



Twisted

Laura K. Curtis

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Lucy Sadler Caldwell is a successful true-crime writer. But the one story she's never been able to come to terms with is the murder of her own mother—until now. She's returned to Dobbs Hollow, Texas, the hometown she fled seventeen years ago, to finally expose the real killer.

After a bullet took out his knee in Houston, Detective Ethan Donovan found himself without a lot of options, which is how he ended up as Chief of Police in Dobbs Hollow. Lucy sure isn't asking for his help—she's not big on trust—but he can't help feeling a strong desire to come to her aid.

And though Lucy is armed to the teeth, she will need all the help she can get. When she starts digging into the past, she unearths a psychotic killer who will stop at nothing to silence her forever...

Twisted Details

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From Reader Review Twisted for online ebook

Janet says

This was a really well plotted suspense novel that kept me reading til way too late in the night. There were so many well developed twists and turns that I didn't want it to end. The characters were multi dimensional and compelling. The dialogue appropriate to the characters and the situations. The pacing was fast and even, if you can call a roller coaster even! Just kidding, the wild ride was half the fun! a Great read from a really strong writer.

*I received my copy from NetGalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

Debbie Christiana says

Bodies are piling up in Dobbs Hollow, TX since Lucy Caldwell came back to town seventeen years after her mother's brutal murder. The local town folk aren't happy she's back to find her mother's killer and suspicion grows that Lucy is responsible for the recent and gruesome deaths.

She enlists the help of the handsome police chief, Ethan Donovan, not a local, but a cop with baggage of his own from Houston and unaware of the troubled past between Lucy and the people of Dobbs Hollow.

TWISTED is an action-filled romantic suspense with twists, turns and plenty of dark secrets, that will keep you turning the pages until the end. The main characters are real, believable, strong yet vulnerable and have great chemistry.

If you like romance, excitement and dark murder mysteries, add TWISTED to your TBR pile.

Lucy Dosch says

Lucy Caldwell has written several books about true crimes. She has learned much over the years from working with the police and the FBI. Now it is time for her to write the most important story of all. The one about her own mother's murder seventeen years ago. To do this, she is going to have to go back to the small town of Dobbs Hollow, Texas. The same Town where she grabbed her little brother and ran from after walking into the grizzly discovery in her living room.

No one wept for the death of the small town's local prostitute, and no one broke a sweat investigating her death. Lucy is going to use all the investigation skills that she learned to try to find her mother's killer. Her

mother might not have been a good woman in the eyes of the Town's people, but she tried to give Lucy and her brother a good life and tried to keep that part of her life away from her children. But since everyone in small towns knows everyone else's business, the kids in school made sure Lucy knew what they thought of the daughter of the local whore. She doesn't know what will be harder, looking through her mother's murder file or facing the locals who still look at her with hatred in their eyes.

What she doesn't count on in the cooperation of the new Chief of Police, Ethan Donovan. Ethan isn't local. He was from Houston PD until he was let go on disability. Lucy doesn't know if she can trust him or why the all powerful Mayor Dobbs would appoint an outsider to the position unless he had some control over Ethan. Can she trust him or is he a pawn of the Mayor?

While Lucy and Ethan work together to solve an almost twenty-year old murder, they start to notice a pattern of more recent raped and missing women in the outlying counties and when bodies start showing up, they have to try and figure out if Cecile's murder and the missing women are connected and why.

But someone isn't going to wait for Lucy to figure this out and if they can't scare her away before she does, it just might be time to take Lucy out of the equation forever.

THOUGHTS:

There was a lot going on in this thriller so there was plenty of action and killing, and it was quite twisted, but there was so much going on that the ending was pretty complex for a small town.

