



Devil Sent the Rain

Lisa Turner

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Edgar Award nominee and bestselling author Lisa Turner's hard-boiled Detective Billy Able returns in this dark Southern mystery about the murder of a dazzling Memphis socialite—and the scandals revealed in the wake of her death

The heart can be an assassin. Detective Billy Able knows that from experience.

Fresh from solving Memphis' most sensational murder case, Homicide Detective Billy Able and his ambitious new partner Frankie Malone are called to a bizarre crime scene on the outskirts of town. A high society attorney has been murdered while dressed in a wedding gown. Billy is shocked to discover he has a very personal connection to the victim. When the attorney's death exposes illegal practices at her family's prestigious law firm, the scandal is enough to rock the southern city's social world.

In a tale of the remnants of Old South aristocracy and entitlement, twisted by greed and vengeance, Billy must confront the secrets of his own past to have any chance at solving the murder of the girl he once knew. But as he seeks the truth, he's drawn closer to an embittered killer bent on revenge—and eliminating the threat Billy poses.

Devil Sent the Rain Details

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From Reader Review Devil Sent the Rain for online ebook

Stephen says

This is a solid mystery but with a couple of faults. A woman attorney, Caroline Saunders is murdered in the suburbs of Memphis while driving her car. Who was the passenger and what are the reasons for this dreaded end of life. Homicide Detective Billy Able is assigned to get some answers. Working with his partner, Frankie Malone, they attempt to put a complicated puzzle together.

The problems arise for me are the pace of the story and the large amount of characters ,making it difficult at times to follow the plot. There several persons , male and female who might be the killer and there are several reasons for Caroline's demise. At times the plot gets a little too confusing and so do the reasons for the murder. As is sometimes said at an athletic event, it is difficult to keep track without a scorecard ! In time all the pieces fall into place and there is a satisfactory resolution for all the main characters.

Lagniappe says

I'll admit it - I'm a sucker for stories about old southern families. Devil Sent the Rain does not disappoint. It begins with the murder of a bride, in her wedding dress, on her way to a secret ceremony with an unknown groom. Was her death related to her nuptials, or does her powerful family have other secrets someone would kill for? That's what Memphis detective Billy Able is determined to find out. There are enough twists and turns to keep you guessing until (almost) the end, and the secondary characters are numerous and interesting. The book is the third in a series, but totally stands alone. I have not read the first two installments and had no problems at all following the story. It lost one star for being just a wee bit too stereotypical, but is still a definite recommend.

John Magee says

Above-average page-turning thriller

Finished it in 3 days. Lots of fun. Lisa Turner kept me guessing until the end. Excellent summer beach kind of read.

Julie says

Devil Sent the Rain by Lisa Turner is a 2016 William Morrow Paperback publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

This is book three in the Billy Able detective series, but it can read as a stand alone. However, now that I've read this one, I am hoping to squeeze the first book into my reading schedule.

When Caroline Lee, an attorney who ditched her fiancé, is found dead in her car, still wearing her wedding dress, it soon becomes apparent she is a homicide victim. Billy Able must determine who would want

Caroline dead, and why.

Well, I have to say, I am impressed with this mystery and found I really like Billy Able, the southern atmosphere, and the Gothic tones, which are NOT supernatural, but are pure in the sense that the book features delusional and damaged characters- and that's putting it mildly.

When Caroline Lee, a lawyer and member of a prominent southern family is found dead in her car after calling off her wedding, the suspects pile up in a hurry, giving detective Billy Able a lot to work on. As the saga unfolds, he discovers a personal connection to the case and the family. But, as he digs deeper he uncovers a world of shady dealings and the closer he comes to unmasking the killer, the closer he comes to putting himself in grave danger.

This story is a twisted family saga and crime story that perfectly captures the tones and overlays of the south, which always appeals to me. I love those deep roots, family secrets and lies, competition, revenge, backstabbing, the melodrama and desperation that usually suck a reader into its lethal steaming pot of poison, but add in a good murder mystery, a complex detective, shocking twists and mind blowing revelations, you the makings of, not only a good detective story, but good literary novel as well.

While the story is certainly dark and pretty heavy, it's not packed with graphic violence, but instead is character driven, focusing on the scheming, various crimes and motives, and has more of psychological edge, which is another plus in my book.

I can see this series becoming a favorite of mine, so I will catch up with the first book, which will hopefully keep me pacified while I impatiently wait for the third release.

4 stars

Christine says

Detective Billy Able and his new partner Frankie Malone are assigned to an unusual case of a would-be bride found dead dressed in her wedding gown at an isolated animal refuge. If this isn't strange enough, the case gets even more complicated when Billy discovers he has a personal connection to the victim, high-society attorney Caroline Lee. Although Billy had known Caroline and her family for years, he tries to remain objective while seeking justice for Caroline. Frankie is just as determined to solve the case even though she didn't know Caroline, but she does have hopes that doing a good job on the investigation will help advance her career. The two detectives must learn to trust each other while solving a difficult, high-profile case involving the secrets of a wealthy, powerful Memphis family.

