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Police psychologist Dr. Dot Meyerhoff is pulled into the vortex of a terrible crime involving an eccentric photographer whose images of nude children make her a prime suspect in the disappearance of her own daughter. The principal investigator in the case is a young officer whose dedication to work and obsession with finding the missing child is tearing his own family apart. Trapped between her allegiance to the investigator, her complicated connections to the photographer, and her unstable relationship with the police chief, Dot must find a way to help everyone involved. As Dot's psychological expertise and determination contribute to solving the mystery, her involvement with the missing child's extended, dysfunctional family brings her face-to-face with painful psychological issues of her own. The Fifth Reflection delivers a chilling, up-close look at the psychological strain of investigating Internet crimes against children, the complexities of being married to a cop, and the deadliness of jealousy.

The Fifth Reflection Details

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Author : Ellen Kirschman

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From Reader Review The Fifth Reflection for online ebook

Aleasha says

Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for providing an early release copy in exchange for an honest review.

The Fifth Reflection was a well thought out novel with a bit of a touchy subject. Well that's what the blurb led me to believe anyway. This book starts off with us getting to know the main character, Dot Meyerhoff - an aging psychologist, moving on with a new fiancé after her husband left her for someone younger. Her fiancé's photography mentor has reported her daughter missing and here is the part I referred to early - the blurb makes it seem like this is all about child porn. Thankfully not - I think this was just a clever diversion to mask the real story/ kidnapping.

I quite enjoyed this book and would look forward to reading more from Ellen Kirschman.

Diannetattro says

What a great read

I so enjoyed this mystery. Once I started I could hardly stop reading. The characters, especially Dot, feel so real. It offers an insight into what cops have to deal with on a professional and personal level. I cannot wait for the next Dot Meherhoff book to come out.

Col says

Synopsis/blurb....

A missing child. An eccentric mother. An obsessed and troubled investigator. A police psychologist trying to help them all—at her own peril.

Police psychologist Dr. Dot Meyerhoff is pulled into the vortex of a terrible crime involving an eccentric photographer whose images of children make her a prime suspect in the disappearance of her own daughter. The principal investigator in the case is a young officer whose dedication to work and obsession with finding the missing child is tearing his own family apart. Trapped between her allegiance to the investigator, her complicated connections to the photographer, and her unstable relationship with the police chief, Dot must find a way to help everyone involved. As Dot's psychological expertise and determination contribute to solving the mystery, her involvement with the missing child's extended, dysfunctional family brings her face-to-face with painful psychological issues of her own. *The Fifth Reflection* delivers a chilling, up-close look at the psychological strain of investigating Internet crimes against children, the complexities of being married to a cop, and the deadliness of jealousy.

My take....

My last read of 2017 and an enjoyable exit to the year.

A young child, Chrissy goes missing and the initial fear is of an abduction by a pedophile. The child's mother, JJ is a controversial knit-your-own-yogurt, tree-hugging photographer and has aroused ire and condemnation for the content of her photographs - naked young children, portrayed as more than innocents. The child is later discovered dead and carefully dumped, but hasn't been defiled.

Dot Meyerhoff has a connection to the case through her work as a police psychologist helping officers under emotional stress from their work through counselling and also through her fiance Frank. Frank is a keen photographer and a student of JJ, the child's mother.

Kirschman handles a sensitive and troubling subject well, exploring the effect of investigating the horrific abuse of minors on the officers involved and their families. The obvious investigative route in this case is sex offenders and those with an unhealthy interest in minors. The stresses and strains of becoming immersed in this world takes an inevitable toll on Manny one of the young officers tasked with solving this case. Knowing Manny and his wife, Dot endeavours to help the pair resolve the difficulties Manny's job is causing them. An interesting dilemma - where does Dot's professional obligations cease and at what point does offering marriage guidance overstep the boundaries? There's a real blurring of the lines.

As well as the sex offender angle, family is also a line of enquiry. JJ herself with her unconventional lifestyle and strange reaction to the death of her daughter is a viable suspect. The child's father, Bucky and his partner are other options worthy of exploration.

