



Bad Little Falls

Paul Doiron

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Maine game warden Mike Bowditch has been sent into exile, transferred by his superiors to a remote outpost on the Canadian border. When a blizzard descends on the coast, Bowditch is called to the rustic cabin of a terrified couple. A raving and half-frozen man has appeared at their door, claiming his friend is lost in the storm.

But what starts as a rescue mission in the wilderness soon becomes a baffling murder investigation. The dead man is a notorious drug dealer, and state police detectives suspect it was his own friend who killed him. Bowditch isn't so sure, but his vow not to interfere in the case is tested when he finds himself powerfully attracted to a beautiful woman with a dark past and a troubled young son. The boy seems to know something about what really happened in the blizzard, but he is keeping his secrets locked in a cryptic notebook, and Mike fears for the safety of the strange child.

Meanwhile, an anonymous tormentor has decided to make the new warden's life a living hell. Alone and outgunned, Bowditch turns for assistance to his old friend, the legendary bush pilot Charley Stevens. But in this snowbound landscape — where smugglers wage blood feuds by night — help seems very far away indeed. If Bowditch is going to catch a killer, he must survive on his own wits and discover strength he never knew he possessed.

Bad Little Falls Details

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From Reader Review Bad Little Falls for online ebook

Kevintipple says

When you annoy the bosses once too many times and you work as a game warden for the State of Maine, you get sent to their version of Siberia. In this case, Warden Mike Bowditch has been sent to Washington County. The eastern most county in Maine is well known for poaching, drug abuse, high unemployment, and a host of other social ills. Not to mention the brutal winter working conditions. Bowditch is being punished and he knows it. Just about everything Bowditch has to deal with in his new assignment is made worse because his considerable reputation precedes him.

The biggest place in the county population wise is the county seat of Machias. The town barely has two thousand people. The small town, as well as the surrounding county, is a place where everyone knows everyone else, looks the other way, and pretends to know nothing. That includes ignoring the actions of a local drug dealer. A drug dealer that soon winds up dead with his friend severely injured by frost bite.

While others believe the friend killed the drug dealer during a snowstorm, Bowditch doesn't think so. Any shred of credibility he had coming in was shot by his involvement in the case (never get romantically involved with a suspect is rule one no matter what agency you work for), so he is forced to go it alone to get to the truth. It isn't the first time and won't be the last.

The series that began with The Poacher's Son and continued with Trespasser just keeps getting better and better. This is a very complicated novel that continues to build on an excellent foundation while bringing further nuance and depth to the Bowditch character. Those efforts do not get in the way of the multiple storylines at work in this complex and multi-layered novel. Bad Little Falls by Maine author Paul Doiron is very good and well worth your time.

Bad Little Falls: A Novel
Paul Doiron
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Kevin R. Tipple ©2012

Michael says

I liked this mystery set in rural Downeast Maine for its twists and turns, its realistic coverage of colorful backwoods characters, and its progress in developing the personality of its hero, game warden Mike Bowditch. Given the competition of so many great mystery writers, a three-star rating would be fair, but I am biased as this third one in the series is set in my neighborhood, the low-income communities of Washington County in the eastern tip of Maine.

Bowditch is sent here from mid-coast Maine as punishment after getting too much in the middle of a murder case involving his estranged father. The community of hardscrabble types obviously don't like game wardens, so he easily makes a lot of enemies. He wastes no time in putting his nose in law enforcement business when he gets called out on a search and rescue situation in a blizzard and a man ends up dead from foul play. It looks like a drug deal gone bad. His growing friendship with gorgeous Jamie, the ex-girlfriend of the dead man and sister of a man seriously frostbitten in the event, leads Bowditch to secretly seek alternatives to the official explanation.

At every turn, winter in Downeast Maine rears its ugly head. The Oxycontin addiction problem had an epicenter here a decade ago along with Appalachian states. This book weaves these issues nicely into the tale. Doiron doesn't totally besmirch the county as a backward, godforsaken wilderness. For example, he has the popular sheriff be an open lesbian, which isn't far fetched from the tolerance I've experienced here. So if you want the flavor of the rural Maine environment with your escapist mystery reading, give this a try.

Machias on Machias River, and Bad Little Falls

Remote blueberry barren in Washington County, ME

Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: Mike Bowditch, game warden

SETTING: Wilderness Maine

SERIES: #3 of 3

RATING: 4.5

Mike Bowditch is an excellent game warden, but his feckless nature and self-destructive impulses have caused a lot of trouble for him in his professional life. He has butted heads with his superiors and often seemed arrogant and contentious. As a result, he has been banished to a remote wilderness area on the Canadian border of Maine; and it's the dead of winter. Fortunately, Mike has acknowledged his flaws and has been working hard to temper his self-destructive nature. He isn't always successful, but he's made major strides in becoming more responsible and less obnoxious.

When a half-frozen man appears at the home of a local couple, who are terrified by their visitor, Mike has just had dinner with a local vet who he calls upon to look at the frostbitten man, Prester Sewall.

