



Virals

Kathy Reichs , Brendan Reichs

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Tory Brennan, niece of acclaimed forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan (of the Bones novels and hit TV show), is the leader of a ragtag band of teenage "sci-philes" who live on a secluded island off the coast of South Carolina. When the group rescues a dog caged for medical testing on a nearby island, they are exposed to an experimental strain of canine parvovirus that changes their lives forever.

As the friends discover their heightened senses and animal-quick reflexes, they must combine their scientific curiosity with their newfound physical gifts to solve a cold-case murder that has suddenly become very hot if they can stay alive long enough to catch the killer's scent.

Fortunately, they are now more than friends. They're a pack. They are *Virals*.

Virals Details

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Author : Kathy Reichs , Brendan Reichs

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From Reader Review Virals for online ebook

Monkey888 says

I originally started to read this book after completing the Temperance Brennan Series. They had set a high bench mark with complex just-believable if you squint plots, strong characters and quality writing, supported by Reichs' knowledge of forensic Anthropology.

I'd liked the series so I thought, hey, why not give virals a go?

I have more heckles than I could possibly cram into a review, so here are my main points,

A few pages in I was already sceptical. Being a 14 year old girl, the same age as the protagonist, Tory, I instantly found flaws in her thinking and boasts of superior knowledge. While I'm not the smartest in my grade, nor have I skipped, I found myself instantly at a higher level of thinking than Tory. Her knowledge seemed to flit spontaneously from ridiculously technical, using complex jargon much like the Temperance Brennan books, to simple, below average teenage girl.

A throwaway line of perceptiveness "But I wasn't as perceptive then. Hadn't evolved." at the start of the book intrigued me, yet throughout the book, Tory remained as socially blind as ever right through to the final page, possessing an incapacity to predict even the most obvious of enemy action. This is in conformity with the first few pages, which seem to hold a different writing style and more untruthful throwaways than I'd think possible.

Aside from this, the gross female stereotypes and Tory's gender isolation puzzles me. What kind of school would not have a single pleasant girl in it (the only one that seems nice blows it at the end)? This makes me wonder if Tory's the problem, although no evidence is put forward to say that she is anything beyond flawless ... well ... no DELIBERATE evidence.

Beyond the simple weaknesses in Tory's character, there are issues with all of her friends, relatives and acquaintances. Dumb confessions progress the story, horrid naivety supporting this further. Sudden character changes don't do much for it.

Then there's the faux science as this detective novel shamelessly crosses the boundaries of sci-fi fantasy. The crossing of DNA stumped me as I questioned Tory's scientific conclusions as they came belated to my realizations as to what is going on.

Finally, there's the simplicity of the finds and rare, quick, perspective changes from first to third person. This only made the story harder to finish as I glanced over pointless babble I had registered or even read from another character several chapters ago.

Somehow, despite all of the above, the novel had a certain level of readability to it. Throughout my endeavour, I found myself locked in a constant internal debate between putting the crappy thing down and finishing it mindlessly, despite my constant frustration.

Kate says

<http://www.gurl.com/wp-content/upload...>

YES!!! Sci-fi done perfectly :) JUST FANTASTIC!!!

At school, our teachers put us into book clubs and this was one of the set books - sadly, our group didn't get to read it (then again, maybe that's a good thing - there's NO WAY we'd be able to drag this book out over 10 weeks!), but a friend of mine did and LOVED it, so I grabbed it at the library... and amazingness followed...
<http://now-here-this.timeout.com/wp-c...>

The start was kind of slow... and it takes a moment to get into, but about halfway through it the plot just POUNCES on you, like the drop bear of literature! Actually, that sentence turned out kind of strangely...

Tory and her friends live on Loggerhead Island, day after day, analysing, inventing, looking for action. Which is exactly what they find after they rescue a wolfdog, the adorable Cooper, from a scientist who has been breeding a rare strain of a canine virus, and Tory nurses him back to health.
(view spoiler)

Definitely one of the most exciting books ever!! Best things about it:

1. The plot-twists. Seriously. TENSE!
2. The Virals jokes and conversations are perfectly done and hilarious! Hi, in particular, has some great lines :) AND their conversations sound realistic for their age. So much fun to read with the entertaining comments from the best pack ever XD <http://www.geekosystem.com/wp-content...>
[I've GOT to stop doing so many GIFS]
3. Everything.

