



Cold Cold Heart

Tami Hoag

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** This is an updated cover of this Kindle edition. **

#1 New York Times bestselling author Tami Hoag delivers a shocking new thriller

Dana Nolan was a promising young TV reporter until a notorious serial killer tried to add her to his list of victims. Nearly a year has passed since surviving her ordeal, but the physical, emotional, and psychological scars run deep. Struggling with the torment of post-traumatic stress syndrome, plagued by flashbacks and nightmares as dark as the heart of a killer, Dana returns to her hometown in an attempt to begin to put her life back together. But home doesn't provide the comfort she expects.

Dana's harrowing story and her return to small town life have rekindled police and media interest in the unsolved case of her childhood best friend, Casey Grant, who disappeared without a trace the summer after their graduation from high school. Terrified of truths long-buried, Dana reluctantly begins to look back at her past. Viewed through the dark filter of PTSD, old friends and loved ones become suspects and enemies. Questioning everything she knows, refusing to be defined by the traumas of her past and struggling against excruciating odds, Dana seeks out a truth that may prove too terrible to be believed...

Cold Cold Heart Details

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From Reader Review Cold Cold Heart for online ebook

Shaun says

Really enjoy Tami Hoag's style of writing.

Though I figured this one out, I still felt the characters and their development was top notch. Plus there were a few surprises along the way. Well done characters and several plots that are interwoven. My second book by this author, and I will likely be reading them all.

Though part of the Kovac and Liska series, this is arguably a stand alone as the detectives only make brief cameo appearances in the beginning of the book.

TBI and PTSD and their implications are explored which adds a layer of interest. As a physical therapist, I have at least briefly worked with patients who've suffered a traumatic brain injury, and I felt Hoag did a great job of portraying the challenges that these people face. Good stuff.

Robin says

Dana Nolan's life is turned upside down when she is kidnapped and tortured by a serial killer. She does survive her ordeal, but not without a traumatic brain injury. After ten months in the hospital, she has returned to her childhood home. Dana doesn't remember her time in the killer's hands. She also doesn't remember large portions of her past. When she remembers that her best friend, Casey Grant, disappeared seven years ago right after their high school graduation, Dana delves into the mystery of what exactly happened to her.

I've read many of Tami Hoag's suspense novels. This one is totally different than the others. Dana's brain injury has changed her from the girl who grew up in a small Indiana town. She sometimes uses the wrong words. She sometimes says the first thing that pops into her mind. She becomes obsessed with Dana's disappearance. Did she run away? Was she kidnapped by a deranged killer just like Dana was? Much of the book is Dana comparing herself, pre-injury versus post-injury. It was an interesting story, but I thought the suspense portion was lacking. My rating: 3.5 Stars.

Susan W says

"Where there is life, there is hope"

Yah....but not in this book, sorry. I honestly do not know if it was because I was coming off a *Tess Gerritsen* high and her books pack a wallop or it truly was the most draggy book I have ever read.

This book had a great start. Then chapter after chapter, again and again it was the same shit over and over.....No new details, nothing to keep me interested.

Read chapter 1-6 maybe then a bit more near the end and you will be satisfied. I really wanted it to be a good one, it has great intent to keep the reader going it just fell flat.

2.5 stars and seriously Goodreads get your act together and start allowing readers to put in half stars!!!

Laz says

What happens when you're young and full of potential & everything comes crushing down in one moment? More on the point, what happens when you're an up and coming reporter and you're kidnapped by a serial killer who tortures, rapes, and gets under your skin? What happens when you're forced to kill him in order to be saved?

That happened to Dana Nolan, who's the only surviving victim, and last one, of a serial killer. She killed him when he was driving and like we all know psychopaths tend to be very confident of themselves, leaving around objects that they think their victims cannot reach to. But she did, and she killed him but along with him she almost killed herself when the car crushed.

After 9 months she comes out of a rehabilitation center with memory problems and some slurring while speaking. She goes back to live with her mother and step-father. While doing so she comes to face to face with the past. Seeing people who hadn't been in her life for years & years. She relives the memory of her best-friend who went missing when she was in senior year & she tries to put the pieces together in order to find out what happened to her friend all those years ago.

It's very interesting to read because Dana is a very troubled gal and suffers from PTSD and tries to adapt to the new person she is. It's intriguing to read how a person who's been through so much feels and how they go through phases, or refuse to deal with their issues and end up more hurt than they want to be.

While this is very nice-built, fast-paced, intriguing and etc. It was predictable to the point that I was sure of the killer by halfway through and then I just waited for it all to unravel. But I give it a 3-star rating because of its characters, I loved Dana and how strong she is and how she manages to cope with everything she's thrown. She's a fighter, this one. And also, I loved the prose and narrating. Tami Hoag does a very good job at captivating feelings and shaping good characters.

