesive whole. Anza also has the ability to see ghosts and help them cross over. When she arrives on the haunted island with her young son in tow, she finds plenty of lost souls in need of her talents and a contentious political battle over a proposed wind farm planned for the island.

I thought *The Ice Cradle* sounded good based on the summary, but I found myself unable to really get into it. To begin with, the writing is stilted and lingers too long over dull details. For example, at one point Anza hears someone using a chainsaw and it reminds her of a dentist's drill and she muses about how she needs to make an appointment with her dentist. There's no reason this detail needs to be there. It's not Chekhov's Chainsaw--no one turns out to be committing chainsaw murders with it or anything--and it has no purpose in the story.

Another problem is that the tension is not paced well. The stakes feel higher at the beginning than they do at the end. If the authors wanted to create a sense of danger, they would have been better off placing the arson later in the story or following it up with an even more frightening occurrence. (I guess I'm supposed to see her son playing on the rocks as such, but it's not really a part of the competing-agendas plot. It's just regular old carelessness.) Instead of building up, the tension fizzles as the story progresses, to be replaced with politics and with a tepid romance.

Finally, Anza is an annoying character with whom to spend nearly 300 pages. She has strong opinions, and any event in the novel is a possible soapbox to her. She talks about her tendency to lecture about the evils of things like fast food and corn syrup, and in the process gives the lecture to the reader. I run into enough lecture-y people in real life that it's tiring to read the first-person narrative of someone with that personality type. Other musings are even more off-putting, such as when she meets her love interest, who is Latino, and notes that he reminds her of one of the exotic natives in an offensive fashion shoot. She then tells the reader

how offensive the fashion shoots are...but that's still what she thought of when she looked at him! She also comes off like a much older woman than she actually is. When her age is finally mentioned just before the end of the book--"almost thirty"--I was surprised. The narrative voice gives a very different impression.

There are a few bright spots; I really felt for the young man who went down on the ship on his way to propose to his sweetheart, and I got a little misty-eyed when he reappeared toward the novel's end and found some resolution. Overall, though, *The Ice Cradle* was a cross between pedantic and dry.

Staggerlee337 says

An easy read. If it weren't for the gardening, I'd have read this in one sitting instead of 2. A cute little story. But I was a little disappointed that the landscape painted wasn't true to the island. It gave the indication that the wreck was at the Southeast Lighthouse, but the wind farm was actually installed at the North Light. The bar (The Pier?) and the B&B, and the pizza place... well, it didn't need to be so fictionalized. But to those who've never been there, no harm, no foul.

Charlie says

Fans of the hit TV series *Ghost Whisperer* will love *The Ice Cradle*. Mary Ann Winkowski is a consultant for the show and also the co-author of this incredible story. *Ice Cradle* has it all and without doubt covers several genres including: historical, paranormal, romance, political, environmental and mystery. It is also a clean read that is suitable for a broad range of ages. This is more than a paranormal investigation story. Thematically, it appeals to a reader on several levels. The historical elements provide a background to the haunting, but also raise the debate about disrupting burial sites for the sake of progress – or in this case, developing wind energy. Should the past trump the future? How should the living honor the dead? Anza O'Malley's gift reminds us that what is important varies person to person, and although we have good intentions, sometimes a compromise is the best we can hope to accomplish. There are no good and bad guys, but a string of events, interests and perceptions all interacting and colliding on many planes, at the same time. *Ice Cradle* is a complex story that reads easy and is entirely entertaining while at the same time being thought provoking. This is a difficult task to achieve, but Winkowski and Foley have done it!

Heather Hnatko says

This book sounded like a very interesting read. I thought it started off rather well, but about mid-way I lost a bit of interest when the main character seemed more interested in making out with the "cute boy" than the fact that she was trying to communicate with the local ghosts! It just seemed a bit far fetched for her to fall so quick for someone she just met and then she lost all interest in the whole reason I chose the book to begin with. I was quite disappointed with the ending as it just led up to nothing and then was done. I think the ending could have been much more exciting.

Xochilt says

It was pretty slow going for most of the book which was good and bad. It was bad because I found myself not caring about Anza or her precocious toddler a lot. But it was good because sometimes a slower pace is much appreciated and I found myself fantasizing about staying in a bed & breakfast myself.

I found Bert pushy and annoying at first but by the end, their romance was touching.

I absolutely adored everyone else. Especially the ghosts.

It was a fine solid read. Can't complain too much. I will be reading the next one, hoping we hear more from the characters we met in this one.

Amy Corwin says

This book probably deserves a better review from a different reviewer. As we all know, some books resonate with us and others do not, and it's not necessarily the fault of the writer.

In *The Ice Cradle*, Anza is a single mom, book binder, and ghost whisperer. She has the ability to see ghosts and help them cross-over to wherever it is they should go when they die.

