



The Bones of You

Debbie Howells

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"An intriguing dark psychological thriller--truly brilliant!" --Lisa Jackson

I have a gardener's inherent belief in the natural order of things. Soft-petaled flowers that go to seed. The resolute passage of the seasons. Swallows that fly thousands of miles to follow the eternal summer.

Children who don't die before their parents.

When Kate receives a phone call with news that Rosie Anderson is missing, she's stunned and disturbed. Rosie is eighteen, the same age as Kate's daughter, and a beautiful, quiet, and kind young woman. Though the locals are optimistic--girls like Rosie don't get into real trouble--Kate's sense of foreboding is confirmed when Rosie is found fatally beaten and stabbed.

Who would kill the perfect daughter, from the perfect family? Yet the more Kate entwines herself with the Andersons--graceful mother Jo, renowned journalist father Neal, watchful younger sister Delphine--the more she is convinced that not everything is as it seems. Anonymous notes arrive, urging Kate to unravel the tangled threads of Rosie's life and death, though she has no idea where they will lead.

Weaving flashbacks from Rosie's perspective into a tautly plotted narrative, *The Bones of You* is a gripping, haunting novel of sacrifices and lies, desperation and love.

"Unusual and haunting." --*Library Journal*

"Suspenseful and poignant." --*Publishers Weekly*

"A compelling debut." --*Woman and Home*

"A star in the making." --*The Daily Mail*

The Bones of You Details

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Author : Debbie Howells

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From Reader Review The Bones of You for online ebook

Elaine says

The Bones Of You is the story of events surrounding the disappearance and murder of a young 18 year old, Rosie. The main characters are Rosie herself, and her parents Neale and Jo. Neale is a world renowned TV reporter and we are told millions of women around the world are in love with him. I have to say that I didn't buy that at all, to me he just comes across as a smarmy git. He is the sort of man who my husband would walk to the other end of the bar in the village pub, to get away from. Mother Jo, or Joanna, is very much a trophy wife. Her main function is to look beautiful, run a perfect home and raise perfect children, and that is it.

The other main character is Kate, a local woman who at the start of the book knows Jo a little, but only really from the school run. However, Kate and Rosie shared a common bond in horses and when she disappears Kate feels duty bound to help Jo through what follows. She then very quickly becomes attached to Jo, getting more and more drawn into her life. There is just something about Kate that really annoyed me. She was so gullible and naïve and too willing to accept whatever she was told, sometimes seeming to bend with the wind every time depending on who was speaking to her at the time.

Now it is not a crime procedural, it is told purely through Kate's eyes, and those of Rosie as her "life flashes in front of her eyes" and is extremely reminiscent of The Lovely Bones. At first I really enjoyed listening to Rosie as she shows all the family secrets and the story starts to take a very dark turn indeed. The family is not the perfect unit that is shown to the outside world and a story of domestic violence and child cruelty is revealed. The one problem I have with this is that at times her story is just so ludicrous, lacking believability. It is the sort of nonsense that children would spout during a "my parents are meaner than your parents" bragging rights match and I always think subtlety and "less is more" make for a far more sinister, gripping read.

I have said it is not a crime procedural and now I know all the facts of what happened, I have to say that I think the story is lacking for that. Where are the family liaison officers, the scenes of crimes officers, the forensics and the post mortem results? Neale is a world famous TV reporter and his daughter has been murdered, so why is there no police presence at his home? We don't see anything of that and to be honest, if we had, then I think the whole thing would have been wrapped up in two days flat. Not really one I would recommend at all. Thanks to the publisher for the review copy.

Sue says

Thank you to NetGalley and Kensington Books for providing this ARC.

"THE BONES OF YOU", is a dark psychological suspense thriller debut by Debbie Howells.

A small village in Sussex, England, a body of an eighteen-year-old girl, Rosie Anderson, is discovered, murdered. Who would do such a thing?

The novel opens with after we learn that Rosie has gone missing, Rosie describes what it is like, in the final

moments of her life. She describes the images flashing in front of her at record speed, like watching a “movie of her life.” This shows the author’s talent of flashback narration of Rosie.

Rosie Anderson, was the daughter of a well to do family in England. Kate, who Rosie used to visit and ride horses with, wants to know more. Kate befriends Jo, Rosie’s mother, and helps her deal with this terrible tragedy. But she soon discovers that there is more to this family than meets the eye, from the wife, Jo to the Husband Neal, and younger sister, Delphine. Nothing is what it seems!

This novel is an intense character driven novel, where the hidden secrets and lies, soon come to the surface. The story is told in alternating points of view, written mainly in two point of views - the present is Kate’s, to which is added Rosie’s flashback narration, which helps the reader piece together what actually happened to her.

