



## Summit Lake

*Charlie Donlea*

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Charlie Donlea

**Summit Lake** Charlie Donlea

**“A gem of a mystery, fast-paced and suspenseful.” --Catherine Coulter, # 1 *New York Times* bestselling author**

***No suspects. No persons of interest. Just a girl who was alive one day and dead the next.***

Some places seem too beautiful to be touched by horror. Summit Lake, nestled in North Carolina’s Blue Ridge Mountains, is that kind of place. But two weeks ago, Becca Eckersley, a first-year law student and daughter of a powerful attorney, was brutally murdered there. Now the town is reeling with grief, and the police are baffled.

**“An exciting debut, with all the right touches, captivating from the first page to the last.” --Steve Berry, *New York Times* bestselling author**

At first, investigative reporter Kelsey Castle thinks of the assignment as a fluff piece. But the savagery of the crime, and the efforts to keep it quiet, hint at something far more sinister than a random attack by a stranger. As Kelsey digs deeper, despite danger and warnings, she feels a growing connection to the dead girl. And the more she learns about Becca’s friendships, her love life—and her secrets—the more convinced she becomes that walking in Becca’s footsteps could lead her out of her own dark past...

**“A swift, outstanding debut.” --Robert Dugoni, *New York Times* bestselling author**

**“Fans of contemporary suspense will enjoy this brisk read.” --Booklist**

## Summit Lake Details

Date : Published March 28th 2017 by Pinnacle (first published January 26th 2016)

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Author : Charlie Donlea

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Suspense, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Crime

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# From Reader Review Summit Lake for online ebook

## Norma \* Traveling Sister says

Traveling Friends Review by Norma and Brenda

It's no secret that Brenda and I really enjoy Donlea's novels and have highly recommended his books in the past on our blog and to our Traveling Sisters and Friends, especially the novel DON'T BELIEVE IT. After we finished up our monthly group read on our Traveling Friends group for DON'T BELIEVE IT we were all left with wanting more Donlea so we quickly dove into reading Donlea's debut novel, SUMMIT LAKE. He is such a natural and talented author - he definitely knows how to write a darn good suspenseful thriller!

SUMMIT LAKE by CHARLIE DONLEA is a gripping, edgy, dark, and suspenseful murder mystery novel that opens up with quite the shocking scene, ends with a surprising and shocking twist but left us with some unanswered questions.

As mentioned above, the opening scene was a bit shocking and a little darker than some of us were expecting, but after we absorbed that shock we were drawn into this story right away and couldn't put it down until we were dealt with another shock which left some of us wanting to run and hide from this story. But, we all soon gathered together to discuss that surprising twist, which we didn't see coming as we shared some theories amongst ourselves.

CHARLIE DONLEA delivers a well-written, fast-paced and captivating read here that is told in a past and present timeline in alternating points of view between Becca (her story before her death) and Kelsey Castle's (an investigative reporter looking into her death). For most of us we found both of these perspectives equally interesting and captivating.

We all absolutely loved the setting here with the small lake town which really added an extra layer to the story for us and that left us with a bit to discuss. We also loved the characters from the town but left us questioning some of their actions. We have to mention that name too, Kelsey Castle - what an awesome main character's name!

Charlie Donlea had us guessing and sharing a few theories and some of us pieced a few different things together. We have some very clever friends and some of us picked up on some of those clues that Donlea left for us. However, he has this way of leading us down a path to where we second guess ourselves. Even if we thought we knew where the ending was headed and had our suspicions we were all still left shocked thinking WOW I can't believe it that he's done it again. We really like that feeling which has us second guessing ourselves because we are not sure what we are supposed to pick up on and what we are not supposed to. Donlea does that so well and in the end with that second shocker just shows us how well Donlea can pull everything together.

We do recommend this one with caution as there is some scenes we were not prepared for and found that they could be triggers for some readers. So please check out some more reviews on Goodreads if you feel you might need a heads up or just drop us a message in our contact section of our blog or message on Goodreads and we will be more than happy to help with any concerns that you might have.