What else do I need to say? Just read it and become more and more obsessed with every page!

TEAM VIRAL!

Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

Kathy Reichs is the author of the Temperance Brennan series. She is a forensic anthropologist, so both the books and the TV series Bones are loosely based on her life. Knowing all this, I expected something different from her YA novel, and that's exactly what I got.

I loved this book! Tory Brennan is 14 years old, living on a very small island near Charleston with her newly discovered father, a marine biologist. With her three friends, she somehow saves a wolf-dog from an institute, but they all soon become very ill and start experiencing strange things. At the same time, they discover some old bones, so the four of them begin an adventure made all the more interesting by their new abilities.

I'm (almost) certain that the DNA cannot be altered the way it's described in Virals, but THAT story is definitely more believable than angels, vampires, weres, sidhe-seers and whatnot. What we have here is a classic whodunnit spiced up with a touch of supernatural.

I liked that there was no love story in Virals. Tory is only 14, so I don't think it would be appropriate to have her fall madly in love with some boy just by looking into his eyes. I was thanking various deities for that little treat. I'm not saying she hadn't developed a small crush, but that only made about 2% of the story. Also, the solution to the puzzle was not obvious. Reichs is very experienced so I expected as much.

So why did I give four instead of five stars? Tory Brennan was a bit too smart for her age. They discovered a 40-year-old skeleton and she somehow managed to determine age and gender in less than 5 minutes. I get

that she inherited her aunt Tempe's brains, but did she also inherit her knowledge? It was a bit ridiculous. Also, the beginning was slow, but I understand that this is the first installment and the foundation had to be laid.

My overall experience was somewhat ruined by the narrator, Cristin Milioti. The fake southern accent she used for some of the characters almost drove me crazy! She has a pleasant voice, but a flat intonation, so I often tuned out while listening to the parts with very little dialogue.

The next installment is called Seizure and it's coming out on October 18th. I will definitely read it.

Ruth says

Ten Reasons Why This Book Is Better Than Maximum Ride-Hunger Games-Gone-Everythingelse

1. It blends science, superpowers, and mystery. Crossover genre books are the bomb.
 2. These kids whoop ass. Literally. When they SNAP, all heck breaks loose.
 3. The characters are very well done. Maybe a little iffy with the side characters, but it's easy to sympathize with Tory and the Pack.
 4. Virals is very informative in the science area without turning into a Bill Nye episode.
 5. THE MYSTERY!! Loved it and very intricately written out!
 6. I loved the fact that Reichs didn't entirely focus the book on Tory and her friends when they got their powers. That would have totally turned into a Maximum Ride copycat. But this book isn't like Maximum Ride in the fact that all these people are easily relateable. You can't exactly compare with bird-winged kids who are basically super-fly ninjas, can you? But you CAN compare yourself with someone like roly-poly Hi, or nerdy Shelton, or even moody Ben. Plus, Reichs added in teen characters who were actually pretty intelligent. Brain power rules.
 7. Gee golly, wolf-spiked DNA? Well it's more believable than fallen angels, I do believe.
 8. Virals is a ruby in a bucket of diamonds. In other words, it completely stands out among the washed out, idea-has-already-been-done-before YA books that are floating around in which they all have Dazzlingly Spectacular covers but no substance.
 9. I can honestly say that I did NOT see the end coming at me. Whoa, total shocker.
 10. The ending looks open for a sequel!! I WANT MORE!!
-

Mary says

I usually don't go for the mystery novels solved by teens as they are really cheesy. Not that this book wasn't cheesy, I actually got so into this that I read it in just two hours!! Yay! I loved it, especially the ending.

Jennifer says

I'm a big fan of Kathy Reichs' Temperance Brennan series as well as Bones, the TV series it's vaguely based on. When I heard about Virals, I knew I had to read it. While it's very different from her other work, Virals is very similar in both the scientific atmosphere and deep character development.

