

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Boy That Never Was by Karen Perry

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Gavin Dimmock

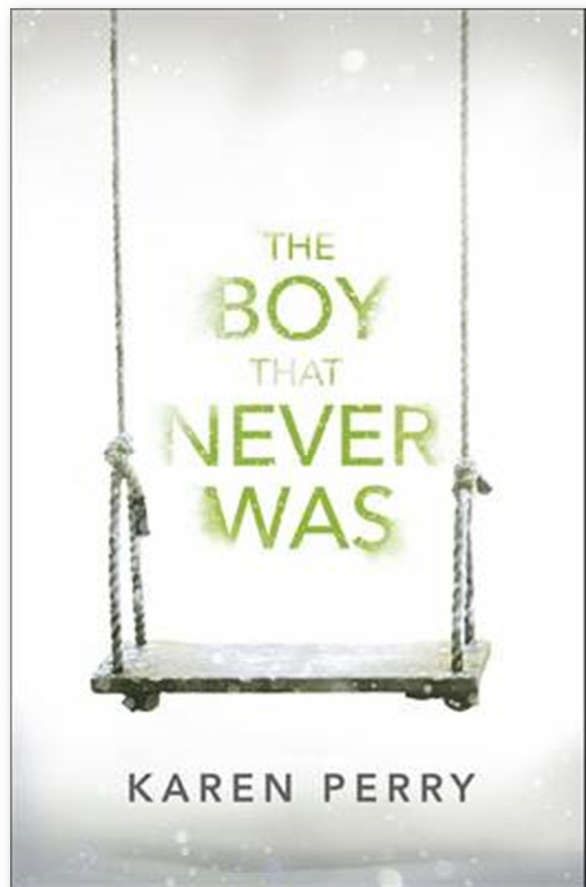
***Harry sees his son in a crowd;
five years after he died.***

***A tense, gripping tale of one
couples struggle with loss and
grief and hope.***

This isn't the style of fiction I'm usually drawn to. However, I've been widening my range over the past eighteen months and was keen to plunge into its pages.

And, wow, am I glad I did!

It begins in an explosive manner and I was hooked from the first pages. The drama unfolds as Harry and Robin, parents struggling to cope with the loss of their young son, each tell their version of events, past and current which have led from their grief to their current uneasy relationship.



Harry, an artist torn by guilt, is convinced he has seen his son – his dead son – in a crowded Dublin street. Robin, weighed down by her own grief, worries at her husband's increasing isolation and despair.

The story is told by each character in alternate chapters. This works superbly as their tragedy is shown from each viewpoint and we learn of, and share in, their separate secrets, guilt, hope and fears.

Each character is well formed, the dialogue is sharp and direct, the scenes are beautifully crafted. The tale is told in a gripping and thrilling way; the tension is cranked up early on and does not relent. This is a real "page turner".

It's a magical thing when a book from an author new to you and despite your initial reservations, delivers with such force and leaves you craving for more.

Buying only one book this year? Make it this one.

You can read Gavin's blog at: <http://the-mustachioed-reader.blogspot.co.uk>

Rachel Aygin

*The idea of a boy disappearing and then five years later his father thinking he has seen him was intriguing. **I found myself reading quickly as I had to know - was the boy really Dillon and what had happened to him?***

*I had to put aside my preconceived ideas about books written by more than one person as it worked so well in this book, with the story being told alternately by Dillon's mother and father. You really get to sense the different personalities of the characters and what they are thinking. Secrets come to light and **just when you think you know what happened to Dillon you realise you are wrong.***

An enjoyable read.

Emma Farragher

Well where to start with this wonderful story....

An interesting and exciting tale of life and passion, loss and consequences. The split narrative between the main characters Harry and Robin makes for a thorough if not sometimes awkward understanding of the story. Young carefree artists, living in Tangier with their infant son, Harry drawn to a relatively seedy underworld, and under the influences of both alcohol and drugs makes a decision that will ultimately determine his fate. It is written in such a way that you feel you truly understand what difficulties the characters are going through in dealing with the aftermath of the tragic loss of their son.