Review written and posted on our themed book blog:

Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading

### **Sue says**

SUMMIT LAKE by author Charlie Donlea, is a well-written debut psychological crime suspense mystery thriller that has winner written all over it.

The novel is set in a little town called Summit Lake in the Blue Ridge Mountains, in North Carolina, where urban workers take a break from the rat race and go and spend time at their weekend homes...a real tourist town. The town has a beautiful view of the mountains and Blue Lake.

“Somewhere in this quaint tourist town, a girl had been murdered. It seemed too nice a place for such a thing to happen.”

The story opens with the brutal murder of law student, Becca Eckersley, who had come to Summit Lake, and her parent’s second home to study for her law exams. Her father is a prominent attorney.

Her attacker savagely raped and killed her in her parent’s summer home.

“He was vicious and possessed as he silenced her, his hands clamping with a powerful rage around her neck...she still resisted, by never breaking eye contact with him.”

He then fled through the sliding door, leaving Becca a few moments of life, before her time was up.

The story then flashes back and forth, fourteen months earlier with Becca, and her college life at George Washington University. We meet Becca’s college friends awaiting their college acceptance letters.

There are no leads or suspects on the case. A girl with so many hidden secrets. Who would someone kill a college student and Why?

Kelsey Castle, a crime investigative reporter from Miami, FL at Events Magazine, is sent by her boss to Summit Lake, to investigate the story. Now the work would begin. She had to conduct interviews, gather facts and evidence to put the mystery to rest...to write the story of a girl’s murder.

I really enjoyed reading this suspenseful novel, and the character are well-fleshed out. Twists and turns and many surprises, the identity of the killer is not be revealed until the end. When the killer is finally revealed, I was not expecting it. The only issue I had with this novel was why a reporter, with many problems of her own, starts investigating the death. Why weren’t the police more involved?

I’ll definitely be keeping an eye out for more from this author! Well done!

I wish to thank Kensington and NetGalley for an ARC.

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### **Christine says**

I wish to thank Net Galley, Kensington Books, and author Charlie Donlea for an ARC of this book in exchange for an unbiased review.

Wow, Charlie Donlea! Your writing career is off to a good start with one terrific read. Yes, this is indeed a clever debut mystery/suspense novel that engaged me the entire way. Reading a book by a brand new author is always a risk, but when it pays off, it is so satisfying. Not only is the ride great, but there is a new author on the must-read list to look out for.

The story is set in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina and is about the murder of first-year law student Becca Eckersley. The chapters alternate between Becca's story before her death and the tale of investigative reporter Kelsey Castle as she attempts to figure out exactly what happened to Becca. Mr. Donlea slowly drops little clues along the way that kept this a compelling read for me. There are plenty of secrets and delightful little surprises, not to mention a helluva big twist towards the end. The characters are well written and well developed, just the way I like them. The pace is great and never flags, and overall the book is a fast read. When forced to put the kindle down, I couldn't wait to get back to it.

The overriding theme is a good one. It deals with how one's whole life can change (or even end) with one bad decision. In this case, the deed that was done really wasn't necessary, making the repercussions that much worse.

My only complaint is that the author takes some major liberties in the manner in which Kelsey obtains a lot of her data. In my opinion, those with info, including law enforcement and medical personnel, are unrealistically eager to risk their jobs and just hand over whatever Kelsey wants. And what happened to HIPPA?? Because of this, I knocked off a full star, but I have to admit I still loved the experience of reading this book. I do think Mr. Donlea is truly talented and has the potential to become a real star. I am eager to see what he serves up next!

Summit Lake is strongly recommended to all fans of mystery and suspense.

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### **Jonetta says**

Kelsey Castle, a renowned crime writer for a prominent magazine, is assigned to develop a story about the murder of Becca Eckersley, a law student from a prominent family, who was savagely killed two weeks prior in Summit Lake. Becca was alone at her family's vacation home near the Blue Ridge Mountains. Kelsey first thought this was a light assignment given to her by her editor as she recovers from her own situation. However, as she probes for answers, Kelsey finds an even larger effort by law enforcement to stifle the investigation.