Tory Brennan is Temperance's grand-niece. For those familiar with the books, Tory is the granddaughter of Harry, Tempe's sister. Tory mentions Tempe a lot even though she only learned they were related a few months before and has only met her once. Tory is a science nut and Tempe has been her idol for much longer than she knew of the relation. The one thing that left me wondering was is it possible that Harry has a 14 year old granddaughter? I always got the feeling Harry and Tempe were in their forties from the books.

Virals sticks close to Reich's style. There are intelligent, yet easy to understand explanations of the science mentioned. The characters are believable and easily invested in. As in the Temperance Brennan series, Virals is full of never see them coming reveals.

The similarities end there. Virals has an added edge of science fiction not found in the other books. The idea, while weird, is well broached and convincingly described. The kids gain abilities and the focus is on how the abilities affect them and how they use them. Once the transformation is complete, there doesn't seem to be any downside to what they've become. The book is much more concerned with what the kids are capable of rather than the seemingly "supernatural" creatures they become. I find this take with the genre leaning more science fiction than paranormal extremely well done.

In Virals the mystery of what the kids are becoming is only part of the whole. The true mystery involves a long missing girl and the hunt for her killer. As these things usually go, the adults don't believe the kids and the kids refuse to stop until they find the truth, placing them in grave danger. The abilities the kids gain aid in solving the mystery and in keeping them from harm during the investigation. The missing girl mystery was a bit obvious but there were a few surprising twists along the way.

Virals is a very promising start to a new series with the possibility of being amazing as long as the focus stays on the abilities and the science. I'm excited by the premise and will definitely be looking out for the next book.

Lucy says

[sort of

Lindley Walter-smith says

This was entirely awful - badly written, misogynist, poorly plotted and characterised, borderline racist YA that entirely fails to suspend belief. The writing was technically bad, with nothing but choppy sentence fragments and rhetorical questions (which are immediately given redundant answers, every time). Tween readers are constantly condescended to. The four main characters behave in ways that make no sense, or are completely unrealistic - breaking effortlessly into high security labs, for example. Continuity is sloppy,

subplots are never resolved, and there is even the basic error of absolute terror of using "said".

There is exactly one positive female character in this: the heroine. She's a deeply unlikeable "brilliant kid graces with a tall and slender figure" caricature who is a bitch to her father's girlfriend for being pretty, feminine and getting her expensive clothes (what) and spends her time mentally snarking and whining about the popular kids, but I am pretty sure we're meant to like her, anyway. Every single other female character? Vapid and/or evil.

There are no characters who are not stereotypes, which is where my unease with the way race is handled arises. Heroine is white (of course). Her friends are a Japanese/black boy who is naturally a nerdy bespectacled computer whiz, an overprotected Jewish stereotype, and a boy with Native American heritage who is... well, he's Jacob, essentially. The only excuse is that the author doesn't seem to think in terms other than stereotypes even when the (default) white characters are involved - rich kids are spoiled and shallow, Southern belles are sickly sweet, blonde cheerleaders are evil dumb cows, librarians are weedy and live alone with their cats...

The plot is stupid. Four kids rescue a wold dog hybrid from evil vivisectionists and turn into superheroes with wolf powers, and it's all jumbled up with investigating the death of a girl killed by evil Big Pharma. It's rubbish, and the denouement revolves around a villain who has declared their intention of killing them all and disposing of them fast instead standing there explaining the evil plan for two chapters. Even at ten, I would have been disgusted with such sloppy writing.

I really can't think of a single saving grace for this one, and I'm unsure why I ever finished it, except that it's light and easy and there was a sort of trainwreck fascination it. It amazes me that, when there is so much good self-published stuff out there, Random House are putting their money behind things of this standard.

Stewart says

I want to give KR the benefit of the doubt here, and assume she was pressured into writing this book. Something along the lines of . . .

PUBLISHER: Kathy we just love your books! The refreshing way you intersperse real-life issues pertaining to forensic anthropology into compelling stories!

KR: Thanks, I do my best.