This is the first time I've read anything by author Lisa Turner, so I wasn't sure what to expect. I found the book to be well-written and intriguing. I enjoyed the Memphis setting and getting a glimpse of modern society there and seeing how the old South still plays a part of what goes on in that area. The characters have depth and the plot is more complex than it originally appears, as the victim's personal and professional life come to play in the case. While the investigation moves forward at a steady pace throughout the book, the central questions of the investigation, why was Caroline wearing her wedding gown and who murdered her, remain unanswered until the end. This keeps the tension level high until the very end. When the killer is finally revealed, it isn't who I was expecting and I enjoyed being surprised.

I like both Billy and Frankie as main characters. They have different backgrounds and are at different stages in their careers, but both are good people and good detectives, and their partnership works. In the beginning, I thought Billy could have given more credit to Frankie, but I was glad to see he seems to appreciate her more by the end of the book and could see how good of a team they could be. The characters, plot, and steady pace combine for an interesting novel that will appeal to a wide range of readers. I would definitely love to read more by this author.

This review was originally written for Smitten by Books site and blog. (4.5 stars) The book was provided to me in exchange for an honest review.

Pamela says

This time Billie Able ends up across the border in the Delta. Mississippi plantation country and home for him. His victim is his first love, Caroline Lee, and Billie's emotions are riding high. Rainy country days and cool Memphis nights take me back home and Lisa Turner turns in another good Memphis mystery. I may just spend the weekend cooking cornbread and greens and watching movies with steamboats going up and downriver!

Rita Gorra says

This is a well written story, but...I can't really care about Billy or Frankie. They are a little 2 dimensional. I kept reading hoping to get involved with the characters but if they had both been shot halfway through I don't know if it would have made a difference for me. In some books I cringe and worry about the players and in 2 cases had a hard time reading the author's books following the murder of a person I cared about. I would try one more as the background and especially Martin and Rosalyn (I truly hated them) seemed so sinister.

Colleen A Kabai says

A very complicated murder mystery with the killer being mentally unstable.

Would have liked to have more romance included and a heroine who played a more important role. A good book.

Clint says

First 50 pages of this mystery zipped along, and then the final 30 moved fairly quickly because I wanted to find out whodunit and be done with it. The middle slogged along as barely a week's worth of time in the plot seemed like a couple of months. During that week-plus, Detective Billy Able is ready to pin the murder of his onetime squeeze Caroline Lee on two different people (really, a third too). So how good a detective is he? Then, near the end of the book, he suddenly has feelings for his partner that are never explored throughout

the narrative. And then there's the spelling throughout the book of the word "sherriff." Really?

Kristi says

Devil Sent the Rain was a quick read. It's a decent murder mystery about a woman who was killed in her wedding dress on her way to marry a mystery man. She also happens to be the first love of the lead detective. I liked Detective Able and would read other books in this series. You have to be willing to look past a lot of Southern stereotypes to enjoy, though.

Arelya J. says

'Devil Sent the Rain' is Tricky

By Arelya J. Mitchell

"Billy drove away from the diner thinking detective work was fairly basic: ask smart questions, take good notes, and follow the trail to the end. The tricky part was hearing what wasn't being said."

The above is from the first paragraph of Chapter 35, but I appreciated it because it sums up this whodunit by Lisa Turner set in Memphis and the 'Mid-South', an area which consists of West Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas—or some call it the Tri-State area. But whatever term you prefer, if you're from the area you know that the author uses real places to move both characters and plots along to solve this murder mystery in a Post Antebellum 21st Century Memphis-Mississippi-rooted scenario. The family plantation is not Tara but Airlee, with the 'lee' portion denoting an Old South Lee family.

The 'Billy' is Billy Able who is a detective in the Memphis police department. He is the main protagonist with his own checkered history where he was born in the right family on his mother's side but landed on the wrong side of the tracks on his father's side and after some 'S-happens' he ends up living with his uncle and growing up working in his uncle's diner until he goes off to college. But he still has a pedigree which legitimizes his involvement with prominent Lee family members.

The author writes: "His mother had taught him about sugar shells, pickle forks, and asparagus servers. He knew the proper placement of the fish knife, a pastry fork, and dessert spoon. The afternoons she'd been sober, she would lay out the family's sterling flatware and instruct him on its proper placement for formal meals..."

Turner harshly defines Billy's socio-economic dilemma: "The poor whites bought acreage from struggling plantations. They started their farms but couldn't compete with the big planters who still had cheap labor from sharecroppers. Most of the poor whites lost their farms. They had to go into government work or sell burial insurance to the blacks. They ended up living in tenant houses or trailers. That's where the term 'trailer trash' comes from..." Okay, so this is a bit of side history but it plays into the storyline in defining other characters and landscape; it further defines what Billy is up against in this southern whodunit.