Fiance Frank's relationship with JJ is also a cause of conflict with Dot. Frank feels overly protective of the woman, especially in respect of her loss and her physical beauty provokes more than a bit of insecurity with Dot. Dot is having trouble fully committing to Frank, still suffering the scars from getting burned in a previous relationship. Using Frank to pump JJ and others in the photography class for information, increases the tension between the pair.

I liked this one. The mystery is eventually solved, Dot playing a helpful role, despite having no investigative authority. We discover the circumstances of Chrissy's death, but for me the interesting angle was the tensions between the lead players in the novel and how those issues played out. Dot's hot-cold relationship with the police chief is an on-going saga. I don't think the emotional effect that traumatic cases have on those investigating them is often fully appreciated.

Great mystery, interesting characters and dynamics, plenty of personal entwined with the professional, a difficult subject sensitively handled. What's not to like?

4 from 5

I've enjoyed Ellen Kirschman's previous two Dot Meyerhoff books - Burying Ben and The Right Wrong Thing.

<http://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03...>

<http://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2016/02...>

Ellen Kirschman has her website here.

<http://ellenkirschman.com/>

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Darcia Helle says

The Fifth Reflection is one of those books that left me with a mixed impression of good, bad, and indifferent.

I'll start with the good. The author excels at showing us the emotional strain on the cops who work cases involving kids. We see the toll the job takes on their physical and psychological health. We watch as their personal lives crumble. These aspects of the story are compelling and poignant, reminding us that the men and women working these cases often suffer a private trauma of their own.

The mystery and whodunit aspect of the story left me feeling indifferent. I wasn't surprised by the outcome, though there is an interesting twist along the way.

Then there's the bad stuff. I wanted to shake some sense into Dot. She is a successful, intelligent woman in a high-powered job, who is far too meek and submissive in her personal life. And that brings me to the crux of my problem, which is the weird triangle between Dot, her fiance Frank, and his photography teacher JJ. So much is wrong, from my perspective, with the interactions between the three of them. Frank gushes about JJ as if she is his first teenage crush, and he appears to have absolutely no concern for how his behavior affects Dot. In fact, his responses to her seem arrogant. Dot, for her part, tiptoes around him, not wanting to question his infatuation. These are two middle-aged adults, but it feels more like two extremely young, immature adults. JJ, the free-spirited beauty, is apparently oblivious to the fact that she has wedged herself into the middle of this relationship. Considering JJ is supposed to be all about peace, love and supporting her fellow humans, her insensitivity seems totally out of place.

I have not read the other books in this series, and I had no problem understanding Dot's character. This story stands well on its own.

I received an advance ebook copy from the publisher, via NetGalley, in exchange for my honest review.

Carrie Frank says

I received this book from the publisher however the thoughts in this review are that of my own.

The book was an enjoyable read but not overtly great. There are many characters throughout the novel that the author takes time to develop which can get a bit tedious however they are all integral to the story line which is well developed.

The story explores the stresses placed on those in the police community and goes a bit into children that are missing and exploited through child pornography and human trafficking, again a small piece to the story line but I feel underdeveloped in importance in today's society (as I feel that is why it was included). It wasn't necessary given how the plot was developed so it should have either been developed more or left out completely and the inferences used developed in a different manner.

The ending of the book is not my favorite. You spend time reading and the last chapter of the book - mainly the last dialog is a horrible ending given the first chapter of the book. I was not a fan of how this book was wrapped up showing the female lead as insecure in home work and life.

I would read other works by this author and recommend this book for a light reading experience however there are some flaws throughout story and plot development.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Oceanview Publishing for a review copy of *The Fifth Reflection*, the third novel to feature police psychologist Dot Meyerhoff of the Kenilworth PD in Silicon Valley.

Dot is spending Thanksgiving in Iowa with her fiancé Frank when he gets a call from his photography mentor, JoAnn "JJ" Juliette to say that her two year old daughter, Chrissie, has been kidnapped. As the investigation swings into top gear the novel is as much about its effect on the characters and Dot's relationships as it is about Chrissie.

I enjoyed *The Fifth Reflection* although I have no idea what the title means. It is my first encounter with Dot and I really like her down to earth, no nonsense approach to life and counselling, her very insecurities about her age and her relationship, her inquisitive mind, her strong work ethic and her desire to help her charges to the best of her ability. She is refreshingly normal but no pushover. Her first person narrative adds a sensible spin to what could be a very emotive subject.