*The story was absolutely captivating from the first page until I put it down twenty four hours later! **The rich narrative of life in Tangier, the thoughts and feelings were described so beautifully it was with ease that I lost myself into this book.** The empathy is felt with the characters from the start, and it is, at all times, an engaging page turner of the highest magnitude.*

Anne Marigold

A story of love, loss, lies and betrayal beginning with irresponsibility and ending in tragedy.

The story is narrated by the separate voices of Harry and Robin. Harry is the father haunted by the loss of his son, Dillon, as a tragic consequence of his own irresponsible action and a brief but devastating earthquake in Tangier. Robin is Dillon's mother trying to build a new life with Harry in Dublin and to deal with the grief of her loss and the need to forgive.

We meet characters from both Tangier and Dublin interacting with Robin and Harry to reveal unexpected lies and deceit, betrayal and consequences, attempts to re-build trust, passion, delusion, redemption and the hope of a fresh start. What does Cozimo know and should he tell? Who is guilty, who can be trusted? Where do our sympathies lie and who can we believe? Where is the boy who never was?

The threads of the story are intricately woven but the overall design is just out of sight until the shocking denouement.

There is something of the flavour of the settings but this is a relationship tale and a thriller with the emphasis on emotion rather than fast pace and description. I had thought that the collaboration of a male and female writer might have provided a greater distinction between the narrative voices, perhaps each taking on their gender roles. That didn't happen so that on the odd occasion I forgot who was talking. However that barely detracted from an original and engaging tale.

Sarah Hamid

This is a heart-tugging story of loss and regret, betrayal and obsession. An intriguing mystery - is the boy alive or dead? And will Harry and Robin's relationship survive the strain?

This is a heart-tugging story of loss and regret, betrayal and obsession. It is part relationship story and part thriller. Harry and Robin are living in Tangier when an earthquake strikes, and their small son Dillon is apparently killed although his body is never found. They return to England to rebuild their lives, but a chance sighting of a boy and a woman at a demonstration makes Harry believe his son is still alive. Harry seems to be spiraling back into the mental illness he suffered after the boy's disappearance and this starts to destroy the marriage. The novelists keep the pace up, and this stops it becoming tedious

and depressing.

The chapters are written alternately by the two main characters, so the reader gets two different viewpoints. The main characters are believable and I found I empathised more with Robin than with Harry, though both characters have their flaws and have committed misdemeanours. The other characters, notably Harry's two shady friends Spencer and Cozimo serve to drive the plot forward. They are not fleshed out, but this does not matter because Harry and Robin are so realistically portrayed.

The book is written in a style that hooks you in from the start. What is the powdery residue in the cup of milk that Harry gives Dillon, and why is it there? In the end, the plot takes an unexpected turn that makes this a tense, disturbing yet satisfying read. I will be recommending this book to my book group.

Julie Wragg

An absorbing and tense family drama of lies and guilt.

Harry and Robin are living their artistic dream in Tangiers with their adored son, Dillon. However a foolish lapse by Harry means their child disappears in an earthquake. Dillon's body is never found, but in the ensuing chaos, many are never found.

The story picks up five years later in Dublin. Robin and Harry have tried to pick up the pieces of their lives. Harry is a moderately successful artist, but has a history of mental illness and drunkenness. Robin changes her career and provides unfailing support for her husband; in all the time after Dillon's death she has never blamed Harry. She believes they've moved forward but Harry has never truly accepted the loss of their child. The tenuous stability of their fresh start is shaken when Harry becomes obsessed after thinking he has seen Dillon walking down the street with an unknown woman.

With Harry and Robin telling their story in alternate chapters, a web of secrets, lies and the overpowering guilt felt by both creeps through this tense and absorbing tale of tragic loss.

I thoroughly enjoyed this psychological drama. I thought it was well written and atmospheric. Although none of the characters were particularly sympathetic, their frailties made the conclusion more convincing. Well worth a read!