The reader, will be kept guessing all the way to the end. Even if you 'think' you might know who the killer is, the twists and lies and deceit will prove you wrong.

The pacing of the storytelling was excellent, and I found it hard to put down.

This novel gives a new meaning to the concept of “The Perfect Neighbour”!

I would recommend this book to psychological thriller lovers.

Sue says

The Bones of You is a messy book about an oh so tidy family, full of "keeping up external appearances" while no one else knows what goes on. Everything takes place in what appears to be a fairly well off English suburb, where the Anderson family, Neal, Jo, Rosie and Della, live a life somewhat cut off from their neighbors, in wealthy splendor. Until the bottom falls out; until Rosie dies. This is no secret. It happens almost immediately and will be known to anyone who reads anything at all about the book.

From there the story moves in layers of perspectives. For readers who dislike either the use of the present tense or multi-person narratives, this could be a challenge. But let me say---I found it well worth it and well done. The author creates tension, a feeling of loss and confusion, helplessness and almost hopelessness along with fleeting moments of joy and beauty. Kate and Angus are the bedrock here, the counterpoint to Neal and Jo. Through them the reader also sees just how difficult it is to find truth, to sit in judgment of others.

This was a fairly quick read and also a very interesting one. I felt its emotions were earned and I would look for other books from this author.

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Dannii Elle says

Wow! Just wow! Not since The Lovely Bones have I felt such an affinity with the deceased and a desire to

uncover the truth in any thriller fiction!

The Bones of You expertly draws the reader into the plot by its unique use of multiple perspectives to assemble the puzzle of the murder of a teenage girl. The teenage girl in question, Rosie, also forms one portion of the perspective and her from-the-grave discoveries and flashbacks of her life make this both a chilling and sorrowful read. I love how this novel works backwards from the present whilst dually moving ever forward into the future and how both parts were needed to ensure a complete story was told.

The turns this novel takes had me second-guessing every character and misdirected multiple times. I did discover who the killer was a little before the grand reveal but was still stunned and absorbed in the plot until the final moments. This is thriller fiction at its finest!

Jan says

This was a fun read for me- I love books that let you 'think' you know who did what, only to pull the rug out from under you and cause you to change your mind, over and over! The pace of the storyline was spot on-giving just enough to keep you turning the page long after it was time to go to bed.

That was the only thing 'fun' about this read though...the storyline is one fraught with dysfunction, abuse, manipulation, deception, and murder. You won't like a lot of what you read, but you won't know whom you should hate until much later in the story. Told in past and present tense, this is a sad story about the murder of a young girl (past tense told with a feel of The Lovely Bones) and a neighbor/friend who finds herself sucked in to this family's grief and dysfunction.

This is actually the only reason I held back from a 5 star review...the one thing that I couldn't get out of my head was how this neighbor really keep intruding on this family time after time, often injecting herself in situations that no neighbor of mine would ever step. Once you get past that and just chalk it up to a woman with too much time on her hands, you are in for a great read! I look forward to future books from this author and highly recommend.

My thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for an ARC for an honest review.

Liz Barnsley says

The Bones of You is a beautiful slow burner of a novel that you might think is a crime novel - and yes it does involve a crime and yes you will be lead slowly but surely to the resolution of that crime - but the heart of this story is about families and the secrets they keep.

When Rosie goes missing, the small community in which she lives is shocked, then horrified when her body is discovered. There is very little evidence to point to a suspect and through the eyes of Kate, a friend of Rosie's mother and through Rosie herself from beyond the grave, we begin to discover that outward appearances mean nothing at all..

I got caught up in this one for many reasons, probably the least of which was the crime element. I found Kate's life to be beautifully drawn and her thoughts and assumptions and her often utter confusion gave a real heart to what could have been a fairly generic psychological thriller. Rosie is also gorgeously portrayed, there is a poetic note to her voice that packs a real emotional punch - really wonderful writing throughout.

This is not a fast paced edge of the seat story it is a tension building character driven family drama. It is difficult to review in detail without spoilers so I'll keep it simple - highly compelling, nicely constructed with some remarkably normal people caught up in a very abnormal situation. Some tough themes are tackled well and given a focus, a voice and for that reason this comes highly recommended from me.

Happy Reading Folks!

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

A novel that tackles some dark undercurrents in family life in a very clever way, don't expect reveals and twists to hit you in the face, it's more like they creep up upon you until you gasp with shock as truth is revealed. This is a very steady paced book with an intricate plot that is written with great care.

