



Cooper Bartholomew Is Dead

Rebecca James

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Cooper Bartholomew's body is found at the foot of a cliff.

Suicide.

That's the official finding, that's what everyone believes. Cooper's girlfriend, Libby, has her doubts. They'd been happy, in love. Why would he take his own life?

As Libby searches for answers, and probes more deeply into what really happened the day Cooper died, she and her friends unravel a web of deception and betrayal. Are those friends – and enemies – what they seem? Who is hiding a dangerous secret? And will the truth set them all free?

A gripping new novel from the author of *Beautiful Malice* and *Sweet Damage*.

Cooper Bartholomew Is Dead Details

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Author : Rebecca James

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From Reader Review Cooper Bartholomew Is Dead for online ebook

RitaSkeeter says

That was the thing about people like Cooper. They were so noticeable to us, they loomed so large and bright on our social radars, and yet to them we we barely blips.

We all remember what it was like to be younger right? We remember the cliques at school; the cool kids, the nerdy kids, the sporty kids, and so on. It's no different in this book. Cooper is one of those golden kids; blessed with good looks and popularity that seems to cruise through life with nary a problem - at least on the face of it. But Cooper has his issues, and do those in his social circle.

Sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll. Okay; I lied about the last one. There's no rock'n'roll, but there *is* enough grog to sustain a small country town. In fact, make a shift in your head from a small coastal town to Melbourne, and you've pretty much got an episode of *The Secret Life of Us* . Despite this being shelved most as 'YA', it definitely ain't YA.

But unlike *The Secret Life of Us* , there is no glamorising of drug use. We see a mirror held up to contemporary Australian society, and the role alcohol plays in it. We see the impact drug use has on people; how what starts as recreational use moves into dependence and how this changes people. We see Cooper's friends struggle with hurt, rejection, and anger as Cooper does something unexpected: he falls for someone outside their circle whom they don't see as worthy.

There are times when this book teeters on melodrama. That's not going to be a shock to anyone; the blurb pretty much gives that away. But what saves this book is **the emotional resonance it has**. Strip away the melodramatic plot elements, and we are left with characters who are real. We feel their pain; we feel their happiness; we feel their hope. It is palpable. These are people I've known, and I'm sure you've known them too. And here's something else; some of these characters I don't like; I don't like them at all. But like our protagonist Libby, I see the good in them too. I hope that things turn out well for them. I want them to take charge of their lives and get their shit together. **The author has a sophisticated understanding of the dynamics of friendship, of love, and of contemporary Australian society.**

But the real strength of the book is the characterisation of Libby and Cooper. This is a realistic portrayal of a first deep love. Of that awkward getting to know you stage, the heady rush of infatuation, the hormones... *And though I'd read the books and seen the movies and talked about and dreamed of it endlessly, I'd never realised that love could be so intense and so magic, so completely and utterly consuming.*

These are good kids. We want them to be happy, but: *now he's dead* . Damn that author to hell. We know he dies from the title, but she makes us care about Cooper. Makes us *love* Cooper. **Libby's grief becomes our grief**. We spend the book alternately loving Cooper and mourning him. Damn you, Rebecca James. Damn you. You owe the Amazon a tree to make up for all the tissues I used.

The world is simply less without him in it. And for me it will always be that way. Less colourful, less magic. Less.

Mehsi says

Not a long review, just a short one to express my feelings.

This one was an awesome book. Unlike many mystery books Rebecca James did something different, we start immediately at the point where Cooper dies. We immediately start in the now part. Which I absolutely loved, it made me want to know the culprit and the whys and hows even more than usual. Normally I would get bored halfway through most mysteries, however this one grabbed me and held me tightly and didn't let me go until the very end, until the mystery was finally solved.

The book is written with multiple POVs. We got Libby, Sebastian, Claire and Cooper. We switch between the now (where Cooper is dead) and the then (where we slowly get closer to what happened). I really liked it, and I loved the characters. Ok, maybe not love, since both Claire and Sebastian are absolutely horrible characters, but we later find out why and how they got to this point and you can start to like them a bit better. Especially Claire.

There is a fair bit of romance, a little bit of sex (but nothing that graphic) and a whole lot of guilt and mystery. We also find out a lot about Cooper, about his life and about his friends. How he was slowly drifting away from them (I can imagine why).

There was a big plot twist, but I already saw it coming from a far distance. Why? Because Rebecca James put hints here and there and let you puzzle them together, and only at the end will she give the revelation and the answer to the puzzle. The hints weren't that overly there, you had to pay attention. Some were more obvious than others that were hidden more.