Dot is under very strict instructions from publicity hungry Chief Spence not to get involved in the investigation as she knows the controversial JJ through Frank but her concern for the detective leading the investigation, Manny Ocheo, leads her astray. It is interesting to see the other side of policing as Manny slowly loses his way. He was put on the paedophile task force with no evaluation and little training and is now the chief's choice to lead the investigation into Chrissie's disappearance. With a small child at home he slowly becomes consumed by what he sees on the job putting his marriage and sanity in jeopardy. In direct contrast to this is Chief Spence who talks about employee welfare but is prepared to sacrifice Manny for a result. The reason they assume the kidnapping has to do with paedophilia is that JJ published photos of nude children, including Chrissie, in artistic poses a few months previously. Ms Kirschman provides both sides of the argument but leaves opinion to the reader. I think this is based on a real controversy from a few years ago. Personally I find it distasteful.

You would think from this that the plot takes second place to characterisation but this is not the case. It has an interesting premise and takes a couple of unexpected turns. It had me gripped.

The Fifth Reflection is a good read with a different slant from the usual procedurals so I have no hesitation in recommending it.

Patricia Gussin says

THE FIFTH REFLECTION excels in so many dimensions. A police psychologist caught in a tangle between an eccentric mother and her missing child . . . and her own fiancé. Ellen Kirshman is indeed a police psychologist and an outstanding writer.

And why the title: Think: Budda

This is the third in this series, but it can be read as a standalone. Her other novels are THE RIGHT WRONG THING and BURYING BEN.

Kathy says

The Fifth Reflection by Ellen Kirschman is the third in a series about Dot Meyerhoff, a police psychologist with the Kenilworth Police Department in Silicon Valley. This is the first book I've read in the series, and, in fact, the first I've read by this author. I'm not sure I will read another.

The book starts off focused on Dot and her fiancé Frank enjoying Thanksgiving with Frank's family in Iowa; the first time Dot has met any of his family. All is disrupted when he gets a phone call from his photography teacher and mentor, JJ (JoAnn Juliette). Her toddler daughter, Chrissy, has been taken from her bed and is missing. Frank immediately drops everything to fly back to California to console JJ.

This book is supposed to be about investigating Chrissy's kidnapping/death and bringing the perpetrators to justice. In reality, the book is more about relationships, and there are plenty! Dot's triangular relationships with Frank and JJ; the impact of Dot's past marriage on her relationship with Frank; JJ's triangular relationships with Chrissy's father, Bucky, and his wife Katherine; Bucky's, JJ's & Katherine's relationships with Chrissy; Dot's relationships with the police chief Pence and the staff of the Internet Crimes Against Children task force (which is headed by officer Manny Ochoa).

JJ seems more interested in her controversial photography (her specialty is nude children) and her Buddhist beliefs than she does with helping the police determine who took/killed her daughter. Bucky wants to find the person responsible for his daughter's disappearance and death before the police do and take justice into his own hands. Katherine wants Bucky to love her and make her a priority. Chief Pence wants glory. Manny is so invested in catching whoever is behind Chrissy's disappearance and death that he loses all perspective and puts his mental health and family life at risk. Frank wants to be JJ's comfort and hero, while also wanting Dot to finally marry him. And Dot, Dot is one hot mess, flailing away in her relationships with everyone! Drama anyone?!? Sheesh!!

One reason I'm unlikely to read another book in this series is because I found Dot so very, very weak as both a character and a woman. Given her education and profession, I would think she would've done a little more work on herself. I think it would be fair to say that given the numerous rebuffs time and again, no one in the police department really wants to work with her or sees the value in what a police psychologist offers. And though she and Frank are each in their fifties and have been married before, they seem more like shallow teenagers with regards to their relationship than adults. Come on, Dot, grow up and be strong! Are we really supposed to believe you are key to the investigation when you're such a messed up pain in the a**?!

OK as a diversion, but don't expect any real suspense or twists here.

Many thanks to Netgalley and Oceanview Publishing for allowing me to read an ARC of this book.

Ana says

<https://anaslair.wordpress.com/2017/0...>

The Fifth Reflection was not a bad book but it wasn't utterly amazing.