PUBLISHER: We think it's really important to reach out to younger readers and would really like you to consider writing something for them.

KR: Such as . . .

PUBLISHER: Well, the same amazing mysteries you write, but with concepts that teens find compelling. Like vampires. Or werewolves!

KR: So I should write something that contains both real-life forensic issues and mythological creatures?

PUBLISHER: Exactly!

KR: Did Angel fans put you up to this?

PUBLISHER: Why? Do you think we should be reaching out to them more? Do you think David would pose shirtless for cover photos?

KR: (sigh)

Yeah, it was that bad. That bad, plus a debutante function so she could "borrow" concepts from Gossip Girl as well as Twilight. You're better than this, Kathy. I hope.

Alicia says

I'm a sucker for good writing, and in my opinion, the writing in this book is excellent. Varied and vivid verb choices, great word-painting, and a unique narrative voice appropriate for the fourteen-year-old narrator. I am floored.

Action-junkies may not love this book as much as I did because it was definitely a slow burn. At its heart, it was a murder mystery, and plenty of groundwork was laid. I actually enjoyed all the groundwork because the narrative voice always kept it fun and light. Even without constant action, all the story-building seemed completely necessary and never felt like too much to me.

Another thing I loved about this book is that the young adult characters were intelligent and (mostly) rational. I feel that too many YA books are built on characters that are irrational--as if being a teen means you can't have common sense. That wasn't the case here. The kids were smart--really smart. While their choices were reckless, they were mostly logical. The one exception happened toward the end, when they mishandled evidence in a way that was uncharacteristic given their history of logical choices up to that point.

I was hoping to give this book five stars. Sadly, toward the end, there were some twists that didn't have enough groundwork. And too many revelations came in traditional and cliché bad-guy-tells-all-before-killing-good-guy moments that led to some eye-rolling on my part.

(Also, it should be noted that this book is borderline middle-grade.)

Twiggy says

Oh dear!

I think she's made too much money and her editor couldn't face being honest about the whole thing.

This is clearly Kathy Reichs attempt to enter the teenager/ young adult market with a combination of mystery thriller /DNA science/ high school cotillion/ with supernatural powers thrown in for good measure...

Well I suppose it was an original combination.

What really made me hate it, was the fact that she set it in the same 'world' as that of Temperance Brennan and the teenage heroine Tory is her great niece. Given the developments by the end of the book, this was just really problematic as regards the concept of realism and made me worried for good old Tempe.

Anyway this starts of with 4 really super smart teenagers living on a remote island off Charlston whilst their

families work on a nearby research island. Of course they just happen to attend the smartest private school in Charleston, where they can be picked on by the rich kids, except for Tory , who naturally attracts the attention of the two most popular boys at school.

Our fearless team like messing about on the research library and seem to go out of their way to just be annoying. Tory finds a set of dog tags on the island. This means that at all costs she must identify them. Any means are justified. Full day research in the public library followed by felony break in to the lab in order to use specialist equipment to clean the god damned things , returning to the scene, digging up a dead body, refusing to call the police until after same, interfering with a crime scene, lying to everyone, identification of disappeared dead body (at all costs), identification of murderer (again at all costs - without telling any adult) etc etc etc.

what happened to teenagers just wanting to go out and get drunk?

Anyway all of this was annoying enough but on top of that we have secret experimental dog who contaminates them all with wolf DNA and they end up with super powers.

The ending was even worse. Again no adults involved.

Total car crash.

Marguerite (Lady RH) ❁ says

Rating : 4.25 stars

I loved it, I loved it, I loved it, I loved it, I loved it !
I can't believe I did.

So I know *Bones*. I was never a huge fan, but I enjoyed pretty much every episode I've seen. But I've never read the books and I was not really tempted. And then I found this one, and I said "huh, yeah why not ?". Okay, it was not a very exciting way to begin with but i'm glad I took the book.

Because...

I loved it, I loved it, I loved it, I loved it, I loved it !

It wasn't believable. I wonder why... maybe because we follow four teen who accidentally got infected with a virus that turned them into some kind of werewolves.

