



Dead Secret

Ava McCarthy

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From the author of the Harry Martinez thrillers comes a gripping psychological suspense novel. Perfect for fans of Elizabeth Haynes and Gone Girl.

Two quick shots. One for him. One for you.

After the death of her three-year-old daughter, Jodie has nothing left to live for – or almost nothing.

She has one task to fulfil before she takes her own life. And that's to kill the man she holds responsible for her daughter's death – her seemingly perfect husband, Ethan.

But Ethan is hiding more than just his true nature. And as more horrifying secrets from his past emerge, Jodie's strength will be pushed to the limit...

Dead Secret Details

Date : Published January 14th 2016 by Harper (first published January 7th 2016)

ISBN :

Author : Ava McCarthy

Format : Kindle Edition 368 pages

Genre : Thriller, Mystery, Crime, Psychological Thriller

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From Reader Review Dead Secret for online ebook

Joanne Robertson says

This was the first book I had read by this author and it certainly won't be the last! It was a fabulous fast paced novel with a killer plot that came as a real surprise to me and that doesn't happen often.

Jodie feels like life shouldn't go on after the loss of her 3 year old daughter so plans to kill her controlling husband and then herself. Her suicide fails though and she finds herself in prison for her husband's murder. After a couple of years a journalist contacts her-with information that makes Jodie reassess everything she believes in. Jodie is a fabulous character-feisty, strong and courageous. She sets off on a single minded quest for answers with Novak, a washed up reporter with his own personal problems. This would make a great screenplay-murder, prison, shocking disclosures and fabulous locations-what more could you ask for? I could visualise it all.

A highly recommended 4* for this great thriller and I think it will be one of the big bestsellers in 2016. I received a copy of the book via netgalley in return for an unbiased review.

Dominique says

Abby, her three year old daughter is dead. Jodie wants to end her life but she has one more thing she has to do: kill the person responsible for her daughter's death, her husband Ethan. She succeeds but she's still alive and now in jail. While in prison, she discovers that Ethan had a lot of secrets and Jodie will try discover who her husband really was.

Jodie is a great character. In the beginning she was weak because she had nothing to live for but then she became this strong heroine who you had to root for until the end. She lived in a town where people respected her husband and when she tried to get help, her charming husband made sure that the town would turn their back on her.

Novak, a journalist who has been hounding her for awhile to speak to her gets a chance to give a piece of information that makes her go forward in her quest for the truth. Even though Novak has some personal problems, he's there to help her and the pairing of these two characters was perfect.

This book has violence especially abuse, this kind of story can happen to anyone, which might upset some readers but it was integral for the story to understand some of the characters.

It was a gripping, thrilling book. The writing was on point. Some parts were a little bit slow but then it became this fast paced thriller that you couldn't let go. A lot of twists happen, some are predictable but most of them were total surprises. This is a dark story and you feel if for the moment that you start reading it, her description of the characters and the setting made the book more real and easy to visualize.

This was my first time reading Ava McCarthy and she did not disappoint.

sue says

What and absolute crazy ride. This pulled me in and spat me out. I was so engrossed I didn't realize the clock ticking away and nothing was getting done at home.

This story had me literally sunk right into its pages.

There is nothing more thrilling than me to find a story of a child missing or kidnapped or whatever in a story because I just **know** there are going to be all kinds of emotions coming to the fore, not only for the characters but for **me too** and this surely happened whilst reading this.

The twist in its tail was spine chilling.

As you can see, I am certainly not going to write anything about the book that hasn't already been covers or spoil it for anyone.

The author is such a fab story teller I can't wait for more books from her.

My thanks to HarperCollins UK, HarperFiction/Blue Door via Net Galley for my copy.

Kerry says

Wow! Ava McCarthy really knows how to keep a reader in suspense!

Dead Secret begins with Jodie deciding she's going to kill her controlling husband, Ethan, then kill herself. She has nothing left to live for as Ethan killed their 3 year old daughter - his way of punishing her for threatening to leave him. He could have killed her, but he knows that taking away her daughter is the most effective way of making her suffer for the rest of her life.