Altogether, I'll say this was a good read and I recommend it to those who love a good read without having any big twist coming in the view.

Kavita says

This supposed thriller is in no way thrilling. Without the prologue about the serial killer and wondering whether Dana Nolan, the protagonist, would escape him, the book had zero suspense. And of course she escapes, otherwise there would be no story!

So the setup is that Dana has escaped from a serial killer by killing him. She spent months in recovery and had to relearn everything. When she finally returns home, she is harassed by the media. For Dana, who used to be a reporter, the shoe is now on the other foot. But this is not her only woe. As she reconnects with her

childhood days, she remembers that her best friend had disappeared just like she had. Her own experiences gives her the impetus to seek out what happens to Casey. But someone does not want her to discover anything of a case whose trail has gone cold.

The plot had enormous scope and I have seen similar plots being executed in a much better way. But I found most of the characters in this book irritating. Dana acts like a little bitch, screaming and shouting her way through the book. Her mother really got on my nerves with her overbearing protectiveness to the extent of making the lives of other people miserable. Then there is Aunt Frankie, who is basically just a bitch. Roger is selfish, but otherwise seems normal to me, but he is the designated villain somehow. Detective Hardy is creepily weird. John Villante was the best character, but I don't see the point of having him in the book at all.

The book leaves the reader with an unsatisfactory ending, raising more questions than it solves.
(view spoiler)

None of it hangs together well. The plotting is shoddy and the conclusion leaves a lot to be desired. But if you want to learn anything about PTSD or TBI, it's chock full of information. Yeah, it's THAT boring.

Mary says

I think there was a story in here somewhere, between the long, repetitious, dramatic passages about John's PTSD and violent hatred of his father and Dana's ongoing and kind of boring struggle to reconcile the "Before Dana" with the "After Dana" while dealing with her recovery from a TBI at the hands of a serial killer. Unfortunately, the story was not especially interesting. The serial killer and Hoag's detectives Liska and Kovac are all just red herrings, since they barely make an appearance and the mystery turns out to be the disappearance of Dana's best friend Casey, 7 years ago. That plotline was pretty dang easy to figure out, sadly--mostly what we have here is a book about PTSD and TBI. Hoag has written some pretty sharp books, but this isn't one of them; if you're looking for a tight and suspenseful murder mystery, read something else.

StoryTellerShannon says

A journalist is almost killed by a serial killer and returns with PTSD to her hometown to open up old wounds unexpectedly and recover from her trauma.

This is a tale about communities and how they can isolate us and inflict heartbreak.

The narrator did a great job on the character voices and mannerisms.

MY GRADE: B plus to A minus.

Brenda says

where there's life, there's hope

Dana Nolan spent ten months in rehabilitation at the Weidman Recovery Centre; when she was found, she had been extremely close to death at the hands of the notorious serial killer Doc Holiday. A TV reporter, Dana had been abducted on her way to work with the killer wanting to add her to his already long list of victims – Dana's terrible injuries included a traumatic brain injury. Her physical injuries had healed in time, but her psychological and emotional trauma hadn't lessened. Plus her brain injury meant she struggled with day to day normality. Her nightmares were ongoing and intense; her terror at any little thing was heartbreaking.

When her mother took her home for Dana's ongoing care, she found herself unable to venture outside – her facial injuries were such that she felt she was hideous; she couldn't bear the thought of people looking at her; talking about her. But with her return home, the seven year old disappearance of her best friend Casey Grant became media and police interest once again. The police wanted Dana to be able to tell them that the same person had taken Casey. But with her brain injury, she was unable to remember – even if she wanted to. Slowly and with the help of her counsellor, Dana realized that a goal to aim for would be good for her – so she became determined to find out what had happened to Casey once and for all...

The internet became her friend, and gradually little pieces of her memory returned – but with Dana searching for the truth, was she putting herself in danger? Because surely there was someone out there who knew what had happened to Casey? And that someone wouldn't want the secrets of the past to come to the fore...

Wow! I haven't read a Tami Hoag thriller in a while and I'd forgotten how GOOD she is! I thoroughly enjoyed *Cold Cold Heart* – intense, thrilling and heart pounding, it is a definite page-turner. The fast paced plot was gripping and I couldn't put it down. I have no hesitation in recommending this novel very highly. An excellent read!

Julie says

Tami Hoag delivers another top notch thriller with her usual rock solid, tried and true style.