All in all I was glued to this book from page 1 and I couldn't unglue until way after I read this book. I hope one day to find and buy this book, I haven't been able to find a paperback at my usual place (sad :(). But I hope one day I can add it to my collection.

I would truly recommend this book if you are searching for a mystery. Rebecca James is your number 1 writer to go to. This is another amazing books, and just like the other books worth a 5+ stars. Read this and enjoy! And me? I will be waiting with anticipation for the next Rebecca James book!

Review first posted at <http://twirlingbookprincess.com/>

Kristy (Book Nerd Reviews) says

This is my first Rebecca James novel, and I have to say, I am impressed! This is a great Aussie thriller, which kept me guessing and entertained all the way until the very end.

Cooper Bartholomew is found dead at the bottom of a cliff. The ruling is suicide. But are things really as they initially seem?

What I loved about this book is the fact that it is told through four different characters, in past and present tense, as well as being told from both first and third person narrative.. I know this may sound daunting, but seriously, this was one of the best aspects of this book. It was superbly written, in fact the transition through the various narratives is flawless. Libby and Cooper's narrative is first person, which I felt helped us feel connected to these two characters, and understand their relationship much better. Sebastian and Clare's perspectives were told in third person, which gave us the ability to watch the complexities of these some

characters with some distance.

Through “then” perspectives, we get to see the relationship between Cooper and Libby, Cooper's friendship with Sebastian and the strain of Libby being in Cooper's and Sebastian's life. You quickly see that Cooper seems to be a happy, confident guy who does not seem to have any suicidal tendencies. Did he really commit suicide? Or was there foul play involved? Libby is determined to find out.

Each character is complex, multi-faceted, and each has their own demons and desires. Each character has their own strong distinct voice (which is great considering the perspective changes). There are so many emotions underlying each character and the relationships between the characters are multidimensional.

Going into this story, we know that Cooper died. And while I was unsure if I would like a story where I knew the outcome, I found the story isn't about the “what” it is about the “how”. And I especially enjoyed the “then” perspectives, as I loved being able to watch Libby and Cooper fall in love. And more heart-breakingly, watch it all fall apart due to his death. The scene of Libby learning of Cooper's death was superbly written, your heart will ache for this young woman. I felt her pain and confusion, and later I admired her determination to find out what happened to Cooper.

I also found Sebastian and Clare to be very interesting characters. Deep, complex, troubled. Sebastian, Cooper's best friend, has always been a loyal friend to Cooper, even though they are clearly from different sides of the tracks. Although very different, these two boys bonded at an early age, resulting in them being more like brothers than friends. I think this helps Sebastian deal with this tense and rather detached relationship with his real family. And Clare is extremely troubled, she was bitchy, manipulative, self-involved and destructive, but this is clearly because she is insecure (although that doesn't make you like her any more). But for all their faults, these two are a part of Cooper's life.

You will see how Cooper impacted each character's life, how they loved him, how they needed him, how they grieved for him. Did he really choose to leave them, or is someone hiding a deadly secret? Through the clues along the way in the “then” and “now” perspectives, the puzzle slowly starts to move together and the mystery around his death starts to unravel. Be prepared for a heartfelt and powerful conclusion.

Filled with intrigue, loss, heartbreak, longing, deception, mystery, demise, secrets, expectations and secrets – Cooper Bartholomew is Dead is a captivating psychological thriller.

Note: Although it is commonly believed, this book is not technically YA. It is NA. The characters are in university and it does contain drug use, swearing and sex.

Quotes:

“And though I'd read the books and seen the movies and talked about and dreamed of it endlessly, I'd never realised that love could be so intense and so magic, so completely and utterly consuming. I'd never realised that life could be so sweet”

“That's the thing about people like Cooper. They were so noticeable to us. they loomed so large and bright on our social radars. and yet to them we were barely blips. We knew stuff about them, we talked about them and watched them. We dreamed of being invited to their stupid parties. But they knew nothing about us. Not our names, not even our faces. They were indifferent. They made us feel small and boring. They made us feel invisible”

ALPHAreader says

‘Cooper Bartholomew is Dead’ is the new YA novel from Australian author Rebecca James.

I’ve been excited for this novel since 2010. That’s when I read James’s debut ‘Beautiful Malice’ and first saw the title of her work-in-progress, ‘Cooper Bartholomew is Dead’. No synopsis or release date, let alone information on if the book had even been sold to a publisher ... just that title, and I was hooked. Four years later and ‘Cooper Bartholomew is Dead’ is Rebecca James’s third book – after loving ‘Beautiful Malice’ and making herself an automatic-buy author with ‘Sweet Damage’, her third book lives up to that initial intrigue and is going down as a 2014 favourite.

