



Lost Lake

Emily Littlejohn

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An enthralling, atmospheric new novel from the author of acclaimed debut *Inherit the Bones*, featuring Colorado police officer Gemma Monroe.

On a bright Saturday in early spring, Detective Gemma Monroe responds to a missing person call at Lost Lake, near the small town of Cedar Valley, Colorado. With its sapphire waters and abundance of wildflowers, the lake is a popular camping destination in the summer. But for now, ice still grips the lake and snow buries the flowers.

When Gemma arrives at the shore, she meets three friends who have been camping there: the fourth of their group, Sari Chesney, has disappeared in the night without a trace. Sari is an assistant curator at the local museum, which is set to host a gala that night--a project she's worked on for months and would never intentionally miss. As Gemma begins to understand the complex dynamics of the supposedly close-knit friendship group, she realizes that more than one person is lying to her--and that the beautiful, still waters of Lost Lake may hide more terrible secrets . . .

Lost Lake Details

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Author : Emily Littlejohn

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From Reader Review *Lost Lake* for online ebook

Jen says

I had no idea that this was the third in a series when I received a copy of this book. However, *Lost Lake* worked as a stand alone and had me intrigued enough to add the other two books to my TBR. In *Lost Lake*, Colorado police officer Gemma is called to an isolated lake on a chilly spring day. Four friends went camping but one of the girls has gone missing. By the end of the book you will suspect everyone and there will be a surprising murder. I was completely caught up in the mystery and was left mystified as to what happened at that lake and who it's tied to. While I found the ending to be lackluster, this is an easy read that keeps you guessing. I love Detective stories with a strong female lead, and this book did not disappoint in that regard. For me, *Lost Lake* was ???????/5 stars (rounded up from 3.5). Thank you @stmartinspress for this advance reader in exchange for my honest review.

Chelsea Humphrey says

I've been following Emily Littlejohn's Det. Gemma Monroe series ever since I was mailed an arc of her debut novel, *Inherit the Bones* in 2016. I really enjoyed book 1, felt that *A Season to Lie* (book 2) was ok but left a good bit to be desired, and that that this one (book 3) was a significant improvement from installment #2. All that to say, even though the individual cases that are investigated have been a hit or miss for me, I've consistently enjoyed the personal development with the reoccurring characters, which is why I gladly gave this book a chance. That chance paid off, as I'm fully back on the Gemma Monroe train and am already excited for the next in the series to be written... Even though this one isn't out until November! ;)

The foremost reason I attribute to my enthusiasm in book #3 is that the case being solved here is so much more complex and intriguing than in the previous novel. In *Lost Lake*, we have a combination of a missing (possibly dead?) woman, a missing priceless artifact/journal from the local museum, and the murder of the manager of said museum. *And this is all just in the first 10% of the story!* Sprinkle in some local history/folklore about mysterious deaths at Lost Lake, and I was 100% invested. No spoilers here, but I didn't have a single portion of this mystery figured out (except I did solve who the leak was in the police department, but that's just a minor deal...); this made for a fun police procedural experience that checked all my boxes in the mystery portion.

Surprisingly, I felt the character development and furthering of the personal stories was weaker in this installment than any of the previous ones to date. It wasn't bad, but my largest problem is with the lackluster continual inclusion of Gemma's fiance/baby daddy. We've known for 3 books now that she loves him, but he cheated on her, and now she struggles to trust him on his travels for work, but nothing beyond that. The weird part is that he doesn't feel like a real character; he's either discussed in an abstract form, or he's in a room during a scene but never speaks. *Come to think of it, I don't believe he's had a single line of dialogue in all three books...* I also wasn't too keen on a particular plot point that involved her current police partner, as it makes some of Gemma's personal struggles feel a bit invalid, but other than that, I have no complaints.

Another solid installment in what has become a series I look forward to annually, and highly recommended to fans of police procedurals set in Colorado with equal parts characterization and plot progression.