You can follow Julie on Twitter: @fluffychicko

Evelyn Love-Gajardo

A compelling psychological thriller.

I found this book very compelling, a mix of psychological thriller and human relationship novel. It's written by two authors, with two narrators, and tells the story of a couple whose son Dillon disappears while they are living in Tangier after his father, Harry, left him alone for ten minutes.

Five years later, and now living back in Dublin, Harry sees a woman with a boy in a crowd who he is convinced is his lost son, but they disappear before he can catch up with them. Because of the guilt he feels for leaving his son alone when he was meant to be taking care of him, he becomes obsessed with finding him again. Gradually more information is given about the couple's relationship and events in the past which impact on the present. Both are, to some extent, flawed characters; Harry in particular is hard to like, as he is selfish and self-centred.

The book describes the loss of a child and the painful effect it has on both parents very movingly. The plot develops in quite an unexpected way, with twists and turns that keep you guessing, so for those who like bleak, psychological thrillers, this is one to seek out.

You can follow Evelyn on Twitter: @gajarlove

Carol Peace

A great read, I just couldn't put it down.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and the mystery had me held right to the end.

Five years ago in Tangiers a three year old was left sleeping whilst his father nipped out, 10 minutes was all it took for the little boy to go missing and the quake hit and all there was left was devastation.

Harry and his wife Robin move back home as they are haunted by the memories, Harry is an artist and he never paints quite as well as he did. Robin gets on with life and puts no blame for the 'accident' on Harry, he however is constantly looking for the little boy he lost. One day he is sure he has seen him and chases him but to no avail but he just can't stop looking. Robin has heard it all before and tries to get Harry to focus on the here and now. I just don't want to spoil it so can't really say much more than to say a marvelous book, well written and unputdownable.

Alison Greenare

I loved it! An intriguing story of secrets, loss, guilt and obsession...

This intriguing story is set five years after the disappearance of three year old Dillon, when his father thinks he spots him in a crowded street. What ensues is a beguiling tale of secrets, loss, guilt and obsession. Did Harry really see his son? "Very unlikely, but not impossible"

Set in Tangier and Dublin, the story is told from the alternate perspective of the mother (Robin) and father (Harry), which I found totally absorbing. There are many twists and turns in the story, most of which are a surprise. It's a slow burner to begin with but certainly worth the effort. A great and original family based story line exploring the aftermath of the loss of a child. I found the characters of the mother and father very believable and captivating. The only negative, is the supporting characters, Spencer and Cozimo. I don't think they were developed enough and I found it difficult to believe Spencer would have a gun.

Overall I loved the story, 4.5 stars!

Lynda DeFreitas

A child disappears. Parents full of grief, guilt and anger. A chilling tale of love and loss.

The prologue is heart rending. I read it with a feeling of trepidation. There can be nothing worse than losing a child, and to not know exactly what has happened must be the worst thing of all. Having to accept, despite the lack of a body, that your child is dead must be appalling. And to know as Harry did, that you left your child in those crucial few minutes that this dreadful thing happened, must be a burden very hard to bear.

Harry's wife Robin seems not to blame him for Dillon's death, but she is carrying a lot of anger and guilt that she has buried so deeply that she is unaware of it until much later when Harry's seemingly inexplicable behaviour drives her to express the feelings she has hidden for five long years.

This is a very readable story and although some of the actions could be quite improbable, there's no telling what people will do in extreme circumstances and under such conditions. It is told mostly through the eyes of the main protagonists, Harry and Robin, and this helps the reader to understand their actions.

I found the denouement unexpected and quite shocking.

This novel is a collaboration between two established authors, Karen Gillece and Paul Perry under the pen name Karen Perry.

Nicola Kingswell

This is a fantastic page-turner of a novel. The storyline is original, gripping and so well told.

Harry and Robin lost their son, Dillon, during an earthquake in Tangier five years ago. They have returned to Dublin and are trying to rebuild their lives. Harry has become a tortured, alcoholic, womanising artist, riddled with guilt at his part in Dillon's loss. He spots a child who he is convinced is Dillon on the streets of Dublin and sets about trying to track the child down. Harry starts to unravel and all around him challenge his mental health. Characters from Harry and Robins past in Tangier emerge and the truth of Dillon's disappearance during that fated earthquake emerge.