‘Cooper Bartholomew is Dead’ is split between THEN and NOW. In the now, Cooper Bartholomew is indeed dead (sorry, the spoiler in the title is true) having committed suicide – his friends Sebastian and Claire are reeling, and his girlfriend Libby is numb. In THEN, we read how Libby and Cooper bumped into one another at a bottle shop – they were part of the same graduating high school class, and even worked on an assignment together once, but Cooper’s ex-girlfriend Claire warned him off striking up a friendship with ‘the backstabber’ Libby. When they meet again there’s tension and hesitation, but an unmistakable ‘something’ has both of them wanting to reconnect ...

In the NOW, Libby is becoming less and less convinced of Cooper’s committing suicide. Something is not adding up: they’d made plans to move to Sydney together, and Cooper loved her – they had a future together.

The novel’s timeline flips, as does narrative POV, and we hear from Libby, Cooper, Seb and Claire – we wade through their memories of Cooper and hidden agendas since his passing as well as Cooper’s own accounts leading up to his death and pivotal relationship with Libby. Rebecca James really needs to be commended for the pacing of this plot – especially since there’s a give-away in the title that could have hindered the suspense. It’s teased out beautifully to feel like YA-noir and the short, sharp chapters leading to the denouement are wonderful.

But the real strength of this book lies in the central character of Cooper himself. Maybe it’s because I started reading this when the whole ‘Twin Peaks’ second season talk started, but I couldn’t help but think of Cooper Bartholomew having hints of Laura Palmer to him, and Rebecca James’s latest novel as a head-nod to David Lynch in exposing the seedy underbelly of a perfect life. It takes a special character to be dearly departed for a good portion of a book, and still come across so charismatic and downright loveable, that readers mourn his loss along with the characters:

I dream of Cooper. I dream that he climbs through my window while I’m sleeping and slips into my bed. I wake up and find him next to me – warm and very much alive – and cry with joy. He laughs and tells me that his death was all a stupid joke. I hug him tight and am so overjoyed, so glad to see him, I don’t even care that he played such a cruel trick.

But a police siren screeches through my open window and I’m pulled from my dream with a vicious jolt. I’m awake, alone in my bed, feeling as though Cooper has been ripped away from me. And the shock of this reality – Cooper is dead and gone and I will never see or speak to or touch him again – is like a kick to the stomach. The pain takes my breath away.

Libby and Cooper’s romance is teased out in parallel to Libby’s investigation into Cooper’s death – almost making the romance as much of a mystery as the mystery itself. And that romance is so gorgeously realised that when the inevitable happens, it does hurt.

'Cooper Bartholomew is Dead' is another fabulous novel from one of Australia's favourite YA authors. It's a slice of 'Twin Peaks' noir for young readers to get wrapped up in – and that it hurts so much is part of the novel's charm and Rebecca James's talent.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

When Cooper Bartholomew's broken body is found at the base of a cliff his death is declared a suicide but Libby, Cooper's girlfriend, refuses to believe him capable of it. Desperate to understand what led him to the edge, Libby retraces Cooper's last hours, eventually unraveling a tale of betrayal, jealousy, and shocking secrets.

The story unfolds from the alternating perspectives of Cooper, Libby, Sebastian and Claire, and shifts between 'then', detailing the events that led up to Cooper's death, and 'now', exposing its aftermath.

Though well paced, the novel lacked much of the tension I had been expecting, this is more of a psychological drama than a thriller. I found the plot fairly predictable and while the circumstances surrounding Cooper's death, when finally revealed, are emotionally powerful, they didn't come as a surprise to me. However, I found the narrative very compelling, due in no small part to my investment in the characters.

All four protagonists felt genuine in ways to me that other characters in the New Adult genre have rarely done, I believed in their emotion, motivation and actions. The characters have distinct voices, which is important given the structure of the narrative, and are complex individuals. The relationship dynamics are also convincingly drawn.

An engaging read about friendship, first love, loss and lies, I really enjoyed Cooper Bartholomew is Dead. This is Rebecca James' third novel following on from Beautiful Malice and Sweet Damage.

Fleur Ferris says

This is a fast paced psychological thriller that gripped me on the first page and kept me enthralled until the last. This is one of the best Young Adult / New Adult books I've ever read and it will be enjoyed by readers if any age. I highly recommend this book!