I was left a little confused about why Lucy herself was so hated and why so many people were so desperate to get Lucy out of town. I understand why her mother's killer wants her gone, but why were so many others so focused on her? Maybe it is small town life, but most of the town seemed to judge Lucy on what her mother did. There was a reference to how many boys in high school used Lucy as leverage to get their girlfriends into bed, in a "I can go to the daughter of the local whore for sex if you don't give it up" threat, but Lucy wasn't portrayed as acting like someone with loose morals. She wasn't overly flirty or dressed provocatively. She seemed like the type to keep to herself. So why would everyone assume she too was fast and loose?

As far as the romance aspect, you watched Ethan and Lucy work together and build trust and finally confess all their hidden secrets, but all-in-all the romance wasn't built up enough to make it a really passionate love affair.

As far as a thriller it certainly kept me guessing and I certainly didn't catch the killer before they did, but in the end there was just too much going on and too many bad guys for one small town.

Received an ARC courtesy of the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

See more at <http://ebookobsessed.com>

Neely Powell says

Lucy Sadler Caldwell, now a successful true-crime writer, has come back to her tiny hometown to solve her mother's long ago murder. However, the suspect list includes almost everyone involved in her path. With threats on her own life now, she may be another victim instead of a finder of truth.

An intriguing story with a nice romance to round it out. I really enjoyed this book and look forward to Laura's next one.

Rachel the Book Harlot says

"How about we make a deal. I'll tell you how I got here if you tell me why no one wants you to stay."

When I first came across this novel, I was intrigued. Lucy Sadler Caldwell, a successful crime novelist, returns to her hometown of Dobbs Hollow in order to solve her mother's seventeen year old murder. Lucy's mother was a prostitute and town outcast, so the local police were not as inclined to work hard at solving her murder as they should have been. But, is there more to the shoddy police work than just her mother's reputation? Was her mother specifically targeted in order to keep secrets from coming to light?

Lucy will work to uncover the truth with the help of town Chief of Police, Ethan Donovan. Donovan, a newcomer to Dobbs Hollow, is one of the few people willing to help Lucy find her mother's killer.

See? Pretty interesting set up for a romantic suspense novel. Unfortunately, this is one of those situations where the concept is great, but the story doesn't live up to its potential.

Here is the breakdown:

❖ The Suspense(SPOILERS):

I thought the suspense portion of the story fell flat. It's quite obvious who the villains are. There are very little surprises here. In fact, we are given the identity of one set of villains very early on, and are then forced to watch as the two leads work to uncover what we as readers already know. This took some of the suspense out of the romantic suspense.

I get what the author is trying to do here, but for me it just didn't work as intended. What it accomplished instead was to make the final portion of the book anticlimactic since there are very little surprises. That's not to say that there aren't a few things that caught me by surprise. But, for the most part, it just wasn't enough.

I was also annoyed by the fact that one of the villains engages in 'I'm going to kill you, but first let me tell you the where, what, and why' type dialogue during a pivotal scene. I thought that was kind of silly. Also, the villains do something so stupid and nonsensical, that it actually leads to their eventual capture.

The motives behind the crimes are also anticlimactic. I thought one in particular was kind of ridiculous.

❖ The Romance:

The romance portion of the story also fell flat. There is very little chemistry between the leads, and not enough build up in their relationship. Part of the problem is that the Hero and Heroine are attracted to each other almost immediately, they kiss within a few days of meeting, so the rest of the relationship is filled with a little bit of manufactured angst. I found it all quite bland and uninteresting. Overall, I just didn't feel the romance was well developed.