There's a lot to like about this story, the first being the method used to present it. Becca and Kelsey deliver the narratives, the former's beginning 14 months prior to the murder and the latter in the present. It was a great way to develop the characters for the reader and we soon see startling parallels between the two women as the details of Becca's life take shape. Beware of some serious red herrings that are cleverly crafted.

This story has a slow burn that moves to an exciting and tense resolution. I really enjoyed it, even though there were some dangling plot issues I felt needed more explanation. However, that provided for some interesting discussions in my Traveling Friends group. It's my second book by this author and he's becoming

a favorite.

(I received an advance copy from NetGalley in exchange for an unbiased review)

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## **Christina - Traveling Sister says**

### **3 Nice Guys Finish Last: Tales From The Dreaded Friendzone stars!!**

Fade in. Scene Set.

Kelsey Castle (excellent name BTW), a prominent true-crime author and journalist still in recovery from a rocky few months, is sent to the small, stilt-housed, cozy town of Summit Lake. She is sent here for her own well-being as well as to cover the murder of young, beautiful, full-of-potential, her-whole-life-ahead-of-her, Becca Eckersley.

This is told from 2 POVs - Kelsey's (which we're given information about the *present* state of the investigation) and Becca's (in which we're given information delved out in typical moment-by-moment mystery fashion leading up to her murder). This is the first thing that was off-kilter for me. Because we're given these two alternating POVs that don't intersect at all (other than Kelsey investigating Becca's murder) there are **a lot** of characters whose development feels pivotal but falls to the wayside.

**“No suspects. No persons of interest. Just a girl who was alive one day and dead the next.”**

It felt a bit to me that the lack of suspects is what Donlea wanted to carry this story. Everyone is a suspect, suspect everyone seemed to be a common theme here but this fell flat for me because there isn't actually any development into the motive that anyone would have to commit murder. It was a clever red herring but it wasn't pulled off with the finesse I would've expected from Donlea.

The parallels between Becca and Kelsey were one of my favorite things in this novel. I think Donlea wove a poetic, intricate and layered web between these two strong women and it made both of them more likable MCs. I find often in these types of novels that authors don't feel the need for the characters to be likable as long as they're *interesting* and this was a nice break from that.

There is some implausibility that is generally inherent in reading most types of fiction. Kelsey does receive an inordinate amount of help from random people in Summit Lake that borders on illegal but that aspect didn't bother me so much because suspending a bit of reality is par for the course in reading. However, I can totally see how the total and complete failure of the police department might be a turn off for some. My main issue is not that you have to suspend *some* belief or one major point of the story it's that so many small things are implausible that it makes the reader have to consistently suspend reality throughout the novel.

I will note for future readers that I found this book to be **\*trigger city\*** and I don't even like that term. This deals with some very heavy stuff (even for a novel about murder) and there is an onslaught of difficult scenes the reader has to get through in this one. I completed this as a Traveling Friends read and I really enjoyed discussing all of the aspects of this layered mystery! I think this is another one that would be great for any type of book club or buddy read because there's a lot of speculation opportunities throughout and areas for deep discussion.

In the end, I probably would've rated this one two stars for the first half of the book. It's well paced if not a bit slow for me and a few of the scenes were difficult for me to stomach and keep going. The twists in the last third of this book were very well done and placed and I really didn't see them coming! I enjoyed Donlea's Don't Believe It so much that I think I came into this with really high hopes and was a bit let down. **HOWEVER**, I think anyone looking at reading this should pick it up because it's a well written, well paced and well-constructed story. It just wasn't **my** story.

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### **Rose (Traveling Sister) says**

I'm not sure that this was *quite* 4 stars for me, but I have no qualms about rounding up in this case. Overall, *Summit Lake* is a pretty satisfying little mystery.