This review could be riddled with spoiler alerts, so I am going to be very, very careful as I thread through this minefield of an entertaining and well-written whodunit. Yes, as I like to do with any mystery novel I am

reading, I had pen and paper in hand to write down clues and make a list of the ‘usual suspects’. I figured this one out midpoint, but all the while I was leaning to where I was leaning I was hoping Turner wouldn’t go there, but she did. But it was still fun getting there through the detective work of Billy Able, his fellow female detective partner, Frankie Malone, and the rigmarole of other characters, leads, dead-end twists, and subplots. Turner also presents the reader with comprehensive inner workings of what goes on in detective work, and, more importantly, she hones in on the political mechanizations inside a police department when dealing with a high profile case and a filthy rich family.

Among the suspects are the victim’s nutty avant-garde cousin Zelda; the would be humiliated former DA Highsmith; the nervous breakdown driven aunt; the sickly but southern gentlemanly ala Rhett Butler-like father; the weak but manipulative greedy gay brother; the domineering politically astute strong-will equally manipulative bitchy mother Rosalyn Lee; the bedraggled grieving obstinate cousin; and the Middle-Eastern hot-headed doctor whose status is fixated on saving face; the Italian housekeeper; a two-bit career criminal; the ambulance chasing lawyer—and a few others thrown in maybe for the heck of it to rattle your brainwaves.

What I would like to see are some of these characters, especially Rosalyn Lee, exploited more extensively in another novel, because I am a strong believer that when characters are exploited deeper you go up another level as a writer whether you want to or not and that presents even more complicated problems for both author and reader to solve. This was a good, fast read, but Turner knew when and where to slow it to bring in more of the suspects’ back stories and/or idiosyncrasies.

Notice I did not reveal who the victim was. I did not because even though it doesn’t take you long to find out who it is, Turner has written it so artfully that if I were to reveal it, it becomes a quasi-mini spoiler alert.

The novel gets its title from the following passage: “This crazy-looking woman in line got in my face and whispered, ‘The devil sent the rain’. Then she crossed herself. It was creepy.”

The rain is symbolic and serves as a vehicle for clues. Turner further uses the symbol of ‘rain’ to effectively define Detective Billy Able’s history, his character, his rebellion.

This one is that proverbial page ‘turner’, and let’s hope the ‘Turner’ who wrote it will revisit these characters in another book.

END

Candace says

Another Good Able/Malone Mystery

The third story in the Billy Able series may be the best one yet. Lotsa atmosphere, good complex characters, and a clever but fairly played-out plot.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Devil Sent the Rain is the third book in the Detective Billy Able series, but reading this one without having read the previous two was no problem. Honestly, I was so thrilled with this book that I'm glad that I have book two to read as well.

As a big fan of books with a story that takes place in the American South was I instantly hooked with this story about a young woman in a wedding dress that is found murdered in a car. For Billy Able is this case a real shocker, the women in question, Caroline Lee, was his old sweetheart from when he was young. The typical Romeo and Juliet romance, a poor boy meets a rich girl. Now he must solve her murder.

I found Devil Sent the Rain to be the kind of book that is hard to put down and the investigation into Caroline Lee's life. She recently left her fiance, so why was she dressed in a wedding dress? And the members of her family is acting odd, from her cold-hearted mother to the crazy aunt who never got over the disappearance of her son Finn. Billy and his new partner Frankie Malone has to really dig to find the answers.

I really liked this book and I can't wait to read more books in this series!

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through Edelweiss for an honest review!

Ardys says

I enjoyed the fact that the novel takes place in Memphis. Many places familiar to me were part of the storyline. I would have given the book 3 1/2 stars if that were an option. I wouldn't give it 4 stars because it lacked something in the character development. It was a good quick read anyhow.

Race Bannon Berns says

This is a so-so mystery, well told but belabored by a few things including a rather inane climax and guilty party.

First, why do we need to know the make/model/year of every character's car? Yes, this may be somewhat fleshing out depth in the story but it seemed irksome when it is described that often.

Also, why are so many characters afflicted with various maladies? Is it the water in Memphis? There are no less than three incurable diseased characters and also a few mentally impacted ones.

I did like the supporting detective (Frankie), much better than the lead detective (Billy Able). She seemed much more well-rounded and intellectual and not so weepy, although she

does not have a personal relationship to the case as did Billy.

I mentioned the weird ending to the book. Several characters are rather slipshod arrested or identified as the killer only to find out they just as quickly get exonerated, and the actual killer engages in a really elaborate climax scene that made me laugh in disbelief.

So tread lightly if you want to read this one.