Sharon says

Libby Lawson and Cooper Bartholomew bump into one another in an aisle of a bottle shop. From this day on they become friends and as time goes on, their feelings for one another begin to get stronger. But of course not everyone was happy about Libby and Cooper being together. Sebastian, who was Cooper's best friend was one of them. Cooper couldn't understand Sebastian's change in attitude every time he saw him.

On the day Cooper's body was discovered people believed it was suicide, but Libby was not one of those people. Having never showed any signs of suicide, Libby believed Cooper's death was caused another way.

With this in mind Libby decides she will do all she can to find out what actually happened to Cooper, but will Libby find out the truth or was Cooper's death a suicide?

What a terrific read by Aussie author Rebecca James. This really was a fast paced psychological thriller with twist and turns you won't see coming. A must read for lovers of YA readers or anyone who enjoys a really good and very entertaining read.

Eugenia (Genie In A Book) says

This review also appears on the blog Chasm of Books

Expertly woven in a psychological thriller which Rebecca James has executed so well, *Cooper Bartholomew is Dead* is a suspenseful and gripping read where supposed friendships are tested, deep-seated secrets come to light and one boy's death seems to hold more than what first meets the eye.

Ever since reading *Sweet Damage*, I've been fascinated and impressed by this author's work. Not only are the stories set in Australia to give that sense of familiarity, but the sinister undertones and mysterious elements combine to create a novel that is nearly impossible to put down. The psychoanalytical side of it, looking at the multiple perspectives of Cooper's friends and the different persons in the writing style added a whole new dimension to the plot. Every single aspect of the book contributed to the build up of tension, looking back on the 'then' before Cooper's death, and the 'now' with the repercussions afterwards. I loved seeing these different timelines evolve and how new revelations heightened the intrigue along the way.

You do know that Cooper will die in the end, and it might seem strange to see how a story could become so engrossing when you already know what will happen. However, in this case it's not the final result that is significant in itself - but how it came to happen in the first place. Cooper's relationships with everyone in his group - from the envious Claire to the possessive Sebastian, then Libby who he came to develop a connection with, are filled with emotions that cause so much turmoil. Each character had their own story to tell, and had Cooper involved somehow in their lives which made his passing that much more difficult to bear. There were a few shocks along the way, which do make a whole lot of sense once you look back at the little clues Rebecca James left along the way. These moments are scattered to be revealed in small doses, distributing those 'wow factor' moments.

CONCLUSION

I was once again inexorably drawn into this story from the beginning which held me in its interwoven grip right until the very last page. With palpable tensions, an intense plot and complex characters, *Cooper Bartholomew is Dead* is a thriller which fans of Rebecca James won't want to miss. In essence, this is certainly memorable and definitely one of my stand-out reads of the year.

Kristine Davila says

4 alive stars!

The title of this book is catchy enough to tickle my fancy. Yeah, I truly enjoyed reading this. I was excited to know how did Cooper actually died. The characters were all great, (not nice as characters) and were developed well. The book was divided into THEN and NOW which was a good strategy but I think the

twists were lost in it. It had slide and flowed with the story instead of slamming it into your face. I had guessed mostly all of the supposed-to-be big revelations but the story behind Cooper's death. And, that had been a WHAT??? Just like that.

What I don't like in this book was the acceptance of people around Copper. They had willingly accepted that he had fallen to his death. Nobody questioned it except Libby. She didn't give it a rest and finally the reason behind Cooper's death was revealed.

Melanie says

See more reviews at [YA Midnight Reads](#)

Before I go into my review, let me just clear up that **this is a new adult novel**. The characters have finished high school and most of them are twentyish, there's a bit of sex that was described a little more than what you'd find in a YA novel. Just mentioning this because Goodreads has it shelved most as YA and that's definitely not correct. I would have liked to know beforehand, y'know? Nonetheless, that didn't affect my enjoyment.

Anyway.

I'm quite sure why most people want to read this book is to know what on earth happened to Cooper Bartholomew. I was one of those people--I love my mysteries and I love it when it's all twisted and there are red herrings and suspicious people. That's what I got. The mystery kept me flicking the pages into the night, I just *had* to find out EXACTLY what happened to Cooper Bartholomew.

All the characters were really well developed as well. I hated the characters that I was meant to hate and be suspicious of, and I loved the characters I was supposed to love. Cooper was such a sweet guy and didn't let himself just be strung along with his friends. He was loyal too, and I definitely liked Cooper most. It's a shame he was the one that wound up dead. As for relationships, I definitely approve of Libby and Cooper. I don't think I love them to the point where I'd set sail to the ship but hey, they felt genuine and were great for each other. And no instant-love. WHOOT!