I actually really enjoyed the first chapter, almost more than the rest of the book, because of the familiar setting and the fact that the characters were older than I am used to finding in fiction I enjoy reading. It was interesting to see how they related and how they welcomed Frank's girlfriend into their mist. However, Dot came across as much more posh than she turned out to be, whereas Frank developed into almost the opposite, with all his fancy cooking.

When the author jumps back in time to introduce us to the very particular circumstances of Chrissy's disappearance, I lost a bit of interest, probably because it was a brake in the pace I had so enjoyed. And as the narrative evolved I could not understand why Dot kept inserting herself to the investigation when it was obvious it was putting a strain on her relationship with Frank and that the results of her doing so weren't good for the investigation either. It's almost as if she was investigating for our benefit. It would have made more sense to follow someone more personally invested in the event.

On the other hand, I enjoyed discovering what a psychologist at a police station is supposed to do.

Towards the end things just felt clumsy and rushed. Things begin falling into place much too nicely, with a character even spelling things out for us: (view spoiler)

The Fifth Reflection is not your typical psychological thriller full of twists and turns, where you are utterly surprised by each revelation. It has its own pace, with an unusual but fairly relateable main character and it was an enjoyable read, just not something I was absolutely looking forward to pick back up.

Disclaimer: I would like to thank the publisher and Netgalley for providing me a free copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Lloyd Russell says

You know, oftentimes authors will write novels that reflect their careers. We certainly know MANY lawyers who write books about...wait for it...lawyers and the law. And a lot of these books make you feel like you are in the courtroom at the prosecutor's/defense lawyer's table with them. But there is something about Ellen Kirschman's background that makes police psychologist Dot Meyerhof seem even more real than your average fictional character. Ellen, of course, was a police psychologist for 30 years. She is, in fact, still very active in that community. But when I read her novels, I definitely feel like I am learning something. And that I'm actually inside the head of a real police psychologist. It's a pretty cool feeling.

I'll let you go to Amazon or Goodreads to get the plot for #3 in the series. I want to focus on a few of the

facts I learned. And I'm only going to mention 3 of them because I don't want to take away from your reading of the book. Here they are:

1. Regarding online child pornography (sorry that this is such a bummer) - "Every month, 60,000 new images are added to these websites." That brought out an audible "Wow" from me.
2. (bummer #2) "Most child abductions are parental abductions. Children have more to fear from warring parents than strangers hiding in the bushes." Did you know that?
3. I won't quote the passage because it's too long. But it is fascinating to learn about the role of make-up in a coroner's exam.

I could go on and on. Really. This felt like a tutorial, but in a very good way. I really loved learning about the behind-the-scenes stuff. I'm know I also got info in #1 & #2. But it's greatly magnified in #3.

Okay, I have to move along. But it's hard to do. I very badly want to give you more insights into the inner workings of police departments. But I want to make sure you read the book! So here are a couple of other observations I made from reading The Fifth Reflection:

1. There is quite a bit of subtle humor. And everybody knows how subtle I am. (Yeah, right). But the book is funny.
2. The writing is very good. Take a look at this description of an interview by the police: "There's no apparent logic to Manny's interviewing technique. His questions come fast and furious, spinning and swirling from past to present, from California to Norway. I feel like I'm watching Jackson Pollack create a painting." Pretty visual, right?
3. Child pornography and child kidnapping are not fun to read about. But Ellen makes it palatable. Between the police procedures and the police officers' personal lives, the reader gets a good feel for how hard the job is. And, not surprisingly, the toll it takes on the families.

This is a good story and a good series. If you haven't read any of the Dot Meyerhof books, what are you waiting for? I can't think of a better way to learn about the police and police procedure, directly from an expert.

Janet Newport says

Thank you Netgalley and Oceanview Publishing for this ARC

.Arrghh!! I had to really push myself to finish this one. I seem to be on a streak of 1 - 2 star books here lately and am becoming increasingly irritated at the waste of my time. What?? I'm going to read anyways....are these books any worse than the labels on my cereal box?

The Fifth Reflection wasn't much better than the Cheerios box...but no worse than Kathy Reichs' more recent Tempe Brennan stories..... all about a somewhat officious woman with boundary" issues" and a savior complex.