❖ Other Thoughts:

There is one other issue that jumped out at me while reading this story. I found the way certain characters were handled to be problematic. The few minority characters that make an appearance, or are referred to, were portrayed as clumsy stereotypes:

- There is only one African American male character in the story, and he also happens to be an ex-convict (with multiple prison tattoos) who has turned his life around. There are two purposes for Josh's very brief appearance on page. The major one is to prop up and service the characterizations of the Hero and Heroine: the Hero is friendly with this town outcast, and the Heroine flirts with him and asks about one of his tattoos. It is implied that the Hero is impressed with the Heroine because of the way she reacts to Josh: "...she'd chosen to befriend the only recognizable convict in town." Once this character building exercise is done, we never see Josh again. The second purpose is to show us the town has issues with race: "Black ex-con engaged to white woman in a small southern town. Lucy guessed "tenous" didn't begin to describe their situation." Of course, this also serves a dual purpose: to give us further insight into Lucy herself since she is not like the town, and doesn't have a problem with it.
- There are two homosexual characters. One is only made reference to, but does not appear on page. The sole purpose of his existence in the story is to prop up Lucy's mother by showing us her "good" side. Lucy's mother helped him keep his sexuality a secret by pretending to sleep with him. This character also died of AIDS years earlier. The second homosexual character (view spoiler)
- There are two Latino males in the story. Both are involved with drugs.

At no time does a person of color or minority group appear on page as a person in their own right. As just an average citizen. They are either there to serve as a plot point, or service the characterizations of pivotal characters. Now granted, there are quite a number of non-POC characters that are used in much the same way, but the difference is that there are other characters available to counteract it.

Despite all of these issues, the story did hold my interest enough for me to see it through until the end. However, it was not enough for me to give it a higher rating.

Final Rating: 2 stars

Kate Sherwood says

I really liked the first couple chapters, but it kind of fell apart after that. I didn't care too much about the romance - it just felt too easy. And there was no twist or surprise in terms of figuring out who the killers were.

The most challenging part was keeping track of all the secondary characters. Endless men, all with generic names and fairly generic redneck-asshole personalities.

And I still don't really understand why the whole town hated the heroine so much. I mean, sure, a small town might have bitchy whispers about someone deemed a 'slut', but the level of hostility seemed way over the top for me.

I feel cheap for only giving two stars, but the rating system says that's the code for "it was okay" and... this was okay.

Suleikha Snyder says

Curtis' debut lives up to its name, twisting several threads of murder and mayhem into a cat's cradle of romantic suspense. While the concurrent, dovetailing, crimes are a bit hard to keep straight and descriptions of crime-solving software may glaze reader eyes, Curtis delivers a page-turning story with characters you really care about. Whether it's tenacious heroine Lucy, determined hero Ethan, or the supporting characters like Tara Jean, it's easy to invest and nail-bite over their fates throughout the course of the tale. Plus, *Twisted* doesn't skimp on passion! I can't wait to pick up the next book in the series.

Stevie Carroll says

Previously reviewed on The Good, The Bad, & The Unread:

I love mystery stories with or without a central romance, and even those with no romantic elements, although generally I find I prefer cosies, thrillers and police procedurals to romantic suspense – not that I'm going to rely on Amazon's categorisation to tell me what to read, since there's plenty of overlap between the subgenres. So a story set in a small town with a police detective hero, and with a heroine who investigates crime from a different angle as part of her profession, ought to appeal, regardless of how Amazon shelves it, especially as it includes both a cold case and ongoing mysteries as parts of the plot. On the other hand, while I appreciate a good red herring, I dislike it when authors overly rely on bait-and-switch techniques to give us glimpses of the bad guys without revealing their identities in full or their exact role in the plot. I also prefer as many of the loose ends as possible to be neatly tied up by the end of the story – which can be tricky to achieve in books with multiple plot threads and a large cast of minor characters.

After finding her mother murdered, the teenage Laura Sadler ran away from her small town in Texas, taking her baby brother with her. The pair were rescued by a police detective and his wife, and Laura grew up to become a successful author of true crime books – using the surname of her adoptive parents – later becoming closely involved with several high-profile investigations, but never daring to investigate the death of her mother until her brother was old enough to take care of himself. Now, the pair of them have returned to the scene of the crime, moving into the house where the murder took place, and Laura in particular is keen to see her mother's killer brought to justice.