Sadly, I did have quite a few issues with this book. My first one was the love *square*. Yeah, you heard me. Love **square**. Thank God Cooper didn't reciprocate the feelings towards all 3 of them, just to Libby, but it felt kinda weird how he had 3 people all in love with him. There's Claire, the girl who hates Libby's guts from a fight in Year 8 (like seriously?!) and there's Sebastian who's Cooper's best friend. It was just weird to read--with three people pining for Cooper--if you know what I mean.

My second and final qualm is a spoiler, so only click if you've read the book already and want to discuss with me! ([view spoiler](#))

I loved the characters and the mystery, but unfortunately some qualms lessened my overall enjoyment with Cooper Bartholomew is Dead. That being said, I still recommend this--the writing freaking suspenseful and you'll never want to stop reading.

~Thank you Allen and Unwin Australia for sending me this copy!~

Winona says

This book, like many Rebecca James has written, contains a certain eery feeling. I personally love it, now and again. Going back and forth between past and present certainly made it a lot harder to guess the truth of the mystery, it was great! It gave the ending the element of surprise!

C.G. Drews says

I have such confusing thoughts about this book, I absolutely must have a list.

You like lists. I like lists. It's perfection.

But before I jump in I want to say one big thing: **I'M PRETTY EXTRA SURE THAT THIS IS NOT A YA BOOK.** Why do I say that? The characters are all finished school and in their second year of uni. They're nearly in their 20s. That kind of makes it New Adult.

Now I don't like NA books. This is purely preference, hence I'm doing a list, because I'm slightly biased already. I don't like kissing books.

THINGS I LIKED:

1. The characters. were. amazing! All of them! They each had personalities and were so multi-dimensional. If I was giving out star-ratings for specific things, the characters would get a shiny 5-star sticker slapped on their foreheads immediately.

Can we talk about Cooper?! He's probably the sweetest bloke who ever made tables for a living. He's sensible and polite and oh-so-very nice. Seriously, if you only got one word to describe him, it'd be: NICE.

Then there's Claire (the Queen B) and Sebastian (the BFF) and Libby (the love-interest). They all take a turn at narrating, which normally turns me off (four POVS?! 'elp)...but they had incredibly different voices. I hated Claire, was annoyed at Sebastian, and though Libby was perfect for Cooper. Shall we ship them? Let's ship them.

But, you know, Cooper dies...so...

2. There was a lot of mystery...like what really happened to Cooper. You start the book knowing he's dead. (Huge bummer. Honestly, the dude is so nice. Why do the nice people have to die??) Why? HOW?! There are questions! They need answers!

It's written in "then" and "now" segments, so you get to piece together the middle. Kind of like *Dangerous Girls* by Abigail Haas. I liked that, I liked that a lot.

3. Straya, mate. Aussie author. Aussie book. They even went to Sydney. I know Sydney! Lots of surfing and tea and people being too relaxed and laid back to ask questions. Typical.

4. I didn't want to put it down. I had to abandon it halfway through because it was late at night. But! But! I wanted to keep reading.

THINGS I DIDN'T LIKE:

1. It was like a love...square. Or something. Everyone wanted Cooper! I GET IT. He's a nice guy, but honestly? Is he...is he the only person in Australia who's nice? Claire, Sebastian and Cooper used to be a clique. But after highschool, Claire and Cooper broke up and they all sort of drifted. Now Claire and Sebastian have crushes on Coopers...buuut, Cooper is in love with Libby. It's so dramatic. Ugh. Move on, peoples.

2. It was extremely NA. Sure we had the added whodunnit feature in the background, but a lot of the book is about the lead up to Coopie's death. (What? I can give him a nickname.) Claire is an absolute horrible mean girl. Seb is very self-involved. And Cooper/Libby are totally wrapped in their own world of truuuuue love. There's drinking, parties, sex, and family secrets.

3. Oh and by the way, I guessed the Big Family Secret. Totally got that one. Waaaay before it was revealed. Want to know why? None of the reveals were HUGE. All the twists were done mid-chapter...little to zero build up. I kept expecting all this - BOOM OMG WHAT -- moments, but they all just slide in. And just gloomped.

Cooper Bartholomew is Dead had a lot of potential to be like *Dangerous Girls*. It had the same style, same whodunnit feel, same suspense and incredible characters. But it built up to a drama that wasn't knock-your-socks-off worthy and it delivered the WOW moments too plainly.

Now...about that ending...
(view spoiler)

It had a lot of potential to be a thrilling mystery...but it kind of flopped with a less-than-stellar reveal. I sighed. Just a little. Cooper and Libby were absolutely adorable and even grinchy me shipped them. COOPER WAS NICE. At about 50% I started getting really sad because I knew he'd die and I didn't want him to.