Overall, I found the characters to be on the flat side, some even stock stereotypes. I have no idea how / why Dot and Frank ever got together to begin with as emotionally immature as they are portrayed together. Too stubborn to admit they might have made a mistake, maybe? And what's this nonsense about how Dot is a

paid consultant to the Police Department? Paid consultants have contractual obligations that are pretty specific in defining the scope of the work/job expected of them. Dot just seemed to do whatever Dot wanted to do.....as a psychologist she seemed to think her unsolicited "words of wisdom" would be welcomed anywhere at any time.

Good grief.

Then there was the plot. Wild pig trails are easier to follow. The book presents as the difficulties police have dealing with child pornography and the toll the stress of their work takes on them. While these were mentioned (as nauseam) in the book, the story didn't really concern either except as page filler.

Breakaway Reviewers says

A different kind of mystery with an engaging but disturbing subject

Police psychiatrist Dot Meyerhoff spends her time helping police officers deal with the emotionally traumatic scenarios they encounter in their day-to-day work. She is meant to counsel and advise officers only but finds herself getting overly involved in the investigation when her fiancé's friend, JJ's three-year-old daughter Chrissy, goes missing. Unfortunately, JJ is a photographer whose controversial images of nude children make her the prime suspect in her daughter's disappearance. As the case drives a wedge between Dot and her fiancé Frank, she must work to help those dealing with the sensitive issues of the investigation not crumble from the pressure whilst also trying to salvage her own relationships and figure out how honest the complicated members of Chrissy's family are being with the police and each other.

This was an enjoyable novel that was well written and engaging. Despite being the third in a series, I was able to follow the plot easily and the personalities of the characters came through well without a lot of unnecessary explaining of their backstories. Whilst the subject matter of this book is very unpleasant and not easy to read, it was not overly graphic or explicit and it was quite interesting to consider the effect that working in such a horrific area would have on normal people. I found the subplot involving Manny, a police officer assigned to the Internet Crimes Against Children task force, incredibly poignant, as it addressed the toll that working on cases involving child abuse can have on someone's psychological health and personal life. This is something I have never really considered before and is not often addressed in any books that consider child abuse, but is obviously a real problem facing many essential members of society. Manny was a very sympathetic character and I followed his actions attentively through the story.

However, despite a few dramatic moments, this book did lack some of the mystery and urgency that readers tend to associate with crime thrillers. There were no real twists in the plot and the ending seemed a little incomplete, with a few of the loose ends seeming to be tied up a little hurriedly. I also found some of the character interactions (particularly the almost obsessive adoration that Frank has for JJ, which he actively defends to his fiancée Dot and doesn't seem to consider how it may make her insecure), a bit unrealistic and frustrating. Whilst it was interesting to see how a police psychiatrist works, Dot also seemed to be overly involved in the investigation for no real reason, and at times I couldn't really understand why she didn't back off from it a bit.

Overall, this was worth a read but not really exciting enough for me to consider it a thriller. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a compelling story that addresses some difficult areas.

Daenerys

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.

George Lichman says

When two-year-old Chrissy disappears from her bed overnight, the Kenilworth Police Department mobilized all its resources to catch her kidnapper, including a newly implemented Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. And the police have a lot to consider, especially after Chrissy's own mother featured her in an art exhibited that was criticized as bordering on pornographic days before her disappearance. The Department and the Task Force, particularly Officer Manny Ochoa, have a lot to consider in the case. In addition to the art show, there is a nanny who flees the country, a commune home where dozens of unknowns have access to the child, and a father angry and jealous not to have the child as his own.

"I am the owner of my actions, heir of my actions. Whatever actions I do, good or evil, of these I shall become heir"--Buddha's Fifth Reflection

The Fifth Reflection is the third novel by Ellen Kirschman featuring police psychologist Dot Meyerhoff, a middle-aged divorcee who works hard to deal with the emotions of her own failed marriage and the baggage it has brought to her new relationship while she tries to help the men and women of the Kenilworth Police Department, a group who, by their nature, are averse to taking help for anything, let alone from a shrink. But Dr. Meyerhoff isn't your ordinary shrink. She has a knack for getting herself into situations that could get her into trouble, both with her job and real danger. While the police chief calls it meddling or butting into official police business, she prefers to think of it as doing The Right Wrong Thing. However, Dr. Meyerhoff finds herself caught in the middle of a police investigation, her motives are always to help; a grieving family, a cop in trouble, or a crime that needs solving.