Dana Nolan, although she may not agree at times, is a miracle. She is the lone survivor of the serial killer dubbed- Doc Holiday. Her mantra of "Where there is life, there is hope" got her through her ordeal. But, the once beautiful woman, an up and coming news anchor people loved, is now disfigured and suffering from a brain trauma that has robbed her of her memories. But, when a reporter jars her memory regarding the disappearance of her best friend in high school, Dana begins to obsess over the case.

But, as her memories slowly resurface the truth becomes murkier and Dana begins to fear the people closest to her. What happened to Casey all those years ago? Is she still alive? Was she a victim of Doc Holiday? Or was it someone right there under her nose the whole time... or did Dana herself have a hand in it?

Tami Hoag is one of those authors I know I can count on for a good dark and twisty mystery thriller.

This review is the property of Night Owl Reviews

For the full review go to <http://www.nightowlreviews.com>

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

This book will always be a memorable one for me as I read it after difficult surgery whilst recuperating. It was a great book to take my mind off things. With a great plot that builds up at a nice pace the book is easy to connect with and get absorbed into really quickly.

Surviving the nightmare is only the beginning...

Dana Nolan was a promising young TV reporter until she was kidnapped by a notorious serial killer. A year has passed since she survived the ordeal, but Dana is still physically, emotionally, and psychologically scarred, racked with bouts of post-traumatic stress disorder and memory loss.

Dana decides to use her investigative skills to piece together her past and learns of the event that made her become a reporter in the first place: the disappearance of her best friend, Casey Grant, the summer after high school graduation. Looking at her past and the unsolved mystery through the dark filter of her shattered psyche, old friends seem to be suspects, authority figures part of a cover-up. Dana begins to question everything she knows. What is real? What is imagined? Are we defined by what happens to us? And is the truth really something too terrible to be believed?

After returning to her home town looking different due to scarring on her face and acting different due to changes in her personality it's not easy settling in at all for Dana. She is pushing people away who love her and is understandably angry and confused.

She been the only woman to survive the grip of one of the most wanted serial killers, but has NO memory of the events around her abduction or indeed how she survived the ordeal and finally killed him. On top of this her best friend was taken at a similar time and she feels little filters of memories that are important trying to break through the damage to her brain. She does not know which parts are real, imagine how awful that would be?

It's a fantastic storyline, delivers plenty of pace and I loved Dana as a character, she has been through a LOT and still has loads of gumption and courage. She is not a quitter this girl, no chance. Plenty of twists and turns as Dana's memories start to surface as though she is surfacing from being deep underwater and soon fingers are pointing here, there and everywhere. She will not let go on chasing the case, on her own if she has to in order to find out what really happened to her missing best friend Casey. A great "who dunnit".

This builds up to a great ending, plenty of action and bits and pieces you won't see coming. Very enjoyable and an easy 4 star read.

I received a copy of this book thanks to the publisher in exchange for an honest review. Many thanks.

Alex is The Romance Fox says

Cold Cold Heart by Tami Hoag had a great start. Then after the prologue, it was downhill all the way.....right until the last page.

The story opens with Dana Nolan, the protagonist killing the serial killer than had kidnapped and tortured her. Enter detectives Liska and Kovac, who are trying to close the investigation of the serial killer known as Doc Holliday. Now, before you think that this is another book in the author's Kovac & Liska Series...it isn't. They only make a quick appearance in the beginning and that's it. The plot in this book revolves around Dana's rehabilitation from her torture and her going back to her hometown, where she begins looking into the disappearance seven years ago, of her best friend Casey.

And that's when it starts becoming a rather "painful" read.....

We now get all this overload of information....repeat and repeat....of Dana before and after her terrible ordeal.....and not forgetting all the PTSD that the one character suffers after being injured in Afghanistan. He's also the local bad boy and suspected of doing something to Casey. And then there's the local sheriff...geez, think I forgot his name.....another uninspiring character.

I couldn't find or feel any suspense.....any tension.....romance....nah, there's none of that here.

I could not engage with any of the characters.....even Dana.

But what I found even more irritating.....there were all these little subplots that just never went anywhere.....so why they were included in the story I have no idea...but then I am not the writer here.....so maybe she had a reason for it. I would have like to have seen some closure on some of those..

I found that I skimmed a lot of the pages that were repeated again and again.

Not the best by this author....I did like the book title though!!!

“From the dawn of time to the end of time, the world would never run short of cold, cold hearts.”