**I received a review copy from the publisher via NetGalley.*

Maranda says

Cedar Valley Colorado - - Beautiful country with plenty of mountain trails and Sparkling Lost Lake. Museum in town boasts having the Rayburn Diary which is an accounting of the early settler days by one of its early pioneers. Question is if it holds a curse for those that have it. Camping and enjoying the natural terrain is shattered when the assistant curator of the museum Sari Chesney and her boss Betty Starbuck meet with tragedy. Detective Gemma Monroe is the mother of Grace and is building a relationship with her fiancé Brody. Although these are important to her; solving crime with her partner Finn Nowlin and the rest of the police force takes on its own challenges with a leak in the department. Cast of suspects are investigated and Littlejohn does an excellent job of revealing this mystery. So far this is the best of the Gemma Monroe series in my opinion. Lost Lake could easily stand alone without reading the prior ones in the series. "A copy of this book was provided by St. Martins Press via Netgalley with no requirements for a review. Above review here voices my honest views."

Joyce says

4 stars

Detective Gemma Monroe responds to a report of a missing woman Sari Chesney at Lost Lake in Colorado. The woman apparently left in the middle of the night and her three friends don't know where she has gone.

Gemma is a new mother to her daughter Grace. Her partner Brody is very helpful and accommodating.

After checking at her apartment, Gemma and Sari's boyfriend Mac go to the police station to fill out a missing person's report. Apparently Sari worked for a local museum who is putting on a gala that evening and she wouldn't have missed it. While Gemma is attending the gala event at the museum that evening she meets some of the important people who run it, including Betty Starbuck, the museum curator. Betty tells Gemma about the theft of the supposedly cursed Rayburn Diary; all those who possessed it died a horrible death or so the story goes. Sari was one of the four people who had a key to the safe.

The next morning Gemma gets called back to the museum. Police Chief Angel Chaves is already at the scene. Someone has been killed. The dead woman is Betty Starbuck. Gemma's investigation now has three parts, the missing Sari Chesney, The stolen Rayburn Diary and the murder of Betty Starbuck. Gemma's partner Finn Nowlin has now returned from his vacation in Palm Springs and joins the investigation.

When Sari Chesney's body is found in Lost Lake by some fishermen, Gemma is devastated. She told the friends at the campsite that it would be okay; that Sari would show up. Show up, she did.

The list of interviewees grows. Friends, acquaintances, relatives and workmates are all interviewed. Gemma and Finn's suspicions are all over the place. The cases drag on. Then tragedy strikes at the Crimson Café.

The identity of the killer comes as no surprise since a vital clue was given earlier in the story. But since it came almost at the end of the story, it was no great distraction. And the story of the Rayburn Diary is closed.

This is a very well written book. I liked Gemma and Finn, although later in the story than Gemma. He finally came into his own. I appreciated the relationship between Gemma and Brody; how well they pulled together and so on. I hope in the next story they do get married. This was a good police procedural and discussed how slowly things can move in an investigation and how chasing down the clues is such hard and confusing sometimes.

I want to thank NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for forwarding to me a copy of this great book to read, enjoy and review.

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

EXCERPT: If they'd been alone at the lake, and if Sari's death was ruled a homicide, then one of them was a killer.

Ally. Mac. Jake.

Best friend. Boyfriend. Third wheel.

ABOUT THIS BOOK: On a bright Saturday in early spring, Detective Gemma Monroe responds to a missing person call at Lost Lake, near the small town of Cedar Valley, Colorado. With its sapphire waters and abundance of wildflowers, the lake is a popular camping destination in the summer. But for now, ice still grips the lake and snow buries the flowers.

When Gemma arrives at the shore, she meets three friends who have been camping there: the fourth of their group, Sari Chesney, has disappeared in the night without a trace. Sari is an assistant curator at the local museum, which is set to host a gala that night--a project she's worked on for months and would never intentionally miss. As Gemma begins to understand the complex dynamics of the supposedly close-knit friendship group, she realizes that more than one person is lying to her--and that the beautiful, still waters of Lost Lake may hide more terrible secrets . . .

MY THOUGHTS: I started this read with high hopes. The prologue is deliciously sinister. Early on, and sporadically scattered throughout the book, are passages of beautifully lyrical writing. e. g. 'It should have felt peaceful, but there was a roughness to the pastoral scene, like a pencil sketch that has been handled by greasy fingers, the edges smudged.' The cover describes Littlejohn's writing as lyrical and gripping, and there are brief glimpses of this, but largely it is all very ordinary. There was a certain roughness to the ending also, which left me feeling dissatisfied.