Or maybe because they're four überbrilliant teen who can do pretty much everything. Pick a lock ? Easy. Don't get caught by camera ? No problem. Steal secret files ? Eyes closed. And again, and again, and again. They can do so many things it makes me envious.

But it was awesome and very very very enjoyable. I liked all of them, I loved Coop even if he's pretty useless, and I loved Tory. I guess I can say she's a **Mary Sue with perspiration problems**. Yup, that's a new thing !

Whatever, I loved her.

The book really focused on sciences and the mystery. I know nothing about sciences and I don't know if what they said is true or not, but it was enjoyable and it all that matters.

The bad thing is that I kind of can sense a love-triangle building in the horizon, and I really hope I'm not ! Just keep doing weird things, getting shots at and doing what grown-ups seem unable to do !

Now I will start the second book.

Laura Rash says

Really enjoyed this! I can't wait to read the rest in this series!

Leon Aldrich says

I want to like this author. I really do. And this piece of fiction is young adult. I couldn't get past Reich's attempt to legitimize the protagonist by linking her to Temperance Brennan as a relative. Like that somehow will make the story-line stronger? Then to top it off, one of the main characters is named, Hi. Really? That was the best you could come up with?

Supposedly Reich's writing gets better after her first book. But of the two I've attempted, when there are SO many good books out there to devour, why in the name of all that is holy, would I give Reich my money?

Stella Chen says

Since the start of grade 11, I haven't been able to read any books of my choice. This book just begged to be read when I got it from the library.

The plot sounded intense and it was by a well-known author.

I loved all of the characters within the book. It was very relatable as I, myself, was a fan of science and mystery. None of the crap werewolf lovey-dovey story emerged within the story and I am truly grateful for it.

This book was heart pounding, action packed and provided me a fix for my love of the Maximum Ride series. Sci-fi and mystery lovers will no doubt pounce on this book. A weekend well spent!

Sam says

4.5 stars! I only have minor issues with this book.

So, I kind of felt like Tory was a little bossy. Way bossy. Her friends are pretty freakin' awesome to put up with her bossiness. I mean, if I had friends like Hiram, Shelton and Ben, I'd be kissing their feet 24/7. They are so willing, helpful and loyal. Super shoutout to them.

Also, she was kind of, well, mean to Jason. Are you kidding me? If I had a guy after me like that, I'd totally

like him. He's so sweet! :D Absolutely love Jason. And Ben. And Hiram. And Shelton. I'd marry all of those boys in two beats.

The sarcasm in the beginning was a little over the top. I was cringing every three seconds, because Tory's narration was like angst angst angst. Somehow she get better. Whoop!

And I have an issue with the ages. She's freaking fourteen. I eventually gave up and started thinking of them as sixteen or seventeen, because fourteen didn't make sense. Sorry, but people do not talk like that when they're fourteen. They aren't so hard-core in romantic relationships when they're fourteen. They definitely do not become criminal masterminds, plot with killers, and are willing to murder someone with a Sig at fourteen. Sixteen, yes. Fourteen, no.

Will definitely read the next books! Awesome plot, super sc-fi. Love.

Lofinka says

I found it in the library and I was immediately intrigued. It literally screamed at me „**Borrow me!**“

I brought it home because it would look bad if I hadn't borrow something.

PS.: New sexy librarian is in the library, so let him have educated customers!

Dad read Reichs novels with great gusto, so I plunged headfirst into one of them and... **didn't expect that!** I have feeling that *Virals* chased away a taste of bullshits I've read before.

The story takes place in a small, almost deserted island, which is psycho itself. Tory manages to make friends with *three boys* after the six months, what lives there. Another hit the jackpot. Hiram's the funny, Shelton's the smart and Ben's... well, Ben. They're not afraid, with their passion for science, of, for example, break into a secret laboratory, break into the library or liberate wolf. An infected wolf. And it will not go away.

Kathy's novels isn't enough to read, you must turn on your brain. That's the beginning. I feared the worst with her expertise in forensic science - damn lengthy expressions. There were minimum in the book, fortunately.