Susan says

Dana Nolan has everything going for her – she is young, attractive, intelligent and has recently started a job as a newscaster – when she is abducted by a serial killer. The man, nicknamed Doc Holiday, plans to make her his ninth victim, but Dana manages to escape. However, survival is not that easy; Dana has suffered severe brain injuries, she has scars – both visible and unseen – and the killer has marked her forever. Now, she has to adjust to being a new Dana and to cope with her memory loss, panic attacks and a life which has been changed forever. She returns to her family home, in the small town of Shelby Mills, with her over

protective mother, Lynda, and step father, aspiring politician Roger. Also back in Shelby Mills are two men that Dana used to know well – her first boyfriend, Tim Carver, now a deputy in Liddell County, and John Villante, ex-military, who also suffered a brain injury while in the army and who now has a dead end job and a bed, of sorts, in the house of his begrudging, abusive father. Villante was the boyfriend of Dana's best childhood friend, Casey Grant, who went missing seven years ago. Dana's experiences bring back the memories of Casey and, gradually, she begins to investigate what happened all those years ago.

The author manages to create a really exciting thriller in the pages of this book, with a fast moving plot and some great characters. Dana is forced to confront not only what happened, but her young self and the way the press – the profession she had aspired to work for – treat her now she is a victim. Along with retired detective, Dan Hardy, who has never forgotten Casey Grant, Dana has to consider what really happened on that day so long ago. Did she argue with her best friend? Did she lie? Who can she really trust? A very enjoyable and exciting read – I have never read anything by Tami Hoag before, but I am sure I will explore her back catalogue, as I enjoyed this very much. Lastly, I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

Bill says

Three Stars

*** SPOILER ALERT ***

Tami Hoag fans, please don't hate me. This one just didn't work for me. The more books I read and the more authors and genres I experience, the higher my expectations have become. My expectations of this book were raised even higher by quotes of praise on the book jacket like "Cannily plotted and peppered with some of the sharpest dialogue in the business" or "Outstanding! Tami Hoag continues to set the standard for excellence in her genre" or "Gripping." Don't get me wrong this was a very interesting story but I just didn't feel it.

Minnesota detectives Nikki Liska and Sam Kovac are astonished. The box truck had crashed into a light pole at Loring Park, the male driver dead from a screw driver plunged through his temple into his brain. But even more surprising was the near dead woman in the back of the van, appearing more like a Walking Dead zombie than a human being. Fractured skull to the point her head was misshapen and asymmetrical, severe facial fractures including a smashed right orbital, broken fingers and ribs and a shattered knee cap. She is unrecognizable. Her face was craved into a permanent frown. The number nine was etched deep in her flesh from her collar bone to the midpoint between her breasts.

She was supposed to be dead, victim number nine. The deep ligature marks on her wrists and ankles indicated she was bound and tortured just like the other victims of serial killer Frank Fitzgerald. Young, attractive, bubbly, enthusiastic, fledgling Minneapolis on-air television newscaster Dana Nolan had been found! After six months at the Hennepin County Medical Center, she returns to her childhood home in Shelby Mills, Indiana to continue her physical and psychiatric therapy. Now there are two Danas!

Before Dana – The young, perky, energetic and career- driven, enthusiastic, naïve Dana. She was well liked

by the station staff, mentored by her producer. She had potential. The Beauty!

After Dana – Zero potential, broken, The Beast. Physically deformed from severe beatings; psychologically traumatized from days of rape and torture; suffering from severe PTSD and brutal anxiety attacks. Severe skull and brain trauma has changed her personality along with her outlook on the world and the people in it. She thinks differently, she speaks without a filter and struggles to regain her memories although she refuses to recall thoughts and images of her abductor ... until she has too.

Living with her mother Lynda and step father Roger Mercer in Shelby Mills, she struggles against the debilitation of brain trauma to recover her coordination, her ability to remember simple things like how to get from her room to the bathroom and back, and the memories of Before Dana. Family pictures and her high school year book trigger some strange but seemingly disconnected flashbacks of memories, like a movie of someone else's life. Casey Grant her best friend in high school. Casey Grant disappeared seven years ago, the summer after graduation. Casey Grant disappeared forever, Dana came back. Her brain twists and churns – Casey Grant!

Vague recollections and disjointed memories flood her head when the pizza delivery arrives. John Villante has returned to his childhood home in Shelby Mills too, another brain trauma victim. He is a violent man just like his father John "Mack" Villante, Sr. He is abused and demeaned by his father, abandoned by his mother when he was eight years old. The military has channeled John's rage into his tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. The IED explosion scrambled his brain. He left the service on a psych discharge and suffers from depression, PTSD and has turned to self-medication to ease his anxiety. When he delivers the pizza, Dana's brain becomes an electrical storm of emotions and anxiety. She remembers him. She remembers Casey.

