



The Heat of the Moon

Sandra Parshall

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Young veterinarian Rachel Goddard's world begins to crumble when a client rushes into the animal hospital with a basset hound struck by a car during a thunderstorm. The dog owner's terrified tot, drenched with rain, loses sight of her mother in the flurry of activity and screams, ""Mommy! I want Mommy!"" Instantly Rachel is hurled back in time to a day in her own childhood when her baby sister Michelle uttered the same cry while thunder crashed and rain poured down on them. The unearthed memory feels like a fragment from a nightmare, and Rachel doesn't understand its meaning or the anguish it stirs up in her.

When she seeks answers she learns nothing from Michelle or from Judith, their loving but manipulative mother. Judith is a psychologist who is only too happy to have her adult daughters still living in her elegant Tudor house outside Washington, DC. But their apparently serene home is a house of secrets where Judith's unspoken rules forbid questions about the family history or the daughters' long-dead father. As more baffling memories surface, Rachel begins to suspect that nothing about her family is what it seems. Fighting her mother's attempts to control her, Rachel embarks on a quest that takes her deep into her own memory as well as halfway across the country. The heartbreakingly true truth she uncovers will shatter her world and force her to make an unthinkable choice.

The Heat of the Moon is Sandra Parshall's first novel.

The Heat of the Moon Details

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From Reader Review The Heat of the Moon for online ebook

Barb Radmore says

The Heart of the Moon is a compelling debut by Sandra Parshall which hooks the reader from the first page. Rachel Goddard, a young veterinarian, has overwhelming yet confusing reaction after watching a toddler in her office, crying and screaming for her mommy. This scene seems like it is reminiscent of one she experienced in her childhood but it is nothing she can place in her concrete memory. Rachel remembers bits and pieces of such a scene, but a feeling tell her there is more. And the feeling will not go away. As Rachel keeps digging trying to remember her childhood more questions than answers arise.

Rachel wants answers from her mom about what happened but her mother doesn't want to discuss the past. As a psychologist, Rachel's mother has always been the controller, the perfect parent who expects nothing less of those around her. Rachel enlists the help of a friend of her mother's from the past but he doesn't want to betray Rachel's mother's trust or friendship. He also isn't sure he knows exactly what transpired himself. Her boss, fellow veterinarian Luke Campbell , encourages her to delve into the mystery of what might of occurred to cause her feelings. But Rachel is up against the desire of her mother and her beloved sister to leave the past alone. To make matters worse, the mutual attraction between Rachel and Luke is not appreciated by her mother who has taken an active dislike to him. Her sister, whom she has been close to all her life, is becoming distant and distinctly unsupportive of her quest for answers.

The Heart of The Moon is a page turning mystery as one tries to figure out what secrets Rachel's mother is hiding from her and her sister. In this psychological thriller Sandra Parshall has created characters that sizzle and steam, not women easily forgotten. Using the emotion between a mother and her grown daughter, the eternal struggle to grow up and separate from a parent as the launches this plot's suspense to a place we can all understand. It examines the bonds between mother and daughter, the ties that hold sisters together and the knots that can become hopelessly entangled. The ending, both explosive and heart wrenching, is as powerful as it is unexpected.

Sandra Parshall won an Agatha for Best First Novel for The Heat of the Moon. Readers will easily see why she won this one the honor and agree that it is well deserved. She has now also written Disturbing the Dead, again featuring veterinarian Rachel Goddard. It will be interesting to watch if Parshall continues to develop the character of Rachel even more in the future.

Chris says

A few days ago after plodding through the first part of the book, I almost put it down. Actually, I did. Then picked it back up 10 minutes later and am glad I didn't. This is a good book. I'm realizing I don't need to read some books word for word, as I found myself skipping through a page of describing things I didn't care about just to get back to the meaty parts. Nice twists and although I had it figured out about halfway through, I didn't know the whys or hows.

Andrea says

Veterinarian Rachel Goddard's world begins to fragment on the rainy night a dog is rushed into the clinic after being struck by a car. The owner's young daughter cries for her mommy and Rachel finds her memory rushing back to a day in her childhood when her sister was crying for her mother while thunder boomed and rain poured down on them. The memory is vivid and Rachel can't understand the anguish she feels. She starts to seek answers as more memories come crashing back but she isn't finding them thru her sister or her mother, Judith. Judith's unspoken rules forbid questions about the family history or the girl's long dead father. Rachel begins a quest into her own memory as well as half way across the country and uncovers a truth that will shatter her world.

A stunning debut from first time author Sandra Parshall. Tightly written, breathtaking suspense filled mystery that takes you on a roller coaster ride from beginning to end. Memorable characters pull you into the story with skeletons rattling in every closet. As the families deepest, darkest secrets begin to emerge, the suspense just keeps building until it explodes off the page in this delightful psychological thriller that will keep you up late into the night until you have finished every last page.

Ed Scott says

I enjoyed this book from start to finish. But like almost all these type of books, it never ceases to amaze me how the "amateur" sleuths can just go from town to town following meager clues, while I sometimes have trouble finding my local 7/11. Only kidding about that but you get the point, right!

Tremont G says

Audio book - The main character is an idiot. She and her sister act like they are living in the 1950's, not 2006. I couldn't get past how "miss priss" they were! Also, I don't care what the "mother" did to them, I find it hard to believe she would have that much control over her children. I just kept thinking, God, this Rachel is really an idiot to not see all the manipulations! And Luke, how he put up with Rachel's stupidity is unreal! I hated everyone in this book, except for Luke, and I only liked him a little.

Geri says

This of course was the first book in a series of Rachel Goddard Mysteries. It gives you an insight in her past and how she became the person she is now.
So many twists and turns. I didn't even see coming.
Very good. Held my interest through out.