Carolyn says

When Cooper Bartholomew is found dead at the bottom of a cliff, everyone assumes he committed suicide even though he was a young man with a blossoming career to look forward to, in love with a wonderful girl

and full of plans for their future life together. In this sad, and moving story Rebecca James takes us through the events that led up to Cooper's death and its aftermath as seen through the eyes of his family and friends. Some of them are hiding secrets and there will be surprising revelations as well as guilt, grief and possibly redemption before the whole truth of why Cooper is dead is unravelled. An excellent read for young adults and those who enjoy a well told story.

rachel • typed truths says

Review copy provided by Allen & Unwin Australia for an honest review.

I wish I could be more generous with the rating because **bloody hell this book was good**, but there were just a couple of tiny things that didn't work for me.

Before we get into the small amount of negativeness, let me just say a big thank you to Rebecca James - finally an author has listened to our pleas and we got a wonderful, slow-building relationship built on mutual affection between two decent characters. There was no instalove. **Can I get me some hallelujahs?** Libby and Cooper were both thoroughly fleshed out characters. They were sweet, genuine, caring and honest. All of the usual relationship drama was thrown out the window and we got a realistically sweet but still swoon-worthy relationship. I really don't know what more to ask for.

Quickly, I also need to add that the rest of the characters were kind of perfect too. There was a great variety of characters but not in a *Glee* cast kind of way. **It was realistic.** There was variety in social class, genders, sexualities, interests, family backgrounds... you get the point: **plenty of diversity - can I get another one of those hallelujahs?**

Also the writing? It was breath-taking in that simplistic-yet-takes-you-by-surprise kind of way. The mix of "then" and "now" sections, as well as the multiple perspectives - Cooper, Libby, Sebastian and Clare - in both first and third person was genius. Other authors that have attempted a story with that many shifts of perspectives have failed - or at least the books I've read have. It usually gets too confusing and too disjointed but Rebecca James managed it to perfection. It created palpable tension and really just made the book what it was.

But there was a couple of things that didn't work for me - as can be expected. For one the predictability was rather displeasing. **Predictability is a big no-no for me and I saw the "twist" coming from quite early in the book.** The other thing is that the ending left a little to be desired. (view spoiler)

But overall, this was fantastic book. I loved that it threw out all the clichés out the window and built a decent plot centred around decent characters. I've missed books like that. I'd recommend this in a heartbeat and will certainly be on the look out for more of Rebecca James's books.

Kelly (Diva Booknerd) says

<http://www.divabooknerd.com/2014/09/c...>

Incredible. Phenomenal. Unprecedented. Exceptional. There isn't one particular word to summarise the brilliance that is Cooper Bartholomew is Dead. It lured me in, kept me enthralled and left me with a bittersweet and emotional ending. This is how you create one of the best young adult novels that readers will inhale.

That's the thing about people like Cooper. They were so noticeable to us. they loomed so large and bright on our social radars. and yet to them we were barely blips. We knew stuff about them, we talked about them and watched them. We dreamed of being invited to their stupid parties. But they knew nothing about us. Not our names, not even our faces. They were indifferent. They made us feel small and boring. They made us feel invisible.

Told from four perspectives, Libby, Sebastian, Claire and from Cooper himself, the story begins with Cooper recalling his own death as he lay crumpled and fighting for life and then alternates between Libby, Sebastian and Claire as they recall their time with Cooper before his death, and the aftermath he has left behind. In a state of profound grief, Libby simply can't accept that Cooper would have taken his own life and begins to retrace what happened the night prior to when his body was found. But Cooper was the link between the three young adults and it seems everyone has a different story to tell.

The tender romance between Cooper and Libby was simply beautiful. Both from different worlds, her character offered a sense of tranquility and an alternative to the fast and furious lifestyle that Sebastian offered. But both Sebastian and Claire resented Libby, believing she was occupying far too much of his time and wanted nothing more than to ruin his relationship but both cared deeply for Cooper and even when intoxicated or abusing narcotics, neither character could be seen as the reason Cooper is dead. The storyline weaves intrigue traces of secrets and lies, while providing heartwarming and tender moments from Cooper's life leading up to his death. The characters are all ages in their late teens to early twenties, casting Cooper Bartholomew is Dead fall into the category of new adult as it does contain mature content such as drug and alcohol abuse and sexual situations.

Rebecca James is now on my favourite author list, also having recently devoured Sweet Damage. She's an incredible storyteller with a talent for keeping readers on the edge of their seat. This is a must read, you won't be disappointed.