The current Shelby Falls deputy sheriff was the golden boy of high school when Casey vanished and the detective who handled the original case has long since retired but still keeps track of any new case developments. John's return to Shelby Mills stirs up Dana's memories and suspicions. As Dana slowly regains emotional stability and resurrects and reconstructs memories of Casey's disappearance, the confluence of old high school love and betrayal and the return to Shelby Mills of folks involved in those high school relationships leads to some very interesting discoveries and revelations.

Has the making of a spine tingling, nail biting tale right? It wasn't for me and that's why I landed on a half-hearted rating of three stars. No doubt a very alluring and entertaining story but my emotional engagement with any of characters was nil. And the big twist at the end was kinda lame.

"What?" you scream in disbelief. "No sympathy for a woman who endured and survived such heinous physical violence?" you implore. Just the opposite, I am way, way too emotional but frankly I was never allowed to get emotional. I felt Dana's abduction, abuse, head trauma and subsequent PTSD could have been treated with more intensity and vigor. I think if the author let me experience flashbacks of instances with her abductor or forced me to share some of Dana's pain and anguish during her captivity I would have been far more engaged and empathetic. Perhaps the absence of flashbacks was meant to dramatize the effects of brain trauma. That's something!

My other observation is that by book's end, despite her severe brain trauma, Dana acts like a sharp minded detective able to synthesize so many disparate bits and pieces of information into an accurate view of acts committed. That just felt like a stretch to me.

I do applaud the author for raising the physical and mental health issues related to concussions and brain

trauma. In the author's note at the back of the book, Hoag shares her personal experience with traumatic brain injury when at age ten she was thrown from a horse, hitting her head on the street. She suffered a mild traumatic brain injury that was never diagnosed and to this day she suffers from headaches of varying frequency and intensity.

Overall a very good story but I just didn't feel this one. Or my expectations are way too high! Three Stars.

Patrice Hoffman says

In Tami Hoag's latest standalone thriller, we are introduced to the once beautiful and successful Dana Nolan. She has survived the most horrific ordeal that has claimed the life of countless victims before his serial killer escapades took center stage around the country. But, she is not that woman who killed her attacker, she is the After-Dana.

Dana moves back to the small town of her youth as she struggles to come to terms with her new self. She suffers from brain damage where her short term memory often fails and she awakens to the face of a monster. Doc Holiday, carved into her face so badly, plastic surgery still won't bring back the face that many have come love during their daily dose of news. Not only does short term memory fail Dana, but she doesn't remember much of her past. Not until a familiar face from her past brings up memories of her long lost best friend.

Enter John Villante Jr. He is back dealing with his past and his own brain injury and PTSD. Wow... did not realize brain injury ran so rampant in this book. Anyway... John is back in the small town along with Dana except he is trying to stay as far away from the limelight as possible. As a teen, he dated one of the most popular girls but he remained on the wrong side of the tracks in every way possible. Not ever being fully accepted amongst peers or even in his own home, John goes to the army in an effort to escape the accusations of killing his then missing girlfriend and creating a life for his self. After surviving Afghanistan he just wants some peace. But if he received one, then we wouldn't have much of a story now would we.

What I love, and have always loved of Hoag's novels, are how detailed and descriptive they are. She doesn't hesitate to introduce us to characters who are survivors and readers would like to survive. Although "after" Dana is a bit brash and flighty, her brain injury allows me to feel bad for her and not shout at her like the woman who always runs, then stumbles, in a horror flick. Her limitations didn't come off as so exhausting. Thank you Tami Hoag!

Tami Hoag also manages to keep you guessing about who's the true killer. There are so many possible or potential killers that I was (and wasn't) surprised when one of them was finally revealed. The only thing I didn't appreciate is the reasoning behind the seven year old murder mystery. It was way too cliché and predictable. While the other red herring was just simply packaged away too simply and quickly with no mystery whatsoever.

Ultimately, I enjoyed Tami Hoag's *Cold, Cold Heart*. I have always been a fan of hers and can remember devoting many hours to her other series. It is the ultimate survivor's novel and proves that the will to survive never goes away no matter what life throws at you. *Cold, Cold Heart* reminds me that no matter what, *where there's life, there's hope*.

RachelW (BamaGal) says

2 Stars for the first part, 4 Stars for the last 170 pages.

If the reader can manage to trudge through the slightly dry and sloooow moving first 200 pages; they will be (finally) rewarded with a pretty darn good thriller/murder mystery. I appreciate the author's meticulous research into TBI, but it slowed the pacing to a crawl and was ultimately TMI.

The book ended a little abruptly and seemed unfinished. I would have liked an epilogue on Dana and John's recovery from their individual traumatic brain injuries; and an update to the reader on these characters lives.