**"The stilt houses were still bright with the dawning sunlight. A sunny rainstorm, and it wasn't even her birthday."**

Kelsey Castle is pretty big-time, as far as journalists go. She's covered true crime extensively and has a wide national audience. However, she's had a rough go of things lately, so her editor sends her to a cozy town set deep within the Blue Ridge Mountains to cover a one-off murder. The idea is that she deserves to get away from the hustle and bustle to recover from recent events, but once she learns more about the victim, a promising law student named Becca Eckersley, she finds certain parallel experiences that quickly turn the case into an obsession.

This book is probably trigger central for some people. There are fairly graphic scenes of assault, insinuations of victim blaming, relentless creeptastic dudebros - basically a mosaic of every woman's worst nightmares. And if you're a cis man, you might find yourself triggered, too. Becca has several male friends that she "friend-zones" despite them being "nice guys," - basically a mosaic of every man's worst nightmares. Okay, I'm getting worked up. Lemme go sniff my essential oils real quick.

There, I'm back. All that being said, and without sounding like I'm giving a man a prize for NOT being THE WORST, I really enjoyed how Charlie Donlea crafted a fairly feminist narrative that really bastardizes the idea that women owe men anything in return for their friendship. In a world with so many books written by men whose descriptions of women are reductive and nauseating, it's always nice to read an exception.

I also found Donlea's pacing to be very successful. There were never any long stretches of waiting for things to happen. I always prefer it when a mystery unravels gradually rather than sucker-punching you with something majorly far-fetched in the eleventh hour. Furthermore, the plot felt extremely rooted in reality, its plausibility factor much higher than the typical thriller that is constantly pushing the bounds of what's believable.

The prose isn't anything terribly special, as is the case with most suspense novels, but it's descriptive enough to give you a good sense of the setting and who each character is. The only thing that *really didn't work* was the fact that there were at least two glaringly unanswered questions at the end for me. It's possible that I misread or didn't read closely enough, but certain things that were hinted at throughout the story kind of just dropped off at the end once we learned who committed the crime. My gears are significantly ground.

Regardless, this was a worthwhile read that has me curious to pick up more of Donlea's work.

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## Debra says

Summit Lake beings with the brutal rape and murder of first year law student, Becca Eckersley. Becca was staying at her parent's home in Summit Lake while studying for her final exams. She diligently followed her parent's rules of keeping the doors locked and the security system on, until that fateful night when someone she knew knocked on the door. She turned off the alarm and opened the door not knowing the danger she was letting inside the home. Now the town of Summit Lake is reeling. As the town is coping with their first ever murder, the state police and journalists have arrived to investigate and cover the case.

Kelsey Castle is a well-known investigator reporter who has been assigned to cover Becca's murder. As Kelsey begins to interview both the residents of Summit Lake and local authorities, it becomes clear that Becca had secrets. As Kelsey gets help from a local doctor and cafe worker, she learns more about Becca's life, her academics, her love life and her friendships.

As always, I put my super sleuth hat on while reading books in this genre. I had a working theory as to who attacked Becca - which was WRONG! What worked for me was the alternating story-lines detailing both Becca's life prior to her murder and Kelsey's investigation after Becca's murder. The Author did a great job showing us Becca's life prior to her murder. The reader gets to see her interacting with her college friends and the relationships she forged with them. The reader also gets to see Kelsey investigate Becca's murder and the reader knows that Kelsey recently came back to work after some time off work. Investigating Becca's murder gets her back to work and away from her co-worker's eyes and sympathetic comments concerning her absence from work. Plus, Kelsey becomes instantly intrigued as she speaks with locals and begins to get a picture of what happened that terrible night.

There is a KILLER of a TWIST in this book which leads to a HUGE "Holy Crap!" moment. The Author pulled that one out of his hat. He also pulled off the perfect pacing and unraveling of clues. This book never lagged for me. It never felt slow or dragged out. I felt as if everything occurred naturally and the ending did not feel rushed. Through Kelsey's investigation and Becca's pre-murder chapters, the reader is made aware of things/events/relationships in Becca's life which led her to be at the lake house that fateful night. It also provides Kelsey with more possible suspects and people to speak with concerning Becca and her life.

