



# Stolen

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## **Stolen** Rebecca Muddiman

When Abby Henshaw is brutally attacked by two strangers in the countryside, her first thought is for the safety of her baby daughter, Beth. But what follows is a mother's worst nightmare: Beth is gone and Abby's world collapses around her.

As DI Michael Gardner begins to investigate Abby and her family, he discovers lives built on secrets and betrayals. Under pressure from his bosses to find the missing child and to unearth the truth, Gardner finds himself struggling to stay emotionally removed from the case, and from Abby herself.

After the authorities finally shelve their investigation, Abby receives a message telling her where she can find her daughter. But how can she convince those around her that the girl really is Beth when they are the very people she knows least?

A gripping and haunting debut, *Stolen* is a richly imagined psychological thriller from an exciting new talent in crime writing.

## **Stolen Details**

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Author : Rebecca Muddiman

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## From Reader Review Stolen for online ebook

### Book Junkie says

I had to take off one star because I figured out the plot halfway through... Yet, this was entertaining enough to keep me reading late into the night.

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### Smitha says

It was a book that I downloaded on my Kindle just because it was marked down. And it lay there. Forgotten. Stored away in my Kindle for rainy days when I have no real books to read.

Abby Renshaw and her baby are on their way to visit a friend who lives in the country side, when she is forced off the road, out of her car and badly assaulted. All through the horrendous experience, Abby is only concerned about her baby who was left alone in the car while the men assaulted her. When she finally manages to get to her car, she finds Beth missing. Her little baby had disappeared into thin air.

The case falls to DI Michael Gardner to investigate. As he digs deeper into the mystery, he discovers dark secrets and betrayals, some of which he himself has first hand experience of himself. But no sign of Beth.

Years pass, he is no closer to finding Beth, and then he finds himself handed another case of a missing child, which brings back focus into this case which he could never solve. Just then some clues surface, but can Gardner go off on what might be a wild goose chase, so many years after this incident? He also has his reputation to stake, and that might get further tarnished if he is unable to solve the current case he was supposed to solve. He is already known as the cop who couldn't solve his cases. But Abby Renshaw is a hard woman to refuse.

Despite the fact that police got nowhere in their search for her daughter, Abby hasn't given up. She has been searching for her daughter constantly. Her life revolves around Beth, or rather trying to find Beth. Her marriage has since broken down, and all she really wants is to find her little girl. She keeps seeing girls who looked like Beth, much to Gardner's exasperation. Could her instincts finally be right? Are they closer to finding Beth, finally?

A very well written, psychological thriller, that keeps you at the end of your seat. Fast paced and an absolute page-turner, it had me engrossed. The author keeps the suspense going until the very end. The reveal at the end was even shocking and totally unexpected, at least for me. The characters are well thought out, you relate to them, feel their pain, go through their emotions. I was surprised to read that this was the author's debut book, I know I would definitely be looking out for more.

A book that I would definitely recommend if you like thrillers. It was one of the best I've read in recent times. 4/5.

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### Thebooktrail says

Abby Henshaw is driving with her 8 month old daughter Beth, on their way to visit a friend. She is forced off the road by 2 men in a white van, dragged into their van and brutally attacked before being dumped at the side of the road.

However, her nightmare is only just beginning – Beth, her baby daughter has disappeared from the car and is missing.....

The subject matter and descriptions, particularly of the attack are vivid and shocking but it is the search for the daughter that packs the largest emotional punch. It is written from the view point of the victim and is all the more gripping because of it.

This may come across as a crime novel but I would describe it as more of a thriller as you never know who to believe and often come up with an idea of who might be involved only to completely change your mind during the next chapter! The chapters are short and snappy which adds even greater pace and tension to the plot and is very fitting for something that you want to devour as fast as you can in order to find out just what happened to this little girl. You can feel the tension and the emotions of the mother on every page and it is very interesting to see the lengths to which she goes through in order to get people and the police to listen to her and for no-one to forget about her darling baby girl. All characters, the family and friends around Abby are well developed and seeing them from Abby's point of view gives an unusual way of meeting this characters, of finding out about them and deciding for yourself their part in Abby's life and what secrets they might be hiding.

The central idea – that of loss is compelling –

Think of your most prized possession. Think of the one thing you love more than anything else. Think of the one thing you would die for. And then think of losing it

It's Abby that probably has the most emotional line in the book for me. Right at the beginning which filters through the entire book making her role as a mother even more heartbreakingly –

“I chose to be a mother. her mother I chose her.”

Never mind that characters such as Abby are not your most wholesome characters. Abby is flawed in ways we discover later on as are other characters and this makes it more real and more raw. I thought how I would react in the situations presented and this made it all the more thrilling to read.