Harry is not a likeable character. Early on in the book I wondered why Robin was still with him given his role in the loss of their son, and the fact he is on a downward spiral in Dublin. The storyline from the halfway mark is excellent; novel, thrilling and a real page turner. I couldn't wait to find out what had happened in Tangier and I didn't expect half of the twists that were thrown at me. Karen Perry's prose is beautiful I never guessed the ending. This book would translate easily to the small or large screen. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who loves a rollicking good rollercoaster of a read.

Ann

A superbly written book with believable characters. It is about powerful emotions that can destroy individuals and relationships. An excellent read.

'The Boy That Never Was' captured my attention from the first few paragraphs and held it right to the end. When Harry leaves their sleeping three-year-old, even only for ten minutes, alone in their flat in Tangier it has devastating consequences that eventually affects two families.

Robin, Dillon's mother, forgives her husband and accepts that her son has perished in the earthquake even though his body was not found. Harry, however, refuses to believe that the son he loves is dead and believes he has been

taken by someone. Finding Dillon becomes an obsession that overwhelms him and affects their relationship.

Six years later, when they are living in Dublin, Harry believes he has seen his son. Robin thinks it is another figment of his imagination. Gradually the reader learns of deceit and secrets that culminates in tragic consequences.

The characters are superbly crafted and brought alive in this book. The story is well-written and one can feel the emotions running through it. It is an excellent read.

Sally Doel

Robin and Harry lived in Tangiers with their three-year-old son, Dillon. Harry makes a terrible mistake one night and leaves Dillon alone in their flat for ten minutes to nip out and get a Birthday present for Robin and during this time, a calamitous earthquake occurs and rips their son from them.

They decide to return to Dublin to try and make a new start whilst dealing with their grief and loss. Time moves on and Robin, is trying hard to look to the future, but Harry is very caught up with unresolved guilt and desperate longing for his lost son.

One day, several years after the earthquake occurred, Harry is convinced he spots Dillon at a demonstration in Dublin. He is totally consumed by this chance sighting and goes wholeheartedly into trying to discover his whereabouts.

Robin and Harry's relationship is tested to the limits, firstly by the grief and resentments/blame and untold secrets that they both carry around with them and then by Harry's determination that the boy he spotted is their lost son.

*This book is well written and is an emotional roller-coaster. It is written in alternate chapters between Harry and Robin, telling their stories from their own viewpoints. I really couldn't wait to pick it up again between reads and really enjoyed it. It dealt with Robin and Harry's feelings and thoughts sensitively and was **a gripping read, with lots of mysteries and an unexpected ending. I would certainly be interested in reading other books from this author. Unputdownable!!***

Alison Bain

This is the story of a couple coming to terms with the loss of their three-year-old

son, Dillon, in a very tragic but avoidable disappearance in Tangier.

Dillon's parents Harry and Robyn, unable to communicate or console each other and both having secrets to hide, they return to their native Dublin from Tangier to make a fresh start. Five years on and Harry thinks he spots Dillon in Dublin city centre which leads to the relationship between Robyn and Harry unravelling and many difficult secrets being revealed. ***'The Boy That Never Was' has a surprising end with a sad and unexpected twist. Well worth reading.***

Alan Brown

A harrowing story that finally steps away from reality.

For the most part this description about life without a lost son has its appeal from the fears of the reader. Most of the feelings and thoughts described can be imagined as real.

However this is destroyed in the ending where the story goes too far into fiction from realism. The feelings of a shared journey are replaced by a feeling of being cheated because the ending has given up on reality.

By the end of the book the chosen tennis approach of the writing by the two authors becomes explained thereby improving the book.

A book I am glad I read but I am disappointed I did not finish early.

Emma Barton

'The Boy That Never Was' taps into every parent's worst nightmare. Your child goes missing and you hold yourself responsible.