I immediately sympathised with Jodie. As a mother I can imagine the pain she must have been in. I wouldn't want to live either.

However, Jodie's suicide is unsuccessful so she find herself in prison for murdering her husband. She is determined to end it though, just as soon as she gets the chance. That is until she gets a visit from a journalist called Novak.....

This book kept me glued to my Paperwhite every chance I got. I was rooting for Jodie the whole time, desperate to find out the truth as much as she is. I did guess part of what was coming and I thought I had it sussed, but I was so wrong. A shocking twist towards the end. I was gobsmacked!

The final pages had me in tears. Just brilliant!

I highly recommend to anyone who likes an excellent psychological suspense novel.

I will be adding Ava's other books to my to-be-read list.

Many thanks to the author, publisher and Netgalley for my kindle copy.

<https://chataboutbooks.wordpress.com/...>

Janet says

Thank you to Netgalley for an ARC copy of this book in return for an honest review.

Ethan, Jodie and little Abby an apparently typical family but behind closed doors all is not as it seems.

Ethan is a top lawyer, suave and good looking but also controlling and manipulative. Their marriage is breaking down, Jodie wants a divorce but when Ethan finds out her plans he murders their little girl. No

longer able to carry on and with seemingly no other option she takes a gun and goes after the man she once loved...

The twists and turns within this book will have you reeling but thoroughly gripped. The quality of the writing takes you to where Jodie is, you feel every emotion.

Will all the secrets come tumbling out and if they do, are you really ready to face them?

Amazingly I've never read anything by this author before, I need to rectify that.

Breakaway Reviewers says

Some characters are truly evil but McCarthy takes it to a totally new level

I absolutely love Ava McCarthy's novels; when it comes to crime thrillers she really delivers and this is no exception.

The book opens with Jodie McCall loading her husband Ethan's gun, prior to shooting him in the head, after which she plans to kill herself. The scene is set with Jodie going to intercept her husband at the 4th July fireworks and her interactions as she encounters neighbours are not friendly; people are suspicious of her, branding her as having 'lost it'. It is generally believed that Jodie needs help.

They are right, she does need help, but not the kind Ethan tries to impose on her. Jodie is damaged by her early life as an orphan passed from one foster home to another, where she is abused, and never believed. With Ethan she believes she has found love and a safe life with a good man. But Ethan changes when their daughter Abby is born, and Jodie finds herself in a whole new hell where her daughter is used against her until something truly evil, truly monstrous takes place and she believes her only option is to kill her husband.

In part two the story moves to the prison where she is serving a life sentence for murder and is trying to stockpile painkillers to kill herself. She can see no future until she agrees to meet with a journalist, Matt Novak, who brings her a shocking revelation which changes everything.

I didn't just love this book, I LOVED it and couldn't put it down. McCarthy has drawn full characters which come right off the page. You can feel the evil, the pain, the hopelessness, the loss and the hate. You just have to keep on reading, missing meals, bedtime and other unnecessary distractions. It is a book you have to get to the end of but don't want to finish.

It really is that good and I fully recommend it if you have a couple of free days to lock yourself away from the world and immerse yourself. Even if you haven't got the time, do what you must, take a sickie, palm the kids off on the grandparents, develop a deadly disease but READ IT!!!!

Pashtpaws

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review

Maha says

This is one of the most distinguished mystery thrillers I read. The book starts with the very deep and profound grief of Jodie, the wife of a very self-centered controlling husband Ethan. She is in such a disturbed

state that nothing matters to her anymore. Having lost all that matters to her, she is focused on one thing – REVENGE – and she is determined to do it now taking her own life too as a finale for that sad revenge. Now, things don't quite go as planned and Jodie has to face the aftermath of her revenge action in prison. While Jodie still has no reason to go on, she is focused on one thing. That is completing what she failed on the previous time. Taking her own life. She can endure anything to reach that goal.

However, a sudden visit by a young reporter, whom she was very unwilling to meet at first, changes everything. Ethan, as monstrous as she thought he was, still had a darker side that she never knew. Suddenly her reasons to end her own life become her every reason to live. Jodie is now determined to get to the bottom of those secrets at any cost. Her revenge should be complete and she can't do that before getting to the whole truth. In a series of events, the plot unfolds taking you through much unexpected twists and turns. Yet there is still a very dark secret - the darkest secret that Jodie has to face.