I had not read the first two books in this series, but don't feel like I have missed much by not having done so, and I probably won't read any more of the series to come either. I didn't feel connected to the characters. I didn't feel involved in the plot. I felt like a mostly disinterested bystander, watching some disturbance because I happened to be there, with nothing better to do and no other place to be. If you were to ask me about this book in a week or two's time, I think I would struggle to recall it.

My favorite characters are Gemma's grandparents, Julia and Bull. Julia is suffering from dementia, and Bull, who clearly adores his wife, is determined to keep her at home where he can care for her, rather than placing her in a facility. This side-plot was the highlight of the book for me, and earned the book an extra .5 of a star.

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THE AUTHOR: I was born and raised in Southern California but have called Colorado home for over a decade now. The beautiful mountains and open space continue to inspire me on a daily basis.

I wrote *Inherit the Bones* over the course of two years. I've always had a fascination with all things mystery, horror, and the macabre. *Bones* was inspired by a vision I had of a clown, found dead, in full costume. I wondered who was the man behind the make-up?

And just like that, a story was born.

Inherit the Bones received critical acclaim and was a 2017 Colorado Book Award finalist.

I hope you enjoy spending time in Cedar Valley with Detective Gemma Monroe, her partner Finn Nowlin and the rest of the people that bring the town to life. The second book in the series, *A Season to Lie*, is now available, with a third and fourth book to come in 2018 and 2019.

I currently serve as the Program Director for the Rocky Mountain Mystery Writers of America and am a winner in the 2017 ThrillerFest Best First Sentence contest. (Author's website)

DISCLOSURE: Thank you to St Martin's Press via Netgalley for providing a digital ARC of *Lost Lake* by Emily Littlejohn for review. All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own personal opinions.

Please refer to my Goodreads.com profile page or the about page on sandysbookaday.wordpress.com for an explanation of my rating system. This review and others are also published on my blog sandysbookaday.wordpress.com

Liz says

Within the space of two days, a young woman camping with friends goes missing, an antique diary disappears from a museum where the woman works and the head of the museum is murdered. Are the events connected or random? Is there really a curse involved with ownership of the diary?

This is the third in the Detective Gemma Monroe series. I have not read the prior two books but didn't feel at a loss for not having read them. There are plenty of suspects here and each seems to have some dark secrets.

Gemma is a decently fleshed out character. She's a new mother, her relationship with her fiancé seems to be lacking something and she doesn't really gel with her new partner. And her boss keeps adding to her workload.

This is a straightforward police procedural. It's all told from Gemma's perspective. It felt very realistic, including the lack of manpower, the delays in getting information and the need to juggle multiple balls in the air.

This is a fast read. It's good but not great. The ending felt forced to me and I've lowered my rating by ½ star for that reason.

My thanks to netgalley and St. Martin's Press for an advance copy of this book.

Luvtoread says

Excellent!

What a wonderful feeling it is when I have just finished reading a book with a new author and I only want the story to continue into another mystery starring the magnetic characters who captured my interest in this tasty, suspense filled thriller.

The story revolves around a small-town detective (Gemma Monroe) who is engaged to be married and has a new 6 month old baby. Gemma wears many hats yet she gives 100 percent to every duty she takes upon herself.

This book has a missing beautiful young woman who was camping with three others at "Lost Lake", which has a long history of mysterious deaths and some people feel an eerie cloud of darkness when visiting the lake.

There is museum where a rare historical diary (some say carries a curse) is reported missing around the same time as the missing woman who happens to work at this museum, and then a murder follows behind the disappearances.

I truly enjoyed this book with so many twists and sub-plots that easily flowed and connected which made each chapter more and more interesting and I found it difficult when I had to put the book down.

This story was a real " Who Done It ". I was back and forth with trying to figure out who the killer was, and that is a fun-filled reading experience when you really don't know who the real villain (villains?) is. I think Emily Littlejohn is a very talented writer who knows how to reel the reader in and keeps them happily on the hook. This is book #3 in a series, which I did not know beforehand, yet it was a great stand-alone book which was a complete story in itself.