The book was clear to see that the author has much experience in writing books and in the world of science. Her characters are realistic and to be honest... half of them completely unbearable. These are the times when I was like the most, if I slipped the book into that damn tub.

Tory was a bit much... **action**. Let's break here, let's go to steal over there. Sometimes I said that she's for her age too smart. And she is. That's not the genes from Temperance, Reichs!

If Ben wasn't in the book, he would simply not there. I mean... What so important he did? Hit his leg?

What was the... thanks, I had to flip through the whole book because of you now, miss Whitney. Inquisitive, powerful lover of pink dresses and brands. If this individual will also occur in the second book, God forbid!

Chance, Jason, Ashley... if you read it, you know.

The author (with apparent through of the son, which is mentioned at the end) spent countless days over *Virals*, and congrats! The work was a success! The plot deserves, well, a lot. Promising characters (**ignore that names on top**) that finally will give the respect of teenagers for adult people. Beautifully chosen location (I don't change the view for this kind of Islands anyways).

What now? Big thanks to Elle! I owe this review to you somehow. Not sure if you read it, but hey, still is for you! :-D

Carolyn Storer says

3.5 Stars

Some of you may know the author Kathy Reichs because of her adult crime novels featuring Temperance Brennan, or through the TV show, BONES. This is the author's first venture into the YA forum and I must say I am pretty impressed. 'VIRALS' is a mixutre of mystery, intrigue and, surprisingly, elements of the supernatural, but as I love the supernatural this was a welcome surprise and definitely added to my enjoyment of the book.

The writing flows very well and Ms Reichs' incredibly vast writing experience shines through. The main character is Victoria "Tory" Brennan and she's fourteen years old - usually this is a little on the young side for me when I'm reading young adult fiction, but Ms Riechs gives her character a maturity beyond her years and because she's just like her great aunt Temperance it's believable, in fact it reads very realisitcally and I liked Tory pretty much from the first page.

Tory's friends are just as intelligent and into different geeky things - they make a great team: Shelton, who's into gadgets, Ben, the muscle-man and Hiram, the comedian - all have something to bring to the group.

It was also refreshing to read a young adult novel that wasn't filled with romantic triangles and love-lorn teenagers. Although Tory does have a crush or two she isn't paralyzed by it, instead she's a strong independent young women. There are moments where I rolled my eyes at the simplicity of certain aspects of the story, such as breaking into a highly secure laboratory to steal evidence - I'm not really sure a fourteen year old would have the knowledge or skill to achieve such a goal, but I enjoyed the fun ride all the same.

The other aspect that I didn't particularly like was near the end when instead of calling her friends by their names, as she had done for the entire novel prior to this point, Tory began to call them VIRALS. I felt that this was only used to coincide with the title and it quickly became annoying. You wouldn't suddenly go from calling your friend 'Hiram' to 'the viral' or as a group 'the virals' - it was a bit odd.

The other characters such as parents and police are all a bit frustrating but as I was reading the novel through the eyes of a fourteen year old maybe that's why I found them to be so annoying. They wouldn't listen to Tory, even when she and her team of buddies had found human bones and thought it was a murdered girl they were looking for, and her Dad's girlfriend was the most irritating of all - I just wanted to bonk her on the head with something hard. But they're all well written and flesh-out so they didn't read like silly characters but like real people.

The paranormal element is very subtle and only comes into play in the second half of the book but lays the foundations for future novels featuring Tory and her friends, that I hope will be as exciting as this one.

VERDICT:

Overall, 'VIRALS' is an engaging and entertaining read. There are a few negative points, but they are minor and overshadowed by a fun and past-paced story that I had difficulty putting down at times. There are lots of twists and turns that made 'VIRALS' a pleasure to read and I would definitely recommend it to young adults and adults alike.

Angela M says

My first thought when finishing this book was along the lines of "Wow, so much better than I expected!".

Tory is the niece of my beloved Tempe (from Bones) and she's a little mini-version of her. So smart, and so young that it blows your mind. Tory and her crew of friends are all smart in their own areas, and I loved following the adventures of this nerd herd! They live on a remote island, so they really have to come up with their own fun. Tory is obsessed with a pack of wolf-dogs on a remote island, but the pup has been missing. When they break into the lab to clean an old war dog-tag they found they also discover the missing puppy and just can't leave it behind. The mystery of the dog-tag becomes quite an adventure, and saving that puppy will lead them on a path they never could have imagined.