Accompanied by a local professor who is a wilderness expert, they soon find the man's companion dead in the nearby heath. What would cause these two men to be out in a blizzard that may be the storm of the

century? Could they be selling drugs? Things become even more complicated when Bowditch becomes involved with Prester's sister and her strange young son, Lucas. He tries to protect them, but he is facing his own difficulties. Someone is determined to make his life miserable—letting a skunk loose in Mike's rented home, for example.

BAD LITTLE FALLS is the third book in the Bowditch series and delivers on the promise shown in the first, THE POACHER'S SON. The setting is wonderfully rendered, the prose beautifully descriptive, and the characterization top notch. The development of the character of the boy, Lucas, was compelling. But none of the other characters are ever able to outshine Mike Bowditch. Watching him battle his own personal demons is almost as interesting as following his progress on the investigation. I was quite disappointed in the second book in this series, TRESPASSER, because there was almost nothing about Mike's game warden job and the fact that Mike was so unwilling to control his own base impulses. I am happy to report that Doiron has addressed both those flaws, and the result is a book that I thoroughly enjoyed and one that has me anxious to see what happens next. Excellent.

Donna says

Maine game warden Mike Bowditch is in trouble with his superiors who have exiled him to the uppermost county adjacent to the Canadian border. In a place where drugs are rampant, many residents don't like game wardens, especially Bowditch. While trying to be sociable, Bowditch breaks bread with the local veterinarian and a well known woodsman. Taking the vet on a call, Bowditch finds one man practically frozen and another one that definitely is. Although it's not his case, Bowditch doesn't know how to stay on the sidelines.

After reading several of the latest Bowditch books, I found this #3 in the series. I like seeing how Bowditch has evolved in these books. I still enjoy the feeling of the outdoors that these stories provide. All the snow is appealing to me in the 100 degree temperatures of Texas.

Donna says

This author seems to be a solid 3 stars for me. I like this writing. He doesn't taunt any of my pet peeves. The MC is a game warden in Maine. The author includes a lot of info on both Maine and job details of being a game warden. I actually like the info and he weaves it seamlessly into his plot.

His stories seem to be on the light side, which is sometimes, just what I want. This one was just that.

Ellen Keim says

This wasn't a bad book, it just wasn't as suspenseful as I had thought it would be. The main character is a game warden and it was interesting to read about what that entails and how the job coordinates with other branches of law enforcement. My main quibble was with the character of the 12-year-old boy, Lucas. Although his character gets a lot of book-time, he's not as well-drawn as he could have been, considering the part that he plays in the drama.

There is also a lot of information about the climate, especially what it's like in winter in Maine near the Canadian border. I always find that interesting--I'm a fan of Scandinavian and Canadian novels partly for that reason--but it doesn't carry the whole book by any means.

The "love story" in this book is one-sided and I was left wondering what the main character saw in the woman he fell in love with so quickly.

Although the book is well-reviewed by others, I didn't follow suit because it didn't meet my "third-day" rule. If a book doesn't stay with me enough that I'm still thinking about it at least three days after I finish it, it's not going to get four or five stars! This book didn't meet that criterium.

Chris says

Washington County, Maine. The Sunrise County. Poor. Isolated. Long, cold winters. Beautiful in the summertime. Jonesport-Beals. Machias. Lubec. I know the area well. This story takes place in Whitney (Whiting?), Maine. It was a good mystery. It was quite believable.

Susan Grace says

Wow! Mike Mike Mike! You sure get involved in some crazy s#!t!! Warden Bowditch has been moved to the boonies of Maine as a consequence of pushing the boundaries of his job. A new boss and new "wicked" colorful characters!

Deb says

A fast-paced engrossing story! Mike Bowditch has been transferred Down East to Washington Co, Maine and as usual he's not making friends in the area. Bowditch doesn't have an easy personality which as usual causes him difficulty. The author certainly knows how to create an ambiance which infuses the novel and fits the plot perfectly.

Sherry says

The Main(e) :) character in this series usually is not this dumb. Hope he comes back to himself in the next book.

Theresa says

Actual rating 4 1/2 stars

I wasn't sure what to expect when I purchased this book for 1.99 at Barnes and Noble's annual summer

clearance sale. I decided I'd give it try even though it was the third book in a series that I suspected was most likely written with a male audience in mind. While I do hold with my prediction that the target audience was most likely male between the ages of 20-60 it was not uncomfortable nor excluding to the fairer sex. In fact, I found it quite refreshing to read something so action filled with a younger male protagonist. Also, while there were several references to earlier books in the series those references were explained suitably and did not effect readability. So, all in all, I really liked this book. It was well written and moved along quickly. The characters were described and supported in vivid accuracy. The plot had constant action with twists and turns throughout. I generally prefer a book that I can't figure out "whodunit" before the big reveal which I unfortunately was able to do with this story. However, I will admit I only had it half figured out. The obvious easy to follow clue in the beginning is the biggest fault I had with this one. Because of that and a couple of tiny plot inconsistencies is the reason I'm giving a half star less than five. To sum it up --this is one instance I was glad to be wrong and decided to read this book.