Rachael says

So, I just read this book in one day. Loved it. Loved every narrative point of view - something that almost never happens for me when I read books with shared narratives. I loved all the main characters even the despicable ones, cared about what happened to them, rooted for them to overcome their obstacles (themselves). The relationship between Cooper & Libby was beautiful (older + sexy times) and the mystery slowly and beautifully and agonizingly unravelled (through the haze of drugs and alcohol.) The story explores themes of friendship, family, prejudice, perception, substance abuse, dependency, identity, love. Such clear strong engaging writing, great pacing, structure. Winning. This book wins. Rebecca James wins. The reader wins the most.

Brenda says

Libby Lawson was a quiet, conscientious student, loved the arts and had a close circle of friends. When she collided with Cooper Bartholomew in an aisle in the bottle shop, causing a bottle of tequila to crash to the floor, she was angry; mainly at herself but the fact that Cooper was someone she had recognised instantly from school, and he hadn't recognised her stung. She knew she was way out of his league – Cooper and Sebastian were part of the rich, pretentious group that wouldn't have anything to do with the likes of Libby and her friends.

But slowly, gently, Cooper and Libby became friends – then more than friends; Libby was extremely happy and it seemed Cooper felt the same way. But not everyone was delighted about the blossoming relationship – Claire seemed determined to cause nothing but trouble, and Sebastian was surly and rude when Cooper saw him. Cooper was puzzled by his best friend's manner – was it the alcohol and drugs making Sebastian the way he was?

When Cooper's body was found, everyone believed the official finding of suicide – everyone that is, except Libby. She knew the signs for suicide were just not there in Cooper. And she was determined to discover the answers; she knew it would never bring him back but it might bring her a measure of peace. But as Libby began asking questions, all she discovered was lies and deception – what was going on? Would she ever discover the truth?

I loved this book! An absolutely brilliant psychological thriller from an Aussie author who is proving to be a master at her game! The twists and turns are gripping – it's a hard book to put down. The broad audience of YA and adult readers will be enthusiastic over *Cooper Bartholomew is Dead*, and with good reason. I have no hesitation in recommending this novel highly.

With thanks to Allen & Unwin for my ARC uncorrected proof copy to read and review.

Bruce Gargoyle says

Full review at <http://thebookshelfgargoyle.wordpress...> (September 22)

I received a copy of this book from Allen and Unwin in exchange for review.

Ten Second Synopsis:

Cooper is found dead at the bottom of a cliff. His death is presumed a suicide. Sounds fishy to Libby, his grieving girlfriend.

Straight off the bat, let me say how impressed I was with the overall experience of reading this book. The plot is tight, the narrative style is interesting and well constructed and the characters – oh the characters! – are so believable it's almost painful. James has done an incredible job, in my opinion, of creating characters that represent pitch perfectly the range of vices and virtues that appear in all of us once school is over and done and we have to figure out who we're going to be in this strange real world. This was the greatest strength of the story for me and ultimately what kept me interested through the mushy romance bits between Cooper and Libby.

Another great bit about this reading experience is the narrative style that features multiple points of view and multiple timeframes. I just love this writing style and drew me into the story with short, engaging chapters introducing the characters and their relationships in a highly readable way. In fact, the book opens with Cooper in his final moments pre-death and his surprisingly lucid musings are a great launching point to plunge (sorry, horrid pun in the circumstances) right into the tangled web of secrecy that has led to this point.

Regarding the plot and the elements of mystery surrounding Cooper's seemingly happy life and strange and unexpected death, clues are thrown out fairly early for the keen-eyed reader but the whole situation is not revealed until the final few chapters, keeping the suspense high throughout. I admit that I did have my suspicions about halfway through the book, and these turned out to be kinda right and kinda wrong, so in the end I was satisfied with both my level of sleuthery and the author's level of tricksiness.

I don't think this is really the "psychological thriller" that it's being pitched as, but there is plenty of friendship drama and family secrets here to satiate lovers of mystery and overall I highly recommend this title.

Lauren (Bookworm Boutique) says

I didn't know what I would think of this book when I saw it in The Warehouse's bargain bin, my fiancé was meeting me for dinner and I needed a book to read for the hour I had to wait. I'd seen it on the shelves before and I have to say that I found the cover extremely beautiful, but I didn't expect to enjoy the story inside as much as I did.

The book focuses on two groups of University students in Australia who are very different from each other, and how Cooper, from one group, and Libby, from another, fall in love. Well, half of the book does that anyway. The other half consists of a bit of a mystery!