There are moments in this book that are so beautifully written that I read them more than once. Poetic almost. But don't get me wrong, this is a dark psychological thriller not a poetry book.

When Kate receives a phone call with news that Rosie Anderson is missing, she's stunned and disturbed. Rosie is eighteen, the same age as Kate's daughter, and a beautiful, quiet, and kind young woman. Though the locals are optimistic—girls like Rosie don't get into real trouble—Kate's sense of foreboding is confirmed when Rosie is found fatally beaten and stabbed.

Who would kill the perfect daughter, from the perfect family? Yet the more Kate entwines herself with the Andersons—graceful mother Jo, renowned journalist father Neal, watchful younger sister Delphine—the more she is convinced that not everything is as it seems.

Rosie is found dead, a town is stunned - the question is who did it and why? Don't expect a police procedural, a lot of forensics or even it being a hint of a crime book (an element I actually think would have added to it in my opinion). It's a book that focuses on the characters, what is behind the characters, their psyche, their fears, lies, secrets and complexity.

I loved the first third of the book but felt it lagged and felt a touch padded out in the middle, Debbie writes with great clarity and her use of words to describe things is detailed and significant. It's not a "punchy" book, it slides along at a steady, not slow, but steady pace. And the final third of the book really stood out to me with how cleverly it was done as all the truths started to surface at last.

I enjoyed the read, I guessed right about the killer by the last third of the book but there was still some surprises in there. It's a book that really lets you see what REALLY goes on behind the closed door of families who hold up the facade of happy, loving and ideal.

It's a smoke screen, a big one and as the smoke is blown away and the author shows us bits of the real life, it's hard to swallow. Not pretty at all.

A bit like The Lovely Bones we get to hear the voice of Rosie from the other side as she watches, remembers and imparts her side of the story. I felt this was really well done, *Rosie's words were moving and powerful as well as so sad and distressing* and one of my favourite parts of the book.

This would have been four stars but for the fact that some logical things did not occur - there has been a

murder, but no forensics taken, like fingernail scrapings or anything. The finger pointing from the police to the killer was based on basically a very weak case, I think this could have been done with more accuracy, just my opinion.

So, would I recommend it? Yes I would? But if you like your psychological thrillers fast paced, this one is not that, but it does take you on a journey into the mind, the faults, the damage that makes up human beings. It makes you think. I have to admit once I knew who the killer was I was shocked and disturbed. I think that was the intention.

3.5 paw prints from Booklover Catlady - you can check out more of my reviews, book talk, giveaways, at my page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BookloverCat...>

Many thanks to the author and publisher for my ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

Amanda - Mrs B's Book Reviews says

*<https://mrsbbookreviews.wordpress.com>

In The Bones of You by Debbie Howells, a peaceful village in the heart of the British countryside is shocked to the core when eighteen year old Rosie Anderson disappears. Time passes and soon Rosie's body is found in nearby woods, where it appears she has been stabbed to death. This shocks the village in which horse mad Rosie hails from. In particular Kate, a local gardener who befriended Rosie and her family, feels terribly guilty. Her guilt leads her to seek out the truth behind Rosie's murder, as so far, Rosie's murder has baffled police. It is a truth that rips apart an ideal family unit, revealing dark and ugly truths. The story unfolds across three narratives, revealing the how and why of Rosie's death. One of these clever and compelling narratives is Rosie's voice from the grave, revealing aspects that lead up to her death, which was reminiscent of The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold. When I finally cracked this one, I was left to wonder why I didn't see the blinding obvious clues earlier. The Bones of You is a tense read, that leaves us to wonder about the construction of the family unit. It fits nicely into the domestic thriller genre, looking at how a marriage can appear perfect on the outset, but can quickly spiral out of control.

Morgannah Mayfair says

Many thanks to NetGalley for providing this title in exchange for my honest review.

What an amazing story! The writing was crisp and intelligent and sucked me in from page one. It's a psychological thriller, with a touch of "The Lovely Bones" thrown in. I liked the claustrophobic setting of the quiet English town, the horse farm that the main character Kate and her family lived on, and the description of the wealthy estate her friend inhabits. When that friend's daughter-- an unassuming teen with no rebellious streak-- goes missing, the whole town is suddenly wrapped up in hurtful gossip, speculation and accusations. There are plenty of secrets being harbored by more than a few characters here. I got the right idea about how and why the girl disappeared a bit more than halfway through, but it was interesting to see how it all played

out. If you are in the proper mood for a suspense that will play with your emotions, then you might enjoy this novel.

Elyse says

Rosie Anderson - 18 years old, is murdered.

Who killed her?

"If you have two equally convincing stories from two people who love each other, how do you know what's true?"