Heidi says

So frustrated with this book. 27 and 23 year old daughters are still living with a "mommy dearest". Very weird about having to go the Library of Congress to look up articles in a newspaper and using directory assistance when the book was written in 2006. Not a mystery, not a thriller and sure not a romance. The main daughter and the weird relationship she is involved with was laughable. Parts of the book were so good and very believable but just hard to reconcile the flat characters. The ending was horrible and felt rushed.

CD {Boulder Blvd} says

This was a DNF. After numerous attempts, I've given up.

Sheila says

Veterinarian Rachel Goddard's life is pretty much going along OK until a screaming wet child starts to cry in her waiting room. Rachel tries to comfort the child and experiences a flashback moment of déjà vu. This leads Rachel on a quest to find out what has happened in her past that she has forgotten.

Barbara says

Buried memories surface to reveal a past.

Rebecca says

This book isn't a mystery in the usual sense. It isn't a book about solving a murder, but I won't tell you what it is--beyond something I would classify as psychological suspense--because telling you anything might ruin the book.

The author uses foreshadowing to build up suspense initially then maintains it with excellent story telling. I liked the characters and was satisfied with the writing and editing. I did have a formatting issue either with the ebook itself or its display in my android app, but the issue is the trivial but annoying issue of boxes added to the end of many paragraphs. I would like to see it fixed, but the author can't be blamed for it (not fairly anyway).

Overall an intense but worthwhile read that I recommend.

Jen says

I think I can understand all the positive reviews. The story was good. It was gripping and engaging.

But I really had issues with some aspects. It was written in 2006. As far as I can see, the pub date and the award were both 2006. Maybe it had been written long ago, and published later? Hear me out. The only

reason a character uses a computer is for school. A mobile phone is only used once in a while for calls. The main character visits the Library of Congress and uses... microfiche? And calls directory assistance to reach the public records office in a city in a different state? As a twenty-something in 2006, I can tell you that those functions had been replaced by computers and the internet. Finding those answers didn't require leaving the house.

Also, the main character is 26 and still living at home with her mother and 23 year old sister. Yet no one seems to think this is unusual (okay, it's mentioned once). And the controlling mother still has control over how the kids spend their time. They aren't allowed to date as they see fit. There's no hope for privacy in a place where each visit can only entail either visiting outside or in the "parlor". And they only ever use the word "mother" to describe the woman who supposedly gave birth to them.

These setting incongruities make it very hard for me to follow the story without feeling like the author has no idea what 21st Century USA looks and feels like. This book feels like it should have been set back decades in time. Or like maybe it was written then and recently edited without much thought put in to some of these things.

I really wanted to like this book. The story was really good. But every time someone said "mother" or "parlor" I got wrenched out of the story and my brain flinched at language people rarely use any longer. And every time a character did something that didn't fit in with a time period in which mobile phones have become abundant, I was yanked out of the story and found myself asking why someone would act in such a way.

I'm going to try the next book because I hope someone caught these issues and smoothed them over. But I'm not counting on it. And if the issues are still there, I'm sadly going to have to leave Rachel Goddard in my past.

Brenda says

Rachel Goddard's job as a veterinarian was one she loved – but the day the injured dog was brought in by its owners for treatment, Rachel's life became a mix of confusion and terror. Suddenly fragments of memory flashed through her mind – her little sister Michelle terrified in a storm; Rachel trying to comfort her, not much older herself. But now, in her twenties, it didn't make sense – because there was nothing else there...

Rachel and Michelle's mother Judith was a well-known and respected psychologist and while both adult daughters still lived in the family home in Washington with their mother, they all lived comfortably with each other. That was until Rachel began asking questions about their father who had died in a terrible car crash when she was five years old. Rachel had no memories at all of her father and wanted to see photos; she needed to know more about him.

What would Rachel discover as she defied her mother in her search for the truth? And why wouldn't her mother talk about her past? Could Rachel break through the control her mother had over her?

Her show of affection for me was like the heat of the moon, an illusion, a glow that gave no warmth

Excellent! *The Heat of the Moon* by Sandra Parshall is this author's debut and also the first in the Rachel Goddard Mystery series. An intense and gripping psychological thriller I flew through the pages, thinking I

knew the answers but nowhere near correct! I'll be checking out the next in the series and have no hesitation in recommending *The Heat of the Moon* to fans of the genre.

Laura de Leon says

I LOVED the first half of this book. I found the setup fascinating, the characters intriguing. I really wanted to know how the situation had come about, and I had a hard time putting the book down.

But as the story went on, the behavior of the main character and her love interest made less and less sense to me. Stupid decisions, out of character for what seemed like very intelligent people just kept stacking up. Coincidences also became more and more common. Hints slipped in at the beginning never were revisited.

If I hadn't been so impressed, so drawn in at the beginning, I could have let all of this slide by. I've certainly enjoyed books that had all of these issues. I just set my expectations a little too high.

Linda says

Rachel Goddard was not an easy person to like. A young veterinarian, her best relationships had always been with animals. Little did she know how screwed up her life had become.

THE HEAT OF THE MOON is the first book in a mystery series about this young woman. It gives you the backdrop of who she is and provides you with an understanding about her insecurities. She has had 'a number' done to her. While reading the story, I had to constantly remind myself of this. One moment she is acting her age and the next she reverts to an annoying child. But, I digress....

It contained a romance *but the story is not a romance*, if that makes any sense. The actual mystery is not hidden: within the first couple of chapters you will choose sides. Ms. Parshall cleverly entices the reader into believing that everything is black or white. Instead, there are many shades of grey: Rachel's relationships with her mother, sister and her boss/boyfriend.

I would only recommend this book if you had intentions of continuing with the series. In that case, it provides the atmosphere and framework of what I am sure will come. (view spoiler)