Paul Pessolano says

“Bad Little Falls” by Paul Doiron, published by Minotaur Books.

Category – Mystery/Thriller

Those of us who have been following the life of Mike Bowditch should be excited about “Bad Little Falls”. This is the third book in a series that takes place in the woods of Maine. Mike is a Maine game warden that has been ostracized to the “Siberia” of Maine due to his actions in the first two books, thus you may want to read them in sequence.

Mike finds himself again involved in a murder that causes him to overstep his duties as a game warden. After having a nice evening with a local college professor and veterinarian, he is called back when a man suffering from exposure and frost bite is discovered by a terrified couple. The man claims that his friend is also out in a storm that has the temperature well below freezing. The man is found dead believed to succumbed to the weather. An autopsy shows that he has been murdered. The man also is a known drug dealer in the area. Mike, in investigating the crime, finds himself romantically involved with the girl friend of the man. She is carrying a lot of baggage being a former drug and alcohol addict. She is trying to change her life not only for herself but for her son’s sake. The boy is a little on the odd side and seems to be a troubled young man. Mike’s life becomes more complicated when someone nails a coyote pelt to his door with a message and someone also puts a skunk in his trailer.

A very good mystery that takes place in the harsh backwoods of Maine, a mystery that takes the reader to the very end before revealing the cause and person responsible for the murders and a mystery that can be continued because not everything in the end is resolved.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Bad Little Falls is the third book I have read in the Mike Bowditch series, and this is the one book so far that I felt didn't really rock my boat. It was great to go back and read an early book in the series and the story was not that bad. I just found it not very memorable and I kept forgetting who was who. Personally, I found the

best part was that this was the first time Mike met Stacey. However, the case was not that riveting although I did find the ending was good and I was even a bit surprised when the full truth was revealed.

All and all, this was an OK book, although it did feel like a let down when compared to *Knife Creek* and *Stay Hidden*.

Hallie says

Paul Doiron made a big splash with his Edgar Award-nominated first novel, “The Poacher’s Son,” which introduced Maine game warden Mike Bowditch and his extraordinary talent for tracking animals and people through the worst weather that Maine can dish up. When he’s reassigned to the eponymous “Bad Little Falls,” a remote town near the Canadian border where drug abuse, unemployment, poverty, violence, and poaching are rampant, his reputation for disregarding orders precedes him and it looks as if his career has dead-ended. To him, it’s the equivalent of “being exiled to Siberia.”

When he’s called upon to examine the carcass of a zebra, frozen to death in a wild animal hunting park, he immediately makes a dangerous enemy of the park’s owner, a yahoo whose only concern is luring customers who will pay big bucks so they can mount animal heads over their fireplaces. Lonely and far from friends, Bowditch develops an unhealthy attachment to lovely Jamie Sewall, a former drug addict who manages a McDonald’s. Her son is troubled, and her brother and ex-boyfriend sell drugs that may have recently killed a college student. When Jamie’s ex is murdered, Bowditch struggles to rein in his need to protect her.

The story has a strong sense of place and makes palpable the raw power that weather and water can wield. The plot is driven by the elusive possibility that this time Bowditch can redeem his career while saving Jamie and her son. Shelve this book beside the works of Steve Hamilton and William Kent Kruger, stories of strong but not macho men living in godforsaken places, bruised by past relationships, and trying to get it right this time.

-- Review first published in *The Boston Globe*, 11/11/12

HBalikov says

This isn’t my first dance with Doiron. I read *The Poacher’s Son*, the first book in the saga of Main Game Warden Mike Bowditch. It was a very engaging thriller set in the backwoods.

This is the third book in the series and, as a result of the events of books one and two, Bowditch has been transferred to the “easternmost” district in Maine. He comes with a reputation or as Mike’s new boss says: “...you’re an arrogant fuckup who thinks he’s the smartest guy in the Warden Service.” Even Mike admits that this assessment isn’t completely off the mark.

This part of Maine is known for: its magnificent wild scenery; its poverty; its drug dealing and addiction. Game wardens are not DEA or the local sheriff but they, too, are often called to deal with situations involving guns and drugs.

Mike has little time to settle in before a “white-out” dry snow blizzard engulfs the region. (This is Doiron at his best describing the storm and its effects. I learned a lot about the difference between a wet snow blizzard

and this type and I am glad that I have had the choice on whether to go out in such conditions. Bowditch doesn't have that choice and is called out to a cabin where a scary injured man has just appeared outside somebody's cabin.

Things get complicated fast with death, drugs and instant infatuation with a woman's who serves him his breakfast sandwich and coffee at the local McDonald's. What becomes irksome is that Bowditch knows that he has to keep control over his anger; his tendency to jump to conclusions; his vulnerability for a pretty face and his potential for alcoholism. He has to but he doesn't. He falls off each wagon more than once, despite his awareness and others pointing this out to him (see above).

Just because he has the knack of solving difficult problems and doggedly pursuing his quarry doesn't make up for the character development or lack thereof. Doiron may be plotting a much slower arc of maturity for his hero, but this doesn't fire me with anticipation for the next novel in the series.