Rosie was a typical teenager, she was quiet, she was sweet. She also had a boyfriend, named Alex, that she kept secret.... Or at least tried to. Did the boyfriend kill her?

She had a younger sister named Delphine whom she loved very much and felt protective of. Rosie's close friend was named Grace. Did her Delphine or Grace kill her?

Grace told her mother, Kate, that she found it odd that when Rosie would come visit the horses they owned, she only came when Grace wasn't home. It was as if Rosie only came to see her mother. (not Grace). Fishy? Did Kate kill her?

Jo seems fragile.... since the death of her daughter --- she isn't exactly being social, and she is been drinking. Did she kill her?

Neal.. The father, of Rosie, has been a domineering and abusive figure in the family. We learn about the father from 'Rosie'...(during flashbacks....as she narrates perspectives about her family .. feelings.. friends...and life) Did he kill her?

Kate gets very involved with the Anderson family. She wants to comfort her friend, Jo. She wants to help figure out who killed their daughter. Kate's, husband, Angus isn't thrilled about her involvement...but accepts it. Did Angus kill her?

This turned out to be a very captivating psychological thriller. The reader, really is guessing all the way to the end. Even if you 'think' you might know who the killer is...(you may be wrong), it makes little difference because beneath the surface of everything is a lot of madness with almost all of the characters: (either too much gossip, lies, cheating, drinking, and more lies)

The pacing of the storytelling was excellent. The author especially demonstrated her writing talents through the flashback narration of, Rosie.

Rosie had lost a part of her spirit - gave up on hope- by the age of twelve. She called her twelfth birthday her "puppy birthday". (as she was lied and betrayed to fire father) ...

So, Rosie continues to be an important part of the storytelling... not giving us hints so much as to who killed her - but just what type of world she was born into.

Here is one of her messages: (from death):

"I'm the moth who see's the flame too late, leaving my wings charred and my body lifeless.

Like everything that went before, it was written, into the small print of my life, meaning whatever I was, there was never any other way."

The question you might ask? If you enjoyed Gone Girl and Lovely Bones... Will you enjoy this novel? Definitely YES!

Thank you to The publisher- Netgalley-, and many congrats to Debbie Howell's first thriller novel!

sue says

Yes, oh yes, two days in a row now I have had to dish out my 5 stars that I keep for something that is outstanding, that keeps my attention, that is so enthralling I literally eat, sleep and breathe the book and cannot wait to pick it up again to finish it. Yep! This is such a book.

Rosie is 18 years old, she has gone missing. Everyone has high hopes that she is going to be found soon, found and very much alive.

As time goes on though, time is running out for such hope.

**What intrigued me were the chapters where Rosie has a voice, she is missing, she may be dead, she may be in need help somewhere, who knows yet.....

but we hear her voice in chapters that the author has written for us to get an insight to not only her life but those around her, including her parents and her Mom **

But then Rosie's body is found, she is in some undergrowth in the woods, the same woods that Kate goes to ride her horse, the very same horse, the very same adult friend that Rosie loved going to and helping out with the horses.

Kate 'feels' something and the horse DEFINITELY knows 'something'. After all, horses do have a sixth sense.

Rosie's Mother Joanne is a lost soul, someone who has money, and to all intense and purposes seems quite well to do. Everything in their world from the outside looks good, marriage solid, good husband, good job, and her husband is a 'good man' someone who helps others less fortunate.....

But all is not what it seems.

Kate befriends Joanne, both of them become quite close.

The budding friendship between them leaves some questions in Kate's mind at times, and as a reader, there were plenty of thoughts pounding around me head I can tell you!

The Father is a bit of a NASTY PASTY, he is controlling, he is mean, he is a BEAST, he likes to control his

children AND his wife both daily and in the bedroom.

He is also a journalist.....I thought I would throw that one in there!!!

The dual narratives that are within these chapters are fascinating, each time it got to Rosie's chapter to reveal more I was OMG, and really was "into" those chapters.

Kate is married, she seems to have such a loving husband.

Kate starts getting notes via her letterbox, each time she takes them to the Police station, no one knows who is posting these snip bits of sentences.

WHO MURDERED ROSIE?

The title of this book really ties in with the story.

I really love psychological thrillers, ones that are so well thought out, so well written. I love Debbie Howells way of writing, I love how her mind worked in this story, god knows how she weaved this one together, but I need to read more from her, most definitely I do.

I have to thank Kensington Books via Net Galley for my advanced copy of this well written, fascinating, unputdownable.....read.

Would I recommend it? YES most 120% sure

Would I buy this for a friend? Oh yes indeed.