There are some unanswered questions with this book. I won't point them out, so I don't give any spoilers. However, I would have liked to have had everything explained and summed up. Plus, the people in this town seemed a little too happy to assist Kelsey with her investigation. I get that she is a known reporter and people might be more willing to speak with her but several people, with careers and reputations to lose, seemed to throw caution to the wind and violated all kinds of privacy laws to help Kelsey with her investigation.

There is one scene I want to say more about, but I won't. Okay, I will but to say it didn't sit right with me and I should have paid more attention to that thought...how's that for vague...I wish I would have thought about that more.

Be warned - the opening scene is quite brutal. It may be a trigger for some.

Overall, a very enjoyable read that had me turning the pages to see if my theory was correct (it wasn't), to learn the identity of the killer (I did). I was fully invested in learning the identity of the killer and was captivated by the plot. Again, this book may have some triggers for some including rape and murder. There

is another scene in this book which may be a trigger as well, but I feel I will be giving away a spoiler if I share it, so feel free to PM me if you want a warning.

\*Traveling Friends group read

Read more of my reviews at [www.openbookpost.com](http://www.openbookpost.com)

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### **Diane S ? says**

Thought is apropos that I start the new year by finishing a book by a début author. Good start to what should be a promising series. Kelsey Castle, an investigative reporter attempting to overcome a horrible event in her own life, is sent to Summit lake to gather facts on the murder of a first year law student.

On the whole this was an interesting read, a good case, and some interesting characters. But there were a few things that just didn't gel for me in and some situations like the relationship between Kelsey and Matt just seemed awkward at times. Still a good first effort, the last part of the book very suspenseful so will definitely be looking out for this author's next offering.

ARC from Netgalley.

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### **Meredith says**

*Summit Lake* is a solid murder mystery with a twist!

Bad things don't happen in Summit Lake—no one has ever even been murdered, until the murder of 22 year old Becca Eckersley takes place.

*Summit Lake* opens with a detailed description of Becca's brutal murder. The town is in shock, gossip fuels the air and the state police don't seem to want Becca's murder solved. Enter crime writer Kelsey Castle, who is drawn to Becca's story.

The story alternates between Becca and Kelsey's POV's, and the reader gets to experience the events through both of their eyes. This was an enjoyable read that kept my attention!

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Delee says**

[image error]

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## Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

**I'm putting the whole review under spoiler tags instead of here and there since I'm discussing things in the book that was problematic for me quite a lot in this review. And, I don't want to ruin anyone's reading experience.**

*Star reporter Kelsey Castle travels to Summit Lake in North Carolina to write an article about Becca Eckersley who was murdered in her parents home 2 weeks earlier. Is the police trying to cover up the murder and if so why? Kelsey must find out the truth...*

I initially gave this book three stars, but there are just some things that bothered me quite a lot. Things with the story that just didn't make sense. I will come to them later on, but first will I say that the book was not all bad, it was easy to read, the flashback story of Becca Eckersley, as we get to know her before she was murdered was quite good. I like Becca and it made me sad reading about her and knowing her fate. So, part of me enjoyed reading the book, but part of me was also a bit frustrated.

There are some things with the story that for me just didn't work out. Like for instance why the police didn't manage to figure it out by themselves? I mean it was not that puzzling case and if they just would have interviewed her close friends would they quickly have solved it. And, having a journalist receiving classified documents and information from the chief of the police and a doctor? Come one. A man that has worked 40 years as police would just hand over classified material to a journalist because he has been taken from the case? Because apparently there is a cover up? Why? There was no reason for a cover up, no explanation to why there even should be a cover up. Why would her father have tried to cover up his daughter's brutal murder? She hadn't done anything wrong. It felt more like incompetence than a cover up.