I really loved and enjoyed this mystery thriller. You might think that the plot has nothing new. I might agree that there are other thrillers having the same start. Yet, the brilliance of this thriller is in the fact that Ava McCarthy managed to come out with a very unique thriller out of a plot that might seem at first a common one. What I loved about this thriller other than the plot – which I loved so much – was Ava's storytelling. Ava is very talented at planning her twists and turns. She knows exactly how and when to come up with a twist and reveal a secret. She held my interest right from the start. I couldn't even blink. So many times I thought to myself I was smart enough to expect what comes next. Yet, I was wrong. Ava took me by surprise. I never saw it coming.

From my point of view, this is a very interesting fast paced thriller. A real page turner. I think it can be one of the best thrillers in 2016.

** Special thanks to HarperCollins UK, HarperFiction and NetGalley for supplying my copy of this book in exchange for an honest and unbiased review **

Tracy Fenton says

A fast paced thriller which I read in a day.

Stephen Donovan says

A thriller which unravels into something truly remarkable. The twists were unbelievable. This book ended up flooring me (metaphorically, of course).

Lee says

I had not heard of Ava McCarthy before picking up this book but I will definitely keep my eye out for more of her work, as a first time author she has done an excellent job with this story.

Jodie is a very tormented soul and living every mother's nightmare, her husband Ethan has killed her 3 year old daughter after she stated she intended to leave him and his abuse. Ethan is a narcissistic and truly evil person, Jodie makes a decision to take his life and then her own. Jodie's courage will be paramount as this story unfolds as Ethan still has many secrets that Jodie is not aware of and there is more tragedy ahead. This book just keeps throwing things at you, the tension and suspense of the story continue from beginning to

end, an excellent read.

Kelly (purplebookstand) says

Dead Secret

Thank you to Netgalley and HarperCollins Uk for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Wow!!

I finished this book very fast, I couldn't put it down. I read while cooking, cleaning, ironing....!! I have never read anything by this author before but this won't be the last book I read of hers.

Dead Secret tells the story of Jodie, a young woman who decides to take the ultimate revenge on her torturous husband, after she discovers that he is responsible for the death of their daughter.

As Jodie's story progresses, you find yourself experiencing the numerous twists and turns with her. This is an intense read that had me holding my breath more times than I can remember! The author really draws you in to Jodie's world, it makes you feel a whole host of emotions with her, even now I am still thinking about Jodie!

This book has twists and turns that just keep coming. A couple of them I saw coming, but the majority I didn't, and the ending absolutely blew me away. Ava McCarthy deserves to have a huge hit with this book, a psychological thriller well worth picking up! 5* plus from me!

Sara Kettleborough says

When I begun Dead Secret, I hadn't paid too much attention to the blurb, which I was really grateful for when reading this as I think it really added to the mysterious and thrilling nature of the novel – I really had no idea what to expect or what was coming! I was literally on the edge of my seat reading this novel and managed to plough through it in just a couple of hours.

I really warmed to the main character and I was so hoping she hadn't committed the crime she supposedly had. I really sympathised with her and the predicament in which she found herself. I was on her side throughout and I really cared that she was okay! This is not a common emotion for me as a reader and I think it really marks the talent of an author to inflict such strong emotions towards their protagonists in the reader.

The only less positive thing I felt about the novel was regarding the ending. I wasn't too sure how I felt about it.. I don't know if it perhaps felt less authentic than I was hoping or it's just I was expecting something else, but it just didn't feel quite right to me. Although I did like that I was caught off guard, whether I liked it or not!

I would, and have already(!), recommend this to anyone who usually likes a page turning thriller that's impossible to put down! Many thanks to the author and publisher for allowing me to read and review a copy

of this novel for my blog.