Harry and Robin are a married couple, living in Morocco at the time, when their three year old son, Dillon, goes missing after an earthquake. The book follows their lives afterwards and deals with their individual ways of coping with the loss. When Harry believes he sees his son in a crowded Dublin street five years later we discover how far he is willing to go to find Dillon.

The book is mainly written from the alternative point of view of Harry and Robin, which allows their thoughts and feelings to be clearly expressed. I found myself wondering why this couple were still together as their loss had created a gulf between them. Harry seemed to have been swallowed by his guilt with complete disregard for his wife who had suffered the same devastation.

The majority of the story is set during a Dublin winter, with flashbacks to their time in warm, sunny Morocco. The descriptions of the bitter weather conditions and the financial crisis make the story even more depressing, juxtaposed with the happy time they spent abroad, living free and pursuing their individual love of art.

I found it hard to relate to the main characters or feel much sympathy for them, in particular Harry. There are several twists within the plot, most of which are completely obvious, but I did want to keep reading to the end.

Heather Playdon

Sad, brilliant, unfathomable, believable. A brilliantly heart-wrenching story.

This story is an emotional rollercoaster, with quite a few lows written with sensitivity and substance. Moving quickly, no reveal is dwelt upon for long, pushing the reader through each page willing the characters' happiness to take hold. It takes place in an atmospheric and fragrant Tangier, and a Dublin, pictured by the reader mostly through grainy CCTV footage courtesy of Harry, one of the main characters. Written in the voices of Harry and his wife Robin, it tells a story which begins with a sad turn of events. Possibly as a result of Harry's irresponsibility.

As the story weaves in and out of the two characters' lives you realise there's more to their tragic circumstance than meets the eye. Halfway through the book I changed my mind, then a few more chapters later, I changed it back again. The book is written so very well. It is enjoyable to read, flows easily and I did not want to put it down. As the story's conclusion finally unfolded I found myself on the edge of my seat, shaking my head, wringing my hands.

Sometimes unbelievable, sometimes unfathomable, always surprising.

You can follow Heather's blog at: www.hevcom.blogspot.co.uk

Samantha Chan

Fast-paced with believable characters. Harry makes the mistake of leaving their son unattended when tragedy strikes. Years later, he believes he sees his son and tries to track him down.

This was quite an intense read and I found it difficult to put down. I was

pleased that the author dove straight into the story rather than spending half of the book setting the scene. It was fast-paced but stopped short of being so plot-driven that the reader loses out on the emotions or descriptive scenes. The characters themselves were believable and written in such a way that you could sympathise with them even if you didn't agree with their actions.

Right up until the end you find yourself trying to figure out whether you are reading about Harry's slow descent into madness or whether there is a small chance that he could be right. I expected there to be a twist at the end and the author didn't disappoint.

The unexpected part was where the author spent time dealing with the aftermath, which I really enjoyed and wish authors would do more! I suppose the only small gripe I had was that I didn't enjoy the last few paragraphs of the book - I just thought it was a little unnecessary. I think this was probably a matter of personal taste though - I imagine others would like the possibilities it opens up.

On the whole, I really enjoyed reading this book. It reminded me of a recent book by Val McDermid so I think fans of her writing might enjoy this. I would definitely recommend this book and will be looking out for this author in future.

Ian Harvey-Brown

This powerful and poignant story, awash with pathos, had me gripped from the start. As soon as I entered the lives of Robin and Harry, I was totally hooked.

Apart from the very convincing portrayal of grief and the stresses and strains this must inevitably have on the parents of a lost child, I felt there was also a great sense of place. The brightness of Tangier contrasted sharply with the tumult of Dublin at the time of Ireland's financial crisis. Although this was a story about the loss of a child, it never felt so burdened with sentiment that there wasn't room for humour which ran through the tale like a seam of gold.

I liked the dual narrative. I think this worked well. Inspired to have the story told alternatively from both Harry's and Robin's point of view. And then, towards the end, the voice of Garrick providing a further explanation for what happened.