Then we have the thing that I can believe for a second any normal person would do. Keep an important secret after a person has been murdered. I mean I can understand if a priest couldn't talk. But, it was just not believable that an ordinary person would keep evidence. "I have in my had something that could help the police catch the killer, I will hide that". What?

Then we have the fact that the main characters, star reporter Kelsey Castle have returned to work after she's been on leave for a couple of weeks because as we learn during the progress of the story she was assaulted. And, I would guess that a woman would be quite traumatized by this. But, she has some bad moments now and then, but no biggie since the doctor is oh so nice. What? After an experience like that would someone need therapy, but she bounced back to work after a month on leave because she was tired of sitting at home doing nothing. And, she has no problem meeting a man after this. I'm sorry, I haven't been assaulted like she was in this book, but I'm sure it would make an impact on me.

Last, but not the least, the twist in the end. Which wasn't that big of a twist. I thought in the beginning of the book that it would be too easy if that person was the killer. Guess what? Yes, despite the author's brave attempt to throw out some red herrings was the ending not really surprising.

There we have it, the things that really bothered me, at least, the things that I remembered. And, that's just too bad because part of me enjoyed reading the book. But, there were just too many things that just didn't make sense, or made me annoyed.

*I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley in an exchange for an honest review!*

Read this review and others on A Bookaholic Swede

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## Judy Collins says

Top 50 Books of 2016!

Debut? If this is a debut, can only imagine what is to come.

**SUMMIT LAKE** by talented new author, *Charlie Donlea*, is destined to be in line for "The Best Debut of 2016." "Charlie, I hope you have given up your day job, and busy writing your next installment of Kelsey Castle." *Many more stories here, waiting to be uncovered, (hoping for a series); sure your fingers are tapping away.*

**Set in the Western North Carolina**, in the Blue Ridge Mountains- a small upscale weekenders' lake hideaway idyllic area, we learn of a brutal murder of law student, Becca Eckersley in 2012. Her wealthy parents reside in Greensboro, NC Piedmont Triad area, well-connected and father a prominent attorney—one of their many weekend second homes.

As the novel opens we learn of the brutal murder which shakes the small tourist town. We flash back and forth from fourteen months earlier with Becca and her college life at George Washington University.

**We meet a series** of Becca's college friends. Guy friends, a secret lover, a former relationship with a professor, and an old high school fling. They await college acceptance letters from the top Ivy League schools. From college stresses of grades, cheating to pass, obsessions, their future careers, aspirations, secrets, loves, and pressure of hi-profile parents....readers relive the months leading up to the tragic event.

**We also meet Kelsey Castle**, a crime investigative reporter and author, from Miami, FL at Events Magazine, recuperating from her own tragic event. Her boss sends her to the small tourist town for some R&R, for a fluff story. Little does he know, what is in store and what Kelsey will find, as she begins her investigation.

She is obsessed with finding answers for Becca, a young woman with a bright future, cut short. More secrets unfold. She feels a connection and will use all her resources to find out the identity of the killer. For justice. The murder has to be someone the girl knew--no signs of intrusion. Limited clues. The authorities are of little help. Someone is hiding information.

**Donlea, slowly peels** back the layers, giving nothing away; flashing between the present with Kelsey, and Becca's past, as we get closer to the day of the murder. Everyone has a secret. The investigation is mysterious, and due to the parent's wanting to keep things private, there is not a lot of information.

Kelsey has to use all her creative reporting skills putting her in harm's way. With the help of some new found local special friends, she tries desperately to piece together the mystery. Who killed Becca Eckersley? A girl with so many hidden secrets. Who would want to kill her and why?

**An intense haunting mystery.** There are so many suspects. What compounds the intriguing crime mystery is the dark lurking psychological aspect. The secrets thoughts and obsessions of a killer. With twists and turns and many surprises, the identity of the killer will not be revealed until the end.