This novel is set in Teeside but obviously settings and the site of the abduction are not made explicit. The issues however override any mention of the settings as the subject matter is so stark. Knowing Teeside slightly makes me picture certain places as I read the book but it is the mystery at the centre of the story that is the backdrop here. We may think we know how we might act or feel in Abby's situation and feel that we have heard of such a story in the Madeleine McCann case. It is certainly a situation thankfully very few of us experience but that makes it all the more frightening as we share Abby's determination to find out the truth.

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## **Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says**

A great book written by a relatively new face on the British Crime scene. This was promoted in my local library!

I read this book quickly, it's an interesting and chilling plot with plenty of twists and turns, I'm a big fan of supporting English writers, and this book deserves some credit.

### **Kidnapping.**

Scary stuff. And you can feel the fear of those impacted in this book. The plot ramps up quickly and it's not long before you feel pulled into the drama. It's a mother's worst nightmare!

I enjoyed some of the reveals and liked the way the book didn't have a traditional plot or ending for it's kidnap theme. It's a really good read for those that like thrills and crime combined. This is the first book in a series and I will be reading book two. Really liked this.

**4 paw prints from Booklover Catlady for this one. There are some terrific crime writers coming out of the UK and I am loving the surge in Brit Crime. Awesome!**

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## **Katie Pickering says**

let me start by saying how brilliant this book is, it took me all of two days to read and I simply couldn't put it down. I feel the author took a risk writing about the disappearance of a young child but she did it extremely well the characters the plot it all fit together beautifully.

This book kept me guessing the whole way through, every time I thought I knew what was going to happen I ended up being wrong!

"I chose to be a mother. her mother I chose her."

This was my favourite quote of the book, I think it sums up the book completely in very few words. Abby's character is perfect in the way she represents a normal mother and the emotions that a lot of us would go through in her position.

if you like thriller's I think you should give This book a go it was freebie which was a bonus and one of the best free books I have read.

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## **Lindsay says**

‘How had this become her life? It wasn’t even a life. She felt like a ghost.’

Abby Henshaw is on her way to visit a friend after a doctor’s appointment with her eight-month-old baby daughter, Beth. The journey she makes will change her life forever. Suffering a horrendous assault and abandoned at the roadside in a remote spot in the country, Abby faces not only the after effects of the brutal attack, but also comes to a terrifying realisation about Beth – she is gone, stolen. DI Michael Gardner investigates the case and as he looks into Abby’s life and those closest to her, he starts to uncover huge secrets amongst them, and he also finds himself forming a bond with Abby and unable to let the case go even when any leads seem to have gone cold.

Rebecca Muddiman successfully portrays how Abby’s life is utterly destroyed by Beth’s disappearance, and how she is tormented by the secrets she kept and the decisions she made. She is reduced to scouring public places in the vain hope of ever seeing Beth again, and when there is new hope she depicts the struggle Abby has to convince those around her to believe her and not let this lead slip away.

This powerful debut is a compelling, page-turner of a crime novel from a talented new author. The story slowly builds in tension, I was a bit keen for it move slightly quicker at times in the middle, but when the revelations come towards the end, I felt they were powerful and shocking. The chapters are very short and keep the story ticking along at a good pace. The plot is always central to this novel – the reader questions what the outcome will be throughout – but the novel is also very much character driven, as we get a strong insight into Abby’s drastically altered life and into DI Gardner’s rather empty life and his mindset as he continues to doggedly pursue this case for Abby, despite it having been shelved and seemingly without any hopes of resolution, whilst under pressure to solve his other cases.

I was really keen to discover the ending to this story and learn if what I had suspected was true; there are clues for us but the whole truth when it comes is more shocking than I had thought. I look forward to reading more from this author.

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## **Lee says**

I absolutely loved this book! Abby Henshaw is driving with her baby going to visit a friend. She is forced off the road by a car and is then assaulted and raped by its occupants, leaving the baby in the car alone. Abby is terrified, she has never seen these men before and cannot understand why they targeted her. To her horror, after she struggles back to her car she finds her baby missing. What is going on? To divulge more would give away the story but all I will say is that I read this book in one sitting as I just could not put it down, exciting and very suspenseful.

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## **Claire says**

Oh my - this book was so emotional for me, not only did we have to deal with rape and broken relationships but the theft of a baby. I remember being so frightened that something was going to happen to my little man every time we went out when he was brand new that to actually read the story of a mother who lost her baby

was just harrowing and a total page turner because I just had to know what happened next.

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### **Sarah says**

Wow, wow, wow, wow!

This book just hit the ground running right from the start. Boy what a start. This has to be one of the most shocking and uncomfortable starts to a book I have ever read. What poor Abby endures is truly shocking. Not just at the beginning but the whole way through the book.

My heart totally went out to Abby in this story. To not only have to endure being attacked, she then has to try and go on with her life after her baby girl goes missing. You don't have to be a mother to feel the pain and torture that Abby is feeling. She never gives up on finding her daughter and even though she is constantly on DI Michael Gardners back, the pair strike up an unlikely friendship.