Anza is overjoyed when she gets a call from the Block Island Historical Society. They have papers and memorabilia from the wreck of a steamer ship, the *Larchmont*, which went down off the coast of the island in 1907. Sadly, nearly 150 passengers lost their lives in the tragedy. The historical society wants Anza to sort through the material and come up with a strategy for preserving and displaying it to island visitors.

Unfortunately, there are plans to set up bird-blenders, uh, sorry, that is, create a wind-farm on the island that would disturb the resting place of many of the spirits of the dead from the *Larchmont*. The ghosts are upset, not to mention the humans on the island who are fighting over whether to set up the wind-farm and destroy the history and views from the island, or remain "as-is".

So as you might expect, Block Island is positively infested with ghosts. But then, Anza sees ghosts everywhere, on and off Block Island, so the presence of ghosts is hardly surprising and not at all scary. LOL. In fact, that was my first inkling that this book wasn't for me. It's hard to find the shivery element if there are ghosts wandering around everywhere and if said ghosts just need to be sent over to the big beyond. I was really hoping for a bit of a scare or two, so if you're hoping for an eerie ghost story, this is not for you. Here, ghosts are just sort of transparent people. They are characters with a bit of pathos who need to move on.

My other issue was the general preachiness. There were a lot of passages that felt like lectures on politically correct topics. Not that I'm against PC and am some sort of raging conservative, but when I read a book, I'd rather not experience the sensation of being lectured on being PC. While much of the material and some of the historical tidbits were interesting, they were presented in a manner that slowed the story down to a crawl.

That's what I mean when I say I was probably not the right reader for this book. Anza was a delightful character and I enjoyed the depiction of her son. The writing (other than the lecturing paragraphs) was tight and well done. I think I just expected a different kind of book based upon the summary.

Corey says

This novel follows the story of Anza, whom can see and communicate with ghosts as she travels with her son Henry to Block Island in Rhode Island to help put together a book on the Larchmont wreck which took place there in 1907.

I was intrigued by the novel's premise on Amazon and on the back of the book when I received it. I was worried though that it was lend itself to being too campy or overly done, as so many books are that deal with the supernatural. This novel however took me by surprise and overcame my apprehension about it and was in fact a really good - and quick - read. It was very hard to put this novel down.

I think what I liked best about this novel, besides the amazing character development and the believable handling of the ghost aspect is that the story of the Larchmont wreck isn't one that the authors made up, it is a true shipwreck that happened as described in this book. I don't know if the artifacts that the heroine talks about in the novel are real (namely photographs) but most of what is discussed seems to be based on true facts, which is so refreshing. It also makes me wish that they expanded a bit on the history of the Larchmont and the survivors and victims as it seems to be a heartbreaking but interesting story.

The ending is a bit open ended - closed enough to be settled for the novel but open enough for me to hope that there are future books with Anza.

Darlene Ferland says

I had never had this book on my radar and that's a shame! Mary Ann Winkowski has written a very interesting novel. I was glued to this book and was so sad when I reached the last page. The story is filled with ghosts from the sinking of the Larchmont off the coast of Block Island, Rhode Island. I can't wait to read her first book.

Ken says

Who you gonna call? A ghost writer, I hope.

Anyway, this is the story of a ghost whisperer. If you think the Dog Whisperer is a fraud as I do, then you might find healthy competition here from Anza O'Malley, who is 1-800-Ghostcalled to Block Island (Rhode Island, for those who only know about Martha and her nearby Vineyard).

Anyway, Block is hopping with spirits -- pissed off spirits (hell hath no fury like...). Bad enough that their ship sank in 1907 while most of them were sleeping (some dream!), but now some pinko liberal Democrats want to build a WIND FARM out on their ancient briny burial grounds.

In a word: nerve.

So who you gonna call? A weird plotting tag team, apparently. Anza comes from a family with the calling,

you see. Granny had it, and now her little Henry has it. Henry even becomes best buds with a little girl ghost who went down in the Larchwood (that'd be the ship that sank).

Meanwhile, a TV crew is coming in -- real rogues who make up ghosts for sensations sake. Infidels!

Meanwhile, Anza thinks she is falling in love with a native Blockhead (named Bert, of all things).

Meanwhile, one stately ghost is helping Anza -- nothing like a mole, I always say.

Interesting, if you like ghosts I guess. But quite tepid, overall. For some reason, it comes off like a book report. It's just there. Or it was a minute ago! (Wait, I no longer know if I'm talking about spectres or books, so perhaps it's best that we cross over into the light, the big, beautiful light that's known as "The End")....

Lee says

I wanted to like this book, but found the multiple story threads far too distracting. It didn't help matters any that I couldn't bring myself to care about the heroine.