What I also enjoyed about this story is that it was never too predictable. Just when I thought I had worked out the plot, I would immediately have to revise my opinion.

The ending? A total surprise. I guess there were several possible endings. I think the ending chosen worked well enough for me.

You can follow Ian's blog at: ianharveybrown.com

Claire Kirkwood

I really loved this book. I was hooked by the first chapter and was unable to put it down. Full of twists and turns that will keep you gripped. A fantastic read.

I really couldn't put this book down, and finished it in one sitting!

Three year old Dillon disappears from Tangiers, after being left alone by his father Harry for only a few minutes. Harry's wife Robyn has never blamed her husband for their son's disappearance - she has a guilty secret of her own.

Harry and Robyn head back to Dublin to try and move on with their lives - but everything changes when Harry is convinced he spots Dillon on a crowded street.

What follows is a gripping story, full of unexpected twists and turns, as Harry desperately searches for the son he thought was gone forever. Secrets are revealed and their lives start to unravel.

This was a fantastic debut from Karen Perry and I will definitely be looking for more by this author.

You can follow Claire on Twitter at: [@beluski](https://twitter.com/beluski)

Eloise Glynn

I really enjoyed this book. It was something very different to the usual books that I read and I was really pleasantly surprised at how much I liked it. I found that it was a bit slow to start off with, which made me think that I wasn't going to like it, but I kept with it and once the story was in full swing it was fantastic and I couldn't wait to finish it. It was a very interesting story and I am now going to start trying out books that are out of my comfort zone more often.

Phyllippa Smithson

'The Boy That Never Was' is a gripping, page-turner full of hope, loss and resurrection but all at a cost. A brilliant and very compelling story.

Harry and Robin are living the life of their dreams in Tangiers, with their three year old son Dillon. But human error shines at various stages culminating in one single mistake which results in the devastating loss of Dillon. However, as the years pass, Harry becomes more convinced his son is alive and is determined to amend his lapse which subsequently determines his and Robin's lives.

'The Boy That Never Was' takes the reader on a journey full of loss, hope, rigid commitment to a belief (even where that may mean losing those you love). However, at journey's end, emotions are mixed as we deal with our own loss mixed with the learning that hope and commitment can be rewarded.

From Tangiers to Dublin, this book allowed the reader to not only feel a part of the wonderfully created characters, but also to exist in the heat and smells of the Moroccan City, and the very different world of the Irish capital.

I truly did not want the book to end and I for one will definitely read anything further that Karen Perry has published.

Ian Tyreman

A book that absorbs from the start taking you into a world of tragedy and hope as the characters come to terms with life events over a number of years. Individual choices made twist and turn, binding each other through one small boy. An interesting and spell binding book, where the author grips your imagination from the first chapter.

Nicola Clark

Spanning continents, this is a mysterious tale of the consequences of an irresponsible action - can their relationship recover after their devastating loss?

An error of judgement results in the devastating loss of a child; the attempt to carry on, rebuilding lives is told through alternating chapters of Dillon's mother and father, Robin and Harry.

Robin doesn't blame Harry for his mistake but Harry blames himself. He is

convinced his son may still be alive; could he possibly be right or simply overcome with grief and deluding himself?

*I felt a range of emotions over the course of the book and sympathised hugely with Robin and Harry. This is largely a story of a relationship and the consequences of betrayal and deceit, the stages of grief and guilt. The final few chapters were fast-paced and thrilling as the conclusion approached with just the right amount of twists and turns to keep me on my toes. **A highly recommended original tale.***

Kathy Howell

This is a very moving book with a surprising end.

The story begins in Tangier. Harry has left the birthday present for his wife, Robin, at a friends' house. He rushes out to fetch it, leaving their son asleep at home. Unfortunately, while he is out an earthquake strikes and, on his return to his home, his flat has been demolished and his son's body is never found so he is assumed dead.