<https://sarakettleborough.wordpress.c...>

Laura says

Reviewed on www.snazzybooks.com

Dead Secret by Ava McCarthy combines suspense, mystery and action to create a really great debut novel. I was so impressed at Ava McCarthy's writing throughout this novel; although I don't have children myself the writing made me put myself in her shoes and imagine what she must be feeling. Jodie's desperation at times was really powerful and I truly hated her husband the more I read about how he treated her. McCarthy portrayed this behaviour in what I imagine is a very convincing way, and managed to create realistic characters that I wanted to read more about, and cared what happened to. I felt that the ending was also well-written, satisfying and quite plausible too.

The storyline moves along at a good pace and really kept my interest- I didn't want to put it down! It had enough twists and turns to surprise me, without straying too far into unbelievable territory. I can't say much more as I don't want to ruin any of it for future readers!

Overall I am hugely impressed with *Dead Secret* and am looking forward to reading more by this author- if other work is anywhere near as good as this one then I'm sold! :)

Many thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for providing a copy of this novel in return for an honest review.

The Book Review Café says

This is the first book I have read by Eva McCarthy, but it certainly won't be my last! *Dead secrets* is one of those books that pulls you in from the opening chapter. It's dark and so very twisted! Jodie has nothing to live for, her daughter has been murdered by her husband, and she has only one wish, to kill her husband Ethan, and then herself. When Horrifying secrets emerge regarding Ethan, Jodie's strength is pushed to the limits, like any good plot there are many twist and turns along the way.

I really liked Eva's writing style and the plot flowed along seamlessly. Although a child being murdered is a difficult subject to deal with, Eva manages to do so in a sensitive manner. As a parent myself it wasn't difficult to see why Jodie would want revenge on her husband, and the reasons behind the killing unfortunately are very plausible.

Eva has created characters that are very believable, In the beginning Jodie appears weak, but considering the circumstances she finds herself in it's hardly surprising. Jodie is hell bent on revenge, and over time this makes her a stronger and very resourceful character. I also liked the way her relationship developed with Novak an out of work journalist, who helps Jodie find out the truth about her husband. I found Ethan to be a despicable, a manipulative monster, who commits the most horrendous crimes, and the way he justified them chilled me to the bone. Another theme that runs alongside the main plot is Jodie's determination to find

answers to her own troubled past, answers she may wish she left buried.

Dead Secret is a hell of a read, it's a difficult book to review as I don't want to give away any spoilers, but Ava builds the threads of what appears to be a very straight forward plot, but then when you are least expecting it, the strands unravel leaving the reader shocked at the turn of events. The ending is unexpected to say the least, with red herrings galore. Dead secret is a fantastic read, it's nail biting, shocking and heart stopping, and certainly a must read for fans of crime and psychological thrillers

Richard says

I already knew this author from her previous work with the hugely successful Henrietta 'Harry' Martinez series. It has been a while since those three books were released so I was keen to read this latest offering, Dead Secret, promoted as a standalone psychological thriller.

It is as good as those other novels currently around in this genre that deal with when relationships go sour. The tagline here is "How well do you know your husband".

The premise being that Ethan, Jodie's 'perfect' husband is controlling and potentially what is known as a family annihilator after killing their daughter when Jodie threatened to leave him.

The book starts with Jodie's final plans to get a gun; use just two bullets. One for him before turning the gun on herself.

That could have been the end of the story. But Jodie wakes up in prison. On suicide watch with nothing to live for; indeed saving up meds to finish the job when she gets a visit that may change her outlook and provide a new motive not just to live but break out of prison.

The book is clear throughout of the broken background of Jodie and her traumatic upbringing but as she is led to investigate this, further new insights lead her to understand why we do the things we do. Posed with the thought that she could revisit events and save her daughter or not shoot her husband, the book questions, can we change? or are we predisposed in our genes.

A true thriller, a deep mystery and a moving story of the darkness in some families and its influences down the generations. I loved the link with art as an expression beyond words and how a picture can change your life. Beautifully written even when describing the brutality of prison or the abuse towards children.

Jodie goes on an incredible journey, one that Ava has been so clever, to plot in this narrative that is about survival and redemption. It is as baffling as a complicated jigsaw and as rewarding when that last piece slots in, all is complete and the story makes total sense, everything links together.
