



Zero at the Bone

Mary Willis Walker

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Katherine Driscoll is just three weeks away from disaster: foreclosure on her home and business, even the sale of her beloved dog. She has no hope of raising the \$91,000 she so desperately needs--until the father she hasn't seen for thirty years writes to her, offering her enough money to solve her problems...if she will do one thing in return.

But Katherine may never learn what that is. When she arrives in Austin, she is hours too late: her father has died in a bizarre accident. As she sifts through the cryptic notes he left behind, she finds herself caught up in terrible family secrets--and a deadly illicit trade. The more she learns, the more determined she becomes to prove her father's death was no accident. In doing so, Katherine will make a bitter enemy--one desperate enough to kill...and perhaps, kill again.

Zero at the Bone Details

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Author : Mary Willis Walker

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From Reader Review Zero at the Bone for online ebook

Chana says

A nice light mystery, not too serious but well plotted and consistent. A young woman is in serious financial trouble and about to lose her home, land and business. She gets a mysterious letter from her father whom she hasn't seen since she was 5 years old; he says he can help with the finances and to please come see him. So she goes to Austin, to the zoo where he works, to look for him. Shame of it is, he was just killed at the zoo that morning. So our girl takes a job at the zoo and starts to investigate. She also meets the members of her family that she hadn't known since she was 5. So there is some family drama, some sleuthing, some action, some romance, some success - all done in a very nice way.

Michiko says

Agatha???????

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Paula says

I thought this was a good story by a first time author for me.

Katherine owns and runs a dog training center along with boarding. She is in trouble financially since her mother's death because of doctor's bills. Her estranged father sends her a letter and asks to see her, and tells her he can solve her financial problems. She hasn't seen him in about 30 years. She is desperate enough to reach out to him. When she goes to Austin to the zoo where he has worked much of his life and finds to her horror that she is too late, her father was killed by a tiger. They think it is an accident but the evidence points to murder. Now she must find out what he had planned for her and help find his killer.

Clare O'Beara says

This is a mystery in an interesting setting. A dog trainer in Texas hears from her estranged father. Sadly she's in need of money and this is her main motivation for going to meet him after he writes that he would like to

put family differences to rest. But she arrives too late - contrary to zoo regulations in Austin Zoo, her father, the big cat handler, went to work with a tiger on his own and it appears the tiger killed him.

Between the dysfunctional but polite family she now meets, and the rigidly structured zoo where she now takes a job, the heroine has a lot of changes to face. She's convinced someone human killed her father and so are the police.

There's good detail about the work of zookeeping, between careful handling, muck-shovelling and breeding exotic animals. A weirdo is clearly on the loose after another person is found dead and the girl asking questions is in trouble. There's also the issue of the money the girl was promised - where is it? This is an interesting read, not too sweet and fluffy, with respect shown to the animals involved, especially venomous snakes.

Barbra says

This is the first book by this author that I have read and have enjoyed reading it. She has 3 other books available and I have bought all 3 which must say something. Not a bad read.

Back Cover Blurb:

It's feeding time at the zoo. Who's for dinner?

Katherine Driscoll hasn't heard from her father since she was a baby - over thirty years ago. She's deeply suspicious when he writes her a letter. How does he know she is in desperate need of help? Although she's the best dog trainer in Texas, she must find \$90,000 immediately or lose everything, including her beloved golden retriever, Ra.

But when she tries to take her father up on his offer, she finds that he is already dead, mauled by a tiger at the zoo where he was a keeper. Katherine resolves to investigate, drawn to uncover long-buried family secrets which appear to be entangled with events at the zoo. Grimly repressing her fear of snakes, she joins the staff of the reptile house. Only to realize that the tiger isn't the only killer around.

LJ says

ZERO AT THE BONE - VG

Walker, Mary Willis - standalone

Texas heroine, dog trainer, and sleuth Katherine Driscoll. The 36-year-old protagonist receives a letter from her father, whom she has not seen since she was five. The letter promises much needed financial help, but when she arrives at the zoo where he works, she discovers that he is dead. Long-kept family secrets begin to emerge when the woman takes a job at the same zoo, which is run by her deceased mother's brother and largely financed by her maternal grandmother. The mystery brings in various literary tidbits from Emily Dickinson, Shakespeare, and Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner that add depth to the book.

LOVED this book. Katharine is a great protagonist and the suspense kept me turning the pages as quickly as possible. I actually read this book after "Under the Beetle's Cellar." This lady can really write suspense.

Dee says

This one was very dark.

Christina T says

Although a decent book after several years it doesn't stay with me. I reread my notes on the book and if it weren't for them I wouldn't have remembered reading this book at all. I do remember it took me weeks to finish it. I had a hard time connecting to the character Katherine and could care less who killed her father whom she hadn't seen in over 30 years. This is definitely not a cozy as the context was a bit more graphic than that. Katherine not only finds herself in the business of uncovering the reason behind her father's death but also the death of several other men, an illegal rare animal selling ring, and a deep dark family secret. Overall I would say the book wasn't bad but I didn't rush out and read any other books by this author either.

Katherine Clark says

I read this book for the monograph. It won the best first novel Agatha in 1991. This was a first time read for me; I hadn't even ever heard of Walker before this book. I think I liked it. Definitely a traditional--too much blood and danger and killing of animals. The setting was a zoo and wildlife ranches--quite clever and anticipates Barr (whom I prefer).

Penny says

"Walker is terrific at goosebumps!" -- The Philadelphia Inquirer. I agree