Trish at Between My Lines says

This review was originally posted on [Between My Lines]

This book had me so jumpy from the very beginning. The atmosphere was menacing and I could feel evil hiding around the pages just waiting to grab me! Well maybe not me but definitely some of the characters!

First Line of The Bones of You by Debbie Howells:

"I put down the phone and just stand there, completely still."

Five reasons to read The Bones of You by Debbie Howells:

Beautiful writing: Seriously the prose was gorgeous but it never got in the way of the plot. I hate when descriptive writing slows down a story but here the plot and writing complemented each other so well. For this alone, read the book! The descriptions of nature and the flow of life were fab.

Dark shadowy mystery: I'd describe this as ghostly and I've heard others compare it to The Lovely Bones and I can see why. It's not the same, in fact it's very unique, but vibe is similar.

Village setting : I loved the English village setting. At first glance it all seems so peaceful and idyllic but for some families it is far from that. There is a sense of community and of neighbours who genuinely care but behind closed doors, there are unseen horrors.

Ugly, ugly, sick characters! Characters that you will despise and that make you mad as hell.

Complex characters: Even the good characters (Kate, I love her) make some dubious decisions during the book. At one point I wanted to reach into the book and shake some sense into Kate but life is never black and white and I appreciate when characters aren't either.

What a début! I love when an author digs into the undercurrents of family life and shows us the good, the bad and the unthinkable. I was a bit bothered by the plot hole in one of the storylines as it was something the coroner would have immediately noticed and this stopped it being a five-star book for me. But apart from that, I'm impressed and want to read more by Debbie Howell in the future.

Thanks to Pan MacMillan for sending me a copy of this book in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

Delee says

This was a little better than okay for me...

It started off sooooooooooo strong- and lost something in the last half. Whittle this down to about 275 pages and take out the Gone Girl reference in the description- and it would have been 4 stars for me...

Anyone who has followed my reviews for the last year or so- knows how I HATE when publishing companies compare books to Gone Girl...or compare books to any other books in general really. Let a novel stand on its own...and stop giving away the fact that a book has a twisty ending by comparing it to another book with a twisty ending for selling purposes...because frankly it just pisses me off. And I am not easily pissed off when reading.

In this case comparing THE BONES OF YOU to Gone Girl gave away the fact that there was going to be a twist- therefore making me realize who the murderer was about 20 pages in. Thanks for that.

[image error]

When Kate receives a phone call- that Rosie Anderson is missing and then found... dead, she is heartbroken- her daughter is the same age- and the news hits way too close to home.

[image error]

Who would kill the perfect daughter...from the neighborhood's perfect family? Or was everything perfect? The closer Kate gets to Jo- Rosie's mother- the more she realizes that she may need to dig a little deeper to get to the truth.

[image error]

THE BONES OF YOU switches back and forth between three narrators – Kate- a mother...Rosie- the murdered daughter of Kate's neighborhood friend, and Delphine- the murder victim's younger sister. Not everything is always as it seems...but this book would have been better (for me anyways)- if I wasn't forewarned about that- in the blurb.

Thanks NetGalley!

Mandy says

I give this 3.5 to 4 stars.

This book is like Sybil meets Mommy Dearest.

That being said, I feel like I need to see a psychologist after reading this. This story was all over the place and quite frankly eerie.

Rosie is murdered, her mother is falling apart, her dad is some big shot reporter, and her sister is just there. Kate who was like a second mother to Rosie tries to help Jo, the mother of Rosie, through this time weird things start to happen.

Jo is strange to say the least, Neal is all about Neal and Della is left to struggle on her own and to deal with her sister's death.

I started to figure out who the killer was about 2/3 of the way in. This book was sad, crazy, and confusing.

The plot was good, I despised most of the characters and I felt so bad for Kate who was trapped in the middle.

All in all it was an ok read. Just because I didn't go crazy over it doesn't mean you won't. I felt the last 50 pages were the most climatic for me because I had to know who really murdered Rosie.

Will be interesting to see if a movie is made about this one.

Diane S ? says

3.5 This suspenseful and psychological thriller can be representative of many things. Dysfunctional families, keeping problems in the home, alcoholism, narcissism, how two damaged people can come together to create a nightmare of a life. The disastrous effects of a emotionally empty childhood, showing us how little we actually know about what goes on behind closed doors even if we consider them good friends. The many masks people can wear and how easily we can be deceived by charm.

Yes, all these things are in this book but it is done very well. The author uses a loving family, a normal family of you will, to offer as a sharp contrast to the one that is dysfunctional. Took a while for me to figure out who was telling the truth. A good solid and well thought out thriller.

ARC from NetGalley.