Dr. Kirschman writes what she knows. She has a successful career as a police psychologist and wrote the book *I Love a Cop* to help families get through the unique challenges that accompany loving and living with a police officer, and *Counseling Cops*, to offer advice to therapists with police clients. (She also wrote *I Love a Firefighter*, which I just don't understand...) Her experience in psychology and police work is evident in her Dot Meyerhoff series. As Dr. Meyerhoff feels some stress in her relationship with her fiancé Frank, she thinks,

"He doesn't have trouble sharing his opinion about what he calls the important things of life, religion and politics, but the closer we get, the harder it is to talk about our differences because we have so much more to lose."

And as she is talking with one of the police officers she serves, she proves she knows the business, writing something similar to what I've found myself saying and thinking over my career,

"This is the typical progression. In the beginning of their careers cops are so overwhelmed with novelty and new found power they would work for free. Give them a few years and boredom sets in. They start looking around for ways to re-stimulate the feeling of excitement and passion."

I had the pleasure of meeting and spending some time with Dr. Kirschman at Bouchercon last year when she was on a panel I moderated. She is an expert in her field and it is quickly apparent to anyone who meets her how dedicated she is to her career, the law enforcement community, and the myriad issues facing them now. The Dot Meyerhoff books are fun and entertaining crime fiction novels, each one better than the last. Perhaps they can also bring attention to some of those important issues in a way and to an audience that nonfiction can't.

"Fiction is the lie through which we tell the truth."

Albert Camus

3 no 7 says

"The Fifth Reflection" is the third book in Ellen Kirschman's Dot Meyerhoff Series. It is not necessary to have read the previous books to enjoy this one. This is a "police procedure" book from a different viewpoint. Dr. Dot Meyerhoff is a psychologist and a paid consultant for the Kenilworth Police Department, a moderately sized agency located in the heart of California's Silicon Valley. The book is written in Dot's first person narrative. She works to support police officers and their families while they struggle with the day-to-day stresses of solving crimes.

Be advised, this book deals with a complex social problem and illegal activities involving children. This not only takes a toll on the officers working on these cases, but on the reader as well. The cases do not always end the way one might want.

Dot Meyerhoff and her fiancé Frank Hollis are having a typical Thanksgiving gathering with family in Iowa. "The sky is as gray as the stubble in the fields, obliterating the horizon. Without a line to show where earth and sky meet as though I'm floating in space." Unfortunately, this is the last idyllic time they have because the phone rings; a friend calls; the unthinkable has happened; a child is missing; Dot and Frank rush back to California.

Frank is a photography student and Chrissy, the daughter of his teacher, is missing. Complicating the search is the underlying fear that the abduction might be part of a child pornography ring since Chrissy's mother recently exhibited multiple photographs of unclothed young children, including Chrissy.

And then the body of a young child is found. Now it is time for Dot to do her job, but what does she say to someone whose child has been murdered? As the department goes to work, personal relationships become more and more entangled, lovers and ex-lovers, spouses and ex-spouses. Who is lying, and who is telling the truth? Stress mounts. "Nobody calls a cop or a therapist when they are having a good day." And all are in peril. "Be careful, Dot. A person who would murder a child wouldn't hesitate to murder you."

I received a copy of "The Fifth Reflection" from Ellen Kirschman, Oceanview Publishing, and NetGalley in exchange for my review. I had not read previous books in this series, but background information about the characters was included as part of the ongoing narrative. There was no unneeded summarizing of the previous books. This book kept me glued to the pages. It was not an easy book to read because of the subject matter, but it was not sensational, graphic, or explicit. The crimes against children were handled in a sensitive and appropriate manner while emphasizing the toll that these crimes take on everyone involved. I will definitely add Ellen Kirschman to my "must read" list.

Mandie says

Thrilling and provocative. This book takes you down some dark roads with terrible what-ifs. Dot is the unsung hero of this story keeping herself calm through her own struggle with humanity. Reminded everyone that while your job is important, so is your humanity.

Great cop and psychological thriller! This is a definite must read.