Five years later, back in Ireland, Harry is convinced that he has seen their son, Dillon. This is the story of how Harry tries to prove to everyone that he is right. It becomes clear during the book that Harry has suffered in the past with mental illness and all those around him think that he is ill again. However, Robin has a secret in her past that complicates this sighting and when Harry uses friends and contacts to find the boy everything begins to unravel. The reader is able to guess half of the answer but the twist is well disguised.

This is a really enjoyable read that draws you in and it is difficult to put down.

Susan Wallace

A gripping mystery story about a boy who disappears during an earthquake and the effect this has on his parents, particularly after his father thinks he sees his son in a crowd five years later.

'The Boy That Never Was', I feel, is a misleading title because Dillon was very much part of the book from the first page and what happened to him shapes the story and the characters of his mother and father. He disappears during an earthquake at the age of three in Tangier. Five years later, his father glimpses a boy in a crowd in Dublin and is convinced that it is Dillon. The account of the

father's behaviour in trying to find the boy is absolutely gripping. The story is written from the point of view of the mother and father alternately and this lends itself to an in-depth account of how these characters feel about what has happened and is happening. I read this book really quickly because I had to know if the mystery boy was Dillon and if it was, what had happened to him. There is an unexpected twist at the end.

This is not the type of book I would usually choose to read but I would recommend it as a really good read. Once you start it, you won't want to stop.

S Beney

A haunting tale that slowly untangles a web of deceit and questionable choices. Written like a piece of art, capturing the atmosphere, emotions & surroundings to slowly reveal the whole picture.

I was captivated by the way this story was written, almost ethereal and ghostly. With art and light a real feature of the book, it's impressive to see how the writing style reflects. A clever choice of locations and seasons provides a contrast between colourful and bright Tangier and grey and gloomy Dublin.

The story covers some tough topics, and it is hard to like some of the characters, but I sense that this is part of the plot, as you're never sure which character to 'side with'. You are taken on an emotional journey with each character, untangling a web of deceit and questionable choices built over their time together, culminating in an unexpected outcome, which is full of tension and suspense. However, I'm not a fan of epilogues, and I feel that this book really should have finished a few pages before it actually did.

Susan Walsh

A fabulous Book. I loved it and would thoroughly recommend it.

From the streets of Tangier to the streets of Dublin. This book has depth & feeling.

A tale of love & heartbreak.

Colourfully written, this has it all.

Art at its finest, depression at its saddest.

The Love of two young artists who have to try to come to terms with the loss of

their three year old Son, who is thought to have perished in an Earthquake. Harry can't get over his grief and sees the small boy everywhere he looks. A magnificent read 10/10. Loved it.

Janette Skinner

This is an excellent book, a really great original story, very tense and atmospheric and flawlessly written. It is a real page turner.

This book was gifted to me to read and review. This is an excellent book, a really great story and very well written. It is a complicated tale of two families who suffer loss and whose lives are linked together through circumstances. It is told mostly from the point of view of the two main characters. There is a third point of view near the end which fits in well.

The pace is steady with interesting changes of country and changes of narrator, and the suspense is built until the very end of the book. It is difficult to say too much about the details of the story as this might give away too much.

The writer shows great insight into the complex world of relationships and family functioning. This book kept me interested from the start to the end. A well-deserved five stars from me.

You can follow Janette's blog at: www.best-book-review.co.uk

Ray Orgill

Harry and his wife Robin are living in Tangier with their three year old son, Dillon. Harry is home looking after the boy when circumstances cause him to visit a friend, leaving the boy in bed. During this very temporary absence the area is struck by an earthquake and Harry rushes home to find that the boy is a victim and has been lost. There are no recriminations against Harry for his lapse but being unable to settle, the couple move back to Dublin to try to put behind them what has happened to Dillon.