I highly recommend this suspenseful story to any reader who enjoys a good mystery and have given a rating of 5 Wonderful ????? stars!!

I want to thank Emily Littlejohn, the author, and the publishers St. Martin's Press and Minotaur Books for this ARC in exchange for my honest and unbiased opinion!

Denise says

A stolen historical diary, a missing girl and a murder victim -- Detective Gemma Monroe of the Cedar Valley Police department has her hands full. Along with her current partner, Detective Finn Nowlin, and Detectives Moriarty and Armstrong and their intern, they begin a painstaking and complex investigation into these 3 cases. It soon becomes obvious that they have no shortage of suspects, plenty of motives, and lots of opportunity. Can they sift through the red herrings to find the clues that will give them the answers and so that justice will be done?

This is the first book by this author that I've read and I was sorry to come in at this late stage to the third one in the series without having read the first two. I've probably missed some important pieces of backstory, but I was able to jump in and enjoyed this well enough on its own. I like Gemma -- she's more real with the first person narration. Although she has a healthy appetite and actually eats (unlike many where everyone is always skipping meals), she spends a lot of time at work and has little personal time or family time. The police investigation is at the forefront of the novel so most of the detail, action, and forward movement of the plot is focused on the tediousness of chasing down witnesses and suspects for information. There's a lot going on even aside from the 3 main cases and it moves at a fast pace that kept me turning the pages as I wanted to see the conclusion. I'll definitely be on the lookout for the next book in the series so I hope there will be more.

Thank you to NetGalley and Minotaur Books for this e-book ARC to read and review.

Val says

I so enjoy reading this series! Though the killer's motives may strain credulity, the plot is well paced and the characters are intriguing. *Lost Lake* is an intricately plotted police procedural, with a number of possible (and even probable) suspects. Watching Gemma untangle all of the knotty relationships in her town to find the murderer is fascinating. Lots of plot twists! Better book than the second one.

Juli says

Gemma Monroe is a detective with the Cedar Valley, CO Police Department. Gemma is called in to investigate the disappearance of a camper. Sari Chesney was camping at Lost Lake with 3 friends. She disappeared overnight without a trace. Her friends say they have no idea what happened to her. Sari is assistant curator at the local historical museum. With a big gala event at the museum celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of Cedar Valley coming up in just days, it's doubtful Sari disappeared of her own accord. When the head of the museum is found beaten and strangled to death, Gemma knows there is more to the story than just a missing camper.

This story is so suspenseful and engaging! This is the 3rd book in the Detective Gemma Monroe series. I'm definitely going to backtrack and read the other two books, *Inherit the Bones* and *A Season to Lie*. I like Gemma as a main character. She is intelligent and very good at her job. I liked the setting. Cedar Valley has the beauty of Colorado, the complex characters and vibe of a small town, an interesting history....and a lot of hidden, dark secrets.

The plot moved along at a nice pace with plenty of description, character development and suspense. I liked the tie-in with the historical museum, history of the lake and town, and the case. Already have book 1 in this series checked out at the library! Can't wait for the next book! :)

*I voluntarily read an advanced readers copy of this book from St. Martins Press via NetGalley. All opinions expressed are entirely my own.**

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

A young woman goes missing at Lost Lake, near the small town of Cedar Valley, Colorado. Detective Gemma Monroe is called in and at the lake, she meets the camping party who is missing its fourth member, Sari Chesney. Sari seems to have disappeared without a trace. But, would a woman who is a dedicated assistant curator at the local museum just take up and leave, or is it foul play?

READ THE REST OF THE REVIEW OVER AT FRESH FICTION!

Kendall says

So, upon requesting this title I didn't realize that this was a continued series. I was a tad nervous since I don't like reading series out of order.

Lost Lake is the third book in the Gemma Monroe series. I really enjoyed Gemma's character and felt that she was a very strong and confident female detective. This is a typical police procedural novel with a chilling mystery on Gemma's hands.