In addition to the well-written and crafted debut, vivid settings, and descriptions--the human dynamics, with the powerful parallel story line of Kelsey. My favorite characters: Jack, Peter, Rae, and Kelsey. An irresistible page-turner--you will not be able to put it down, grabbing you from page one to the "hold your breath" last page.

**Dying to do a Q&A** with the author, for more about this fresh unique, intriguing mystery. The inspiration, the setting, characters, the parallel stories, etc. My favorite genre; for me, three huge familiar connections, true to my heart (*S. Florida, Blue Ridge Mountains, and Piedmont-Triad NC areas*). You just know when a book will blow you away, from the well-designed book trailer, the description, and the cover. *It lives up in every way; why I pick the "best" for my Featured Weekend Reads.*

**Think:** A cross between *Mark Edwards, Michael Robotham, and Linwood Barclay* authors, always landing on my top book list.

I never left my hi-rise South Florida apartment once, this weekend-- gazing over the waterfront view, nerve-racked with intense suspense, glued to this page-turner. Thanks for delivering a fantastic crime mystery thriller, and a bonus--the setting!

If you have not seen the trailer, *a little more temptation:* Summit Lake Trailer

*A gem, not to be missed.*

*A special thank you to Kensington and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.*

JDCMustReadBooks

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### **Frances says**

4.5\* The novel centers around four university students who are the best of friends. One of the students, Becca Eckersley, decides to drive to her parent's summer home to study alone for her final exam. With doors securely locked and the alarm system set, Becca runs to the door when she hears knocking expecting a friendly face, but unfortunately, opens it to a killer. Since Becca's death is the only recorded homicide in the history of this small town, Summit Lake is now on the radar of reporters, and private detectives. Sensing there is a story for his magazine, Penn Courtney sends his top crime reporter Kelsey Castle to spend a month at the lake to find out why it appears there is a cover-up taking place. The story comes together exceptionally well with chapters going back and forth between present day and the fourteen months prior to her death. Gripping, edgy, and suspenseful, this is definitely a must read for readers who enjoy a well crafted murder mystery.

\*Thank you to NetGalley and Kensington Books for my free copy.\*

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### **Chelsea Humphrey says**

EDIT- once again I couldn't stop thinking about this book, so I felt it only fair to bump this rating up to 4 stars!

\*\*\*\*\*

Many thanks to Netgalley for my copy in exchange for a fair and honest review.

3.5 stars

Well, I was all over the place on this one. I figured I'd settle in the middle to be fair.

This story is a healthy blend of past and present, told through multiple POVs which I thoroughly enjoyed. We begin with the murder of Becca and travel back and forth to figure out who did it and why. Kelsey is a reporter who has suffered a recent trauma unknown to us and is sent on assignment to Summit Lake to piece together a story on Becca's murder. Each chapter alternates so that we get a little more of the puzzle until the big reveal at the end.

While I had a few problems with this story, I really enjoyed the characters in the past tense; I felt like I was experiencing college again with them. The story had so much potential and it kept me reading until the end. I don't want to ruin the story for anyone, but I had an issue with the "big reveal" at the end. I felt cheated and manipulated and it felt forced and aspects of how this master twist was pulled off were left unexplained.

Overall, I'm glad I read it and would still recommend to others. It was a fast read and well written for a debut. I look forward to seeing the author's next book.

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**Sandy \*The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice\* says**

"No suspects. No persons of interest. Just a girl who was alive one day and dead the next."

Following an attack on herself while she was out running, investigative reporter Kelsey Castle is sent to a picturesque North Carolina town to do a piece on a murdered law student Becca Eckersley. Becca was hard-working, accomplished, and ambitious. Who could possibly have wanted her dead? And in such a brutal fashion?

As Kelsey walks in Becca's footsteps she feels a growing connection to the dead girl.

This book would have received 4.5 stars from me except there was a part of the plot that was not explained to my satisfaction (or at all really). (view spoiler)

A good fast moving and suspenseful read.

Than you to NetGalley and Kensington Books for the gift of a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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