Meanwhile, Laura's old high school friend, TJ, the daughter of the mayor and sister of another up and coming local politician, is a police officer on the local force, serving under the new chief, Detective Ethan Donovan. Ethan's an outsider, while most other officials are related to one of the three main families in town. I do find all this rather tricky to follow, being less familiar with the political structure than I imagine US readers would be and got a little mixed up with all the grouped surnames. But maybe that's just me.

Laura is suspicious of everyone – even Ethan, although he's very much attracted to her – but she does manage to warily renew her friendship with Tara. Working with the two of them, and using software developed by her ex-FBI friend, Jake, Laura is able to establish that in the years since her mother's death, at least one, and probably two, serial killers have been operating in the area. Whether either of these crime

clusters is related to her mother's death is harder to establish and, given the hostility just about everyone in town has towards Laura, there's no shortage of suspects for any of the crimes.

We learn early on who is responsible for some of the deaths, and we catch glimpses of another, even more sinister, killer. However, this second villain is referred to by a pseudonym the origins of which are never really explained. Maybe it makes sense to US readers, but I never quite managed to tie it in to the character whose identity is eventually revealed. Also, we never find out what happened about all the women who are missing – and we now presume are dead – as a result of the predations of the various bad guys. The final showdown with the ultimate bad guy is tense and dramatic, although I dislike the convention that serial killers are so often portrayed as insane – the cold, heartless, totally sane villains are far more chilling in my opinion – but then there are also all those loose ends bothering me that probably went unnoticed by readers exclusively focussed on the romance aspects.

Overall, a mostly well-plotted story that suffers slightly from too many plotlines and not enough space to resolve them all. I'd say that having so many unsolved crimes in so small an area is stretching the bounds of credibility a little thin, but then we've had a few serial killers like that over here in recent years, so maybe having more than one in what I assume is a relatively small area is plausible over the other side of the pond.

Maggie Boyd says

Lucy Sadler Caldwell has written numerous successful true crime novels. Her skills have been perfected over the years until she is ready to tell the world the story she has told to only a few - the tale of coming home one day and finding her mother brutally killed. Lucy fled the small town that despised her trashy family that awful afternoon but she never forgot. And she never forgave. Now she is determined to find out just what happened that fateful day.

Police chief Ethan Donovan has secrets of his own. The aftermath of a shoot out in Houston has left him injured and emotionally battered. Determined to settle into a peaceful life, he heads to the small town of Dobbs Hollow where the biggest crime tends to be teens being teens. But when Lucy comes back all hell breaks loose and suddenly he finds himself embroiled in the kind of crime and corruption that strains even a big city police department. Working together will the two of them be able to solve the mystery of what is going on in this sleepy, dangerous town or will they be its latest victims?

I am excited to find a new romantic suspense author and thought this book, while far from perfect, was interesting. I will continue to read her, though I hope she improves with time.

Michel Reinhard (Smut Book Junkie Reviews) says

RC provided by the Publisher, via Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review.

Wow! Twisted by Laura K. Curtis kept me on the edge of my seat. It is intense, fast paced, riveting, and mysterious. The book was unpredictable and had me guessing to the very end.

A small town in Texas holds many secrets. Dobbs Hollow is harboring many, including the murder of Lucy Sadler's mother. After seventeen years she is returning home to get the answers to this unsolved crime.

There's a new sheriff in Dobbs Hollow, Ethan Donovan. Ethan has left the fast paced city after a bullet injury to the knee and landed the job as Chief of Police in Dobbs Hollow. When Lucy comes to him for help he re-opens her mother's case.

When Lucy and Ethan start digging into the past they uncover too many secrets. Bodies start turning up, death threats turn into reality, and the lists of suspects keeps getting smaller. A psychotic killer is on the loose and he will stop at nothing to silence Lucy forever. The past is coming for them and they must unravel the unsolved case before they are another unsolved case.

I was hooked from page one to the very end. I was guessing throughout the entire book. I became very invested in their quest to solve this case.