*Harry is obsessed by his son's death and one day he believes that he sees Dillon with a woman in the middle of a street demonstration and though he tries to reach them, the crowd thwarts his attempt. Harry's insistence that he has seen the boy is treated by everyone as a sign of his obsession and their refusal to accept the sighting drives him to the depths of despair. His wife, Robin, watches him descend into a state of madness but she also struggles with secrets of her own. **This is a tragedy which involves real people and their secrets.***

Lisa Faulkner

"The Boy That Never Was" is a clever plot centred around the disappearance of three year old Dillon in Tangier. The story centres around his parents and how they come to terms with his disappearance and the refusal of Harry to give up on his son. It is a real page turner of a story and I appreciated how the story was told separately from each characters viewpoint. However, I thought the characters lacked depth and you never fully knew really who they were. In addition, I struggled with descriptions of Tangier in the sense that I feel the authors could have provided more descriptions to build up a feel of the country and its people.

The book is an interesting read but lacked detail and style that can be found in the work of other authors of the same genre.

Lynne Morgan

I liked the way each chapter was written from either Robyn or Harry's point of view – this must reflect the fact that the book is written jointly by two authors, one male and one female. It would be interesting to know which author wrote what? Did Karen write Robyn's story, and Paul write Harry's?

Haunting and sad, the story picks up pace as it progresses, like a chase for the truth, rising to a dramatic crescendo ending. *The suspense is kept up throughout, so you are never completely sure of the truth. There are parallels throughout, the well timed twists and turns, lead the reader up dark alleyways synonymous with Tangiers narrow, mysterious streets.*

The descriptions of Tangier and Dublin are well formed and provide a contrast to each other, both environmentally and emotionally.

You get the feeling that the authors are playing with our beliefs! The truth, when revealed, is almost unbelievable and is very well hidden until the end.

Glenda Worth

A heart wrenching story of a father's quest to find his son, even though everyone around him believes he is dead. The twists in the tale keep you gripped until the end *with the boy's mother having her own burden to bear which she cannot share with her husband. Moving from Tangier to Dublin puts a distance between the parents as they struggle to keep their relationship on track while grieving in their own separate ways.*

Fiona Maclean

Gripping from cover to cover, this co-authored novel perhaps works because both male and female characterisation is strong and balanced.

This is the sort of novel where it would be sad to know the ending before reading the book. Poignant and heartfelt, I had no problem buying into what may sound like a slightly unusual setting for the plot. Artists Harry and Robyn are living in Tangiers with their young son Dillon. When Dillon goes missing following an earthquake, Harry refuses to accept his death. The storyline balances the emotion of losing a child with the marital tension caused by Harry's guilt at having left his son at the crucial moment and Robyn's response to that. Black and intense, I found this book hard to put down.

You can read Fiona's blog at: <http://www.london-unattached.com>

Sarah Tilley

A real page-turner with lots of twists and turns guaranteed to keep you guessing!

A very interesting read - I do hope they keep the blank cover that was on my copy, as that lends itself to the intrigue.

I immediately warmed to the two main characters, the parents, and enjoyed how it moved from person to person, giving small insights in to the deeper side of each character.

I expected it to be very firmly in the "misery lit" genre, but was pleased that the soul searching is in little snippets rather than whole chapters.

Who do you side with? Did the father really see his son? The book certainly keeps you guessing, and just when you think he imagined it, you are torn again to believe him, and then another twist is added.

Finally, when you are convinced that you have realised what it going on, you are led another way, with an unexpected ending.

Definitely a book you will want to finish quickly, well written and very thought provoking.

Julie Bertschin

A beautifully moving story of a family torn apart and the aftermath of losing a child. This story will stay with you long after you turn the last pages of the book.

When an earthquake hits Tangier a family is devastated by the loss of their three year old son Dillon. Harry and Robyn try to move on with their lives, leaving Tangier behind and moving back to Ireland to be near family. The fact that Dillon's body was never found in the wreckage of the earthquake leaves the parents at odds whether to believe he died or not and this not knowing eats away at the father who is less able to accept that they must try to accept their son is gone. When Harry believes he sees his son five years later walking down a street in Ireland, family and friends dismiss the news as the return of Harry's neurosis. Harry needs to make everyone believe he is telling the truth so embarks on a desperate hunt for his lost son. This is an engrossing read, chilling and cathartic at the same time.