Personally, I'm not really a fan of books that jump back and forth in time or ones that change character POVs, and this book did both. I have to say that I fell in love. The main characters, Cooper and Libby, are written in 1st person and the two other characters, Sebastian and Claire, are written in 3rd person. I felt instantly intrigued by this writing style, it helped me feel a better connection to Libby and Cooper, while being able to see through the other characters more clearly.

Libby was definitely my favourite character, but I think that that was because it was really her story, as I followed her uncovering secrets and getting to know Cooper. As the title already gives away, Cooper is dead for half the book (this is not a spoiler, I promise!) and I think that that made it a little harder to connect with him and easier to imagine Libby as the main character, even though that might not necessarily be the case. One thing I really loved about the book was that of the four characters that had dedicated POVs I didn't find any of them weak, and I definitely didn't groan when the POV changed, I was actually excited to visit each character and their experiences. I couldn't get enough of the drama.

The plot of this book was far more interesting than I could have imagined, the lies and secrets all built up into this amazing story-line that I enjoyed immensely. I did, however, wish that it would have ended differently, I wanted the ending to be more vicious and cruel, but it was a more understandable ending. I wanted more drama and more lies than I got, but that was only because I tried to predict the outcome of the story and was wrong.

I really loved this book, it is definitely one of my favourite reads of 2015. I would recommend this book for any lover of a contemporary YA love story, but also to those who like a bit of crime/mystery thrown in! I'd give this book 4 out of 5 stars. (★★★★?)

Jeann (Happy Indulgence) says

This review appears on Happy Indulgence - Check it out for more reviews!

Psychological thrillers are one of my favourites – and each and every one of Rebecca James' novels have been flawless in that respect. They feature characters from the much overlooked demographic of university

students, but these NA books are not your typical NA romance.

Cooper Bartholomew is Dead is told through five different people who were involved with Cooper before his untimely death, which happens at the start of the book. Going between Now after Cooper has died, to Before when Libby gets to know Cooper and the fall out between his ex-girlfriend Clare and best friend Sebastian, we see the pieces of the puzzle slowly put together as the story wears on.

Cooper's death was written off as a suicide, but when we see his happiness with Libby during the "Before" perspective, we begin to ask questions. Was he killed, was it suicide, or was there foul play? What are his friends hiding? As we get to know the darker thoughts which Clare and Sebastian were feeling and how they felt cast aside and thrown away, we begin to suspect them and wonder who is telling the truth. Clues and red herrings will be thrown our way until the final few chapters, when we find out the truth – and all the parts fell into place. It's one I never saw coming, but took a surprisingly different tone than other psychological thrillers I've read.

Rebecca James' writing is simply phenomenal. There is something brisk, frantic and deep about it, that makes you want to keep reading and reading as you explore these characters dark, deep and sometimes sinister emotions. The perspective was experiential and surprisingly pulled off really well – it was told through first person for Libby and Cooper, but third person for Sebastian and Libby. This could have had the potential of being confusing but it surprisingly worked really well, as we experienced the depth of emotion and feelings that Libby and Cooper had for each other, but witness the spiraling fall into drugs, alcohol and self hate for both Clare and Sebastian.

The characters were complex, deep and interesting – with Cooper being a lovely, perfect gentlemen who will have an eventual demise. Seeing him and Libby's love story bloom was painful, as we knew the ending to this love story which would never have a happy ending. Sebastian and Clare stood out as the darker, angsty characters. Sebastian who is a gay, well off bachelor who harbours strange feelings for Cooper. And Clare, the popular girl who has fallen from grace spiralling into self pity, overdose and substance abuse. Libby was probably the least complex or stand out character out of all of them, being the questioning girlfriend for Cooper's death.

As you've gathered, this definitely isn't YA – there is heavy drug use and a fairly graphic sex scene within it. That didn't affect my enjoyment though, I loved the university setting and the wide array of living situations, which was more relatable to me than American college students living on campus. The characters are either living at home or renting their own unit with a part time job, and they vary between being well off and struggling to make ends meet. They are dealing with identity outside of being the 'popular kids' at school. It was refreshing to read a setting that closer to home for me, without all of the usual cliches and drama that comes with high school.

Cooper Bartholomew is Dead is a thrilling excursion of seeing the pieces of a puzzle fall into place after you know Cooper is going to die. It's a fantastic, addictive psychological thriller with complex character development featuring identity, loss of a loved one, parental expectations, angst, and battling high school cliches and expectations. Rebecca James can do no wrong in my eyes – I just wish all of you could pick up her books now!

Thank you to Allen and Unwin for sending me this book in exchange for an honest review.