I loved Lucy and Ethan's relationship. They worked well together in spite of all the sexual chemistry and tension.

I highly recommend this book. I am looking forward to reading more of Laura K. Curtis books. Her writing talents will go far.

Paris (kerbytejas) says

The book blurb for **Twisted (Dobbs Hollow #1) by Laura K. Curtis**, made me think that this was going to be an edgy romantic suspense story, and that was just what I wanted to read. Well, despite some 5 & 4 star reviews, I found the book to be a bit light weight and lacking on both the suspense and the romance. Yes there was a complex multi-threaded plot, and yes there was a light-weight romance, but together neither stood out as being exceptional for me. If this is going to be a series (preview of 2nd book was included, but I didn't read all of it) then I suppose that the romance between Lucy and Ethan could develop further in a reprise/cameo type fashion – so there could be hope on that front. I missed the dark, creepy psycho behavior, that put the reader on the edge of their seat; and the twists and turns right when it should all come together in the reader's mind – I was just bored by all that was going on. With the exception of one very brief "hinted" at gruesome murder, none of the events really stood out for me. As I think about it I wonder if there was just too much going on surrounding Lucy's search for her mother's killer. Maybe if there had been fewer plot threads and more development of some of the significant threads it would have been better. Then again maybe it was just me.

Overall this was a 2,75 star read that I will round up to 3 stars

Katherine Paschal says

Lucy has made a name for herself as a true crime writer. She has decided to return to the small town she grew up in, the place where her mother was murdered in. Everyone in town has it out for Lucy, except for

the new Sheriff Ethan. Lucy starts the investigate her mother's unsolved murder, and starts to be harassed. Is the killer afraid that Lucy will discover the truth?

This was a really good mystery. It was dark and twisty, and there were so many suspects I could not pin down the criminal. Everyone was guilty of something it seemed. I was kept guessing right until the last 20 pages or so, but I had an epiphany and was justified. This book was how I wanted Sharp Objects to be when I read it, but I was let down by it, where as this book I was completely engaged in. The book had some gritty details about abuse as well as gruesome murder details, so it is not for the faint of heart.

Lucy was a damaged character with so much baggage she needs a moving truck. Going back to her small town was incredibly dangerous for her, yet at the same time the best thing that could have happened to her emotionally. And Ethan was a broken Knight in shining armor. He was such a solid rock who never gave up. The book had a developing romance between the two characters, but it did not take over the story line, which was actually about the murder mystery.

I can't wait for more from this author because I am most certainly reading everything she writes. I recommend this to anyone who likes a good mystery. This is a fairly short review, but I don't want to give up any details!

I received this book from publisher in exchange for my honest review.

Elizabeth H. says

Seventeen years after her mother's murder, true crime author, Lucy goes back to her hometown for answers. She encounters a very sexy sheriff, Ethan, and explains to him her intent to reopen her mother's case. While the sheriff is fairly new to the town of Dobbs Hollow, he insists on helping Lucy find out the truth, not just because he was knocked straight stupid the minute he saw her either.

This small Texas town holds many secrets. As Lucy and Ethan start to uncover them, bodies start turning up, death threats towards Lucy turn in to actions and the list of suspects keeps getting shorter and shorter. Can they find the answers Lucy is looking for, or will the past literally come back to bite them in the proverbial ass?

This story was incredible. I was hooked from start to finish and kept me guessing through the entire book. I love how the relationship between Lucy and Ethan didn't eclipse the mystery. There were so many different directions going on with the story. Just when I thought I had it figured out, I was wrong.

The suspense in this book was palpable. I was literally biting my nails reading it was so good! I don't want to say much more and spoil the book but I will tell you one thing, Laura K. Curtis is an author to look out for. I highly recommend this to anyone who enjoys a solid romantic suspense read.