I was so engrossed in this book. I would think I'd been reading for only a few minutes, then I would look up and realize it's been much longer and I'm 1/2 way through the book! The mysteries unfold at a great pace and the action just explodes off of the page. I was drawn into the lives of these kids and didn't want to reemerge. Tory is super smart and so snarky and wonderful, I would have loved to have a best friend like her when I was in high school (even though I would have felt dumb hanging around her). The best friends each have their own qualities that make them a great team and each of them add a great element to the story. Chance (the uber-jock, son of a senator, prince of the school) and his girlfriend Hannah really added a great twist to the story.

I really recommend this book to any lover of mysteries, Bones, fantasy, or YA. I can't wait for book 2 and where this series can go from here. I also loved that the mystery of this book wrapped up completely by the end. There was no cliff-hanger to leave me ready to throw the book, but the next book could go in so many directions still. I only wish I didn't have to wait so long!

Leigh Collazo says

More reviews at Mrs. ReaderPants.

BIG SPOILERS HERE, BUT YOU AREN'T MISSING ANYTHING ANYWAY...

REVIEW: Oh, this book. What a mess. Right away, I noticed choppy writing, info-dumping, numerous interruptions in dialogue, and teen characters who do not act anything like teens. I can appreciate that these teens are smart, but seriously? They guessed a high-security door code on the first try? They found a hidden key to a restricted area in the first place they looked? Granted, the code and the hiding place were pretty easy to guess (convenient), but they found both of them **THAT EASILY?**

The burial site of the body they were searching for, after 40+ years of being buried on a remote island and eluding police and grieving family members, is still apparently visible from a cursory search on Google maps. That's how Tory discovered it. **WOW.** And don't even get me started on why they did not contact the police when they found a **HUMAN SKELETON** on the island. They decided, for no real reason, to "tell them tomorrow."

Characters also bothered me. Of course, there is the whole disappearing parents meme that's so fun in today's YA lit. The boys got very little real personality--we know almost nothing about any of them. We know quite a bit about Tory though, and she is just so stinkin' perfect. Having skipped a grade, Tory is still the smartest person in her grade **AND** somehow has caught the eye of the two most popular and athletic boys in school. All the girls--and I really do mean **ALL** the girls--hate her. Tory has several guy friends but not a single girl friend. The girls her age hate her, one woman wants to make her into a reluctant beauty queen, and one wants to kill her dead. Is there really not one nice female in all of Charleston? Apparently not.

The book takes on way too much, a trend I've seen too often lately. *Virals* really runs the gamut--we have a cold-case murder, some wild monkeys (huh?), a brief cotillion, social class warfare at high school, medical testing on animals, nondescript "street thugs" wearing black (naturally), and environmentalism. No wonder it needed 448 pages.

If I had to say something I liked, I guess it would be the...um...I don't know...maybe the Charleston and island setting. Yes, I liked the setting! Author Kathy Reichs definitely knows the area well, and her descriptions are detailed and really make me picture the area. The trailer (below) is kind of cool, too.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you like mysteries and have read absolutely everything else, you might give *Virals* a try. Maybe.

STATUS IN MY LIBRARY: We have the first two. The third one is due out in May.

READALIKES: *Shelter* (Coben); *The Gathering* (Armstrong)

RATING BREAKDOWN:

Overall: 1/5

Creativity: 2/5

Characters: 1/5

Engrossing: 1/5

Writing: 2/5

Appeal to teens: 2/5

Appropriate length to tell the story: 1/5

CONTENT:

Language: mild-medium; several sh** and bullsh** sprinkled in

Sexuality: mild; Tory's father is "entangled" with his girlfriend on the couch

Violence: medium; a human skeleton is found; murder is central to story

Drugs/Alcohol: very mild; Tory takes OTC painkiller (aspirin? ibuprofen? I don't remember) when she feels sick