I loved Gardner. He has never forgotten the case of the missing baby Beth. It's not just Abby who is a constant reminder to him but I think he has quietly beaten himself up over the years in not being able to solve the case. It is understandable that to a certain point he has got slightly fed up of the constant accusations that Abby makes and is reluctant to follow up every one of them.

When Abby receives a message five years after her daughters disappearance telling her where to find her daughter the story gets extremely shocking and twisted.

Stolen is just an outstanding start to a new crime series. I was gripped from the moment I started it and read it in one day. If you want to be taken on a whirlwind roller coaster of a read then look no further. Highly recommended.

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### **Lynda Kelly says**

Easily the best freebie I've read this year although I downloaded it last year !! It's a debut as well so even more impressive. I really enjoyed it and will keep an eye out for this author again.

A mother is attacked and her baby is also stolen in the same incident. A few years on and another child goes missing in the same town and is being investigated by the same detective. There were a lot of twists and turns and I had seen many other reviewers say they figured the story out quickly but I certainly didn't. One character in particular I had a lot of sympathy for whereas another I just thought was selfish and thoughtless. Both evoked quite strong feelings but I'll say no more as I don't do spoilers.

My only gripe were the obligatory apostrophe mistakes which cropped up on and off throughout. There were no spelling nor grammatical errors I spotted apart from this so I didn't knock off a star as I usually do. It seems you have to be pretty darned lucky to download a book without apostrophe mistakes these days. Yes, they're very aggravating but seem par for the course even in bestsellers.

I'd highly recommend a read of this, though. It is very good indeed.

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### **Cleo Bannister says**

Abby Henshaw is forcibly removed from her car by two men following a deliberate collision. Her baby daughter Beth is left alone in the car. Before Abby is able to return she disappears. DI Michael Gardner is running the investigation into Beth's disappearance and uncovers secrets and lies that cause Abby's life to completely unravel.

This book details the long search for Beth both by DI Gardner who is battling negative publicity from the media as he becomes frustrated at the unresolved mystery. When Abby receives an anonymous tip off on where to find Beth she struggles to make anyone listen not least because DI Gardner now has another missing child to find.

Rebecca Muddiman has written a book moves along at a fair pace with enough twists and turns to keep the reader's interest although the first few chapters were fairly predictable the tension soon ratcheted up as Abby's obsession with finding her daughter seemed increasingly futile. A great holiday read.

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### **Suzanne says**

Abby Henshaw is driving with her 8 month old daughter Beth, on their way to visit a friend. She is suddenly forced off the road by 2 men in a white van and they drag her into the van, leaving Beth alone in the car.

Abby is beaten and raped, and left by the side of the road. When she returns to her car her baby has gone. What follows is the story of the search for the missing baby.

I was totally gripped throughout this book. Abby isn't perfect, but the description of a mother who desperately wants to find her missing daughter is powerful and heart breaking.

Quite early on I had an idea of where the story was going, but there was a lot more to it than I had guessed. I was shocked by the twists and turns and stayed up til the early hours to finish the book as I was dying to know how it ended.

I believe this book is the authors debut, and I look forward to reading more from her in the future.

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### **Ann says**

Driving to visit a friend Abby Henshaw is brutally attacked and raped and her baby daughter Beth abducted. The book follows Abby's search for Beth and spans a five year period. It is well written with plenty of twists and turns. However, after a really great start, I did feel it lost a certain amount of momentum. There were certainly moments of tension but the plot became increasingly convoluted and there were so many coincidences that for me it lost some credibility and the end seemed rather dragged out and unconvincing.

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### **Gail says**

I really enjoyed this book. I actually couldn't put it down from the first page.

The story is based in one of my favourite parts of the UK, Redcar, and it's a refreshing change from the more popular locations often used.

I will not dwell too much on the plot, as this has been covered by other reviewers, except to say that Abby is married to Paul and they have an eight month old daughter, Beth. Abby is brutally attacked and raped whilst driving with Beth on a lonely country road to visit her best friend, Jen, and, when Abby is eventually released dazed and terribly confused, Beth has vanished from the car.

Abby's life quite literally falls apart and the police hunt for Beth goes cold. The story then picks up five years after the terrible events that had occurred with Beth totally obsessed at finding Beth; spending days sitting on a beach, walking around funfairs etc., in the hope that she can spot her daughter.

It's a fast, very good read and I enjoyed it immensely. The only downside is that I spotted who the perpetrator was from very early on; I just didn't know how or why this had been done and from thereon in the book engulfed my life!

It's a terrific debut novel and I really can't wait to read the next book featuring DI Michael Gardner and his very interesting past, which was only touched upon during this story.

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### **Linda Lpp says**

Listened to the audio version. British mystery-quite enjoyed the story, even though the premise was heartbreaking.

Will definitely look for the next book in this series. Would recommend this book and already have!

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