I received an ebook copy from the publisher via Net Galley in exchange for an honest review. All conclusions reached are my own

Pamela says

"Twisted" is considered a suspense-romance novel. It's definitely full of suspense, and as for the romance, it's there, but not as much as one would hope for. Speaking of plot, while I found the synopsis to be intriguing, I

thought all the subplots that were tied in together dragged out a little too long. Regardless, the author delivers a well-developed suspenseful story with a slew of characters, keeping the readers guessing right up to the end. While this is the goal, I thought the author made it a little too obvious as to who all the secondary villains were. As for the "Commander" - the top-guy that everyone reported and referred to - it wasn't too hard to figure out who that was two-thirds into the novel.

As for the two protagonists at the heart of the story, Lucy and Ethan, both are likeable and well-developed. While they worked well together in solving the murders, I didn't feel any heat or chemistry between them whatsoever, not even when they had sex the one time. Like I mentioned earlier, the romance plays a minor role in the overall story.

While I may not have been thoroughly amazed with "Twisted," I'm sure this novel will appeal to many other readers.

Kathy says

4.5 stars.

Twisted by **Laura K. Curtis** is a suspense-laden mystery that is full of unexpected twists and turns. This impossible to put down novel is full of unforgettable characters but it is the unfolding investigation that fully grabbed my attention and kept me guessing the killer's identity right up until the story's dramatic conclusion.

Lucy Saddler Caldwell is a successful true crime author whose next project is her mother's unsolved murder. Her return to Dobbs Hollow stirs up a lot of unpleasant memories, both for herself and the town, and Lucy encounters plenty of hostility from the townspeople as she researches her mother's life and tragic death. Lucy is pleasantly surprised by Police Chief Ethan Donovan's cooperation and his willingness to provide her free access to her mother's case files. When a woman resembling Lucy is viciously murdered, Ethan's ensuing investigation reveals a series of unsolved rapes and unexplained disappearances of women in the neighboring vicinity. Unable to easily discern the connection between the old and new cases, Ethan and Lucy are in a race against time to unmask the deranged killer before he strikes again.

Lucy and Ethan are both carrying plenty of unresolved baggage and carefully hidden secrets from their respective pasts. Lucy's secrets stem from her dysfunctional and unhappy childhood in Dobbs Hollow while Ethan's have their roots in his previous career in the Houston police department. While the secrets themselves are not too terribly horrible, it is the emotion attached to those memories that make Lucy and Ethan reluctant to reveal them. While Ethan's revelation explains how he ended up as police chief in Dobbs Hollow, Lucy's plays a crucial role in the overall storyline.

The relationship between Lucy and Ethan is non-adversarial right from the very beginning. Lucy is not very trusting of Ethan but he soon proves to her that he really is on her side. There is a definite chemistry between them but their budding romance never overpowers the mystery aspect of the plot. I enjoyed watching Lucy let down her defenses and although they were slow to confide in each other, it never adversely affected their relationship. When it comes to the investigation, Lucy and Ethan are true partners, and they never intentionally withhold information from one another.

Seventeen years ago, the investigation into Lucy's mother's death was superficial and quickly abandoned. With little to go on, Lucy begins digging into her mother's past and comes up with very surprising information that gives her a more positive viewpoint of her rather notorious mother. I liked that Lucy was able to gain a better perspective of her childhood and that the good memories finally begin to outweigh the bad ones.

The chilling behavior of two of the characters is revealed very early in the novel, but how their actions fit into the overall story is unclear. Equally perplexing are the seemingly unrelated crimes that Ethan's research uncovers. The suspect list is a mile long and there are plenty of red herrings that throw the reader off track time and again.

Twisted is a riveting mystery that kept me up long past my bedtime because I just **HAD** to know who killed Lucy's mom. I just **HAD** to know who was behind the horrible crimes that Ethan uncovered. Darn you, **Laura K. Curtis**, for the sleepless night but **THANK YOU** for a fantastic story!