Gemma responds to a call about a missing woman named Sari Chesney at a Lost Lake in Colorado. I fell in love with the beautiful descriptions of the lake right away. It made me feel at home with such beautiful visualizations and imagery throughout the novel. The history of the lake and the history of the town are closely linked to the plot. Although during the winter time the lake appears to be a very different place.

The missing woman Sari is also the assistant curator at the town's museum and somehow the diary of the founding father goes missing. Can these be linked somehow and tied together?

Bodies start to pile up and Detective Monroe doesn't know who to trust, believe, or look to for answers. It appears that this quaint and beautiful town in Colorado may not be as it appears with secrets unfolding out of the seams.

This was a very good police procedural novel with murder, lies, unreliable characters, and even a tad bit of supernatural.

4 stars for Lost Lake!

Thank you to Netgalley and St. Martins/Minotaur books for an advanced arc in exchange for my honest review.

Publication date: 11/6/18

Published to GR: 10/15/18

Kristy says

It's a bright May day when Cedar Valley Detective Gemma Monroe is called to Lost Lake. Sari Chesney, who was camping with her boyfriend, his brother, and her best friend, has gone missing. Sari hated the water, and the group is convinced she would never go missing on her own so near the lake. Sari was scheduled to work at a big gala at Cedar Valley's museum later that evening--a huge event she had been working on for months. Her friends insist she would never miss it. It's still chilly in Colorado in May, the lake still tinged in ice. Gemma begins the search for Sari, not realizing how quickly one woman's disappearance will lead to so much more.

"Later, much later, I would regret every decision I made that morning."

This is the third book in Emily Littlejohn's Gemma Monroe series, and *I really enjoy both Gemma's character and the series*. The books stand alone, but it's an enjoyable series, and I do recommend reading them from the beginning. At this point, Gemma has a six-month-old daughter, Grace, with her fiancé, Brody, and *one of my favorite things about the books is how realistically Littlejohn paints Gemma's struggles as a working mom*. She loves her career and yet finds it difficult to leave Grace and juggle working and caring for her daughter.

Gemma is a great character overall, and *I always enjoy reading a strong mystery that features a female detective*. We find Gemma not only dealing with Sari's disappearance, but several more things that happen in the aftermath, which lead to her becoming quite busy, and allow us a solid set of cases to follow. *This one kept me guessing the whole way, with a few good twists thrown in too*. There's occasionally a bit of telling versus showing, but overall Littlejohn is a strong writer, and you can't help but root for Gemma.

In this one, I especially *felt like Gemma was growing as a person*, as we find her struggling in her partnership with Finn (her fellow detective) and second guessing some of the decisions she makes in Sari's case. It's *nice to see a story where everything isn't easy*, cut and dried, and our heroine seems so human and regular. One of the things I like so much about Gemma is that she seems like someone you could befriend (if maybe she let her walls down once in a while). It leads to an *insightful and thoughtful book* coupled with a good mystery (or two) as well.

Overall, I enjoyed this one. I feel like I can always count on Littlejohn for some excellent characterization with Gemma, and I found the plot to be interesting. It kept me engaged and guessing. 4 stars.

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher and Netgalley in return for an unbiased review (thank you!); it is available everywhere as of 11/06/2018.

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Susan says

A young woman goes missing while camping, an antique diary is stolen from the local museum and a murder starts off the third in the Gemma Monroe series. I haven't read the first two in the series but that didn't detract from my enjoyment of this one. Overall an easy read and a decent mystery.

Thank you St. Martin's Press and Netgalley for an ARC.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Four friends go camping at lost lake. When one friend goes missing durin the night, Gemma is called to investigate the disappearance. Little does she know that this will be the beginning of something much larger.

Wasn't sure what rating to give this, and I may have gone a little high. I do, however, really love the character of Gemma. She is easy to relate to, a new mother trying to juggle career, motherhood and s relationship with her fiancé. Her grandparents who raised her after her parents death are also a factor in her life, like so many of us, the sandwich generation. Since this turns into more than one single case, a local legend is also related, the pages flying by. Some of the dialogue sometimes, not very often, so that they stood out when they happened, seemed clunky. Also the motives for the murders seemed a bit of a stretch. So despite a few reservations this is a new series, this being the third, that I definitely look forward to reading.

ARC from Netgalley.
