



Abandoned

Cody McFadyen

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For FBI Special Agent Smoky Barrett, her colleague's wedding is cause for celebration. Until a woman staggers down the aisle—incoherent, wearing only a white nightgown. A fingerprint check determines that she's been missing for nearly eight years. Her coldly efficient captor toyed with her mind and body, imprisoning her, depriving her of any contact with the outside world. As Smoky fits together the pieces of what remains of the victim's fractured life, a chilling picture emerges of a cerebral psychopath who doesn't take murder personally, never makes a mistake, follows his own sinister logic, and has set the perfect trap.

Abandoned Details

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Author : Cody McFadyen

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From Reader Review Abandoned for online ebook

Shaun says

3.5 bumped down to 3.

What worked?

I thought the writing was competent and the mystery was well done. And though I found the protagonist to be annoying at times, overall she came to life and felt fully flushed out. I also felt that the author tried to explore some deeper issues like gender inequality that gave this substance.

What didn't work?

Much of the sex talk between the women just didn't ring true. Not saying that women are prissy, just saying that "we" (the women I know at least) have different ways of talking about sex. For instance, I don't think I've ever asked a friend if she got "fucked" last night. Too often it sounded like a man trying to sound like a woman but failing.

Several of the supporting characters were more caricatures who were either too over-the-top to be relatable or too cliché to be interesting.

At times, the inner dialogue felt preachy, as if the author was trying to enlighten me. Sometimes I don't mind a little philosophical aside, especially if I feel what the author is saying is worthwhile, but this was too much. As a result, this book was easily 100 pages longer than it needed to be.

The twist at the end was just too much (and actually ruined what I thought was going to be a fairly satisfying wrap-up) and the last two chapters almost felt unnecessary.

This is actually the fourth book in a series. The previous books were alluded to, but I felt this held up as a stand alone.

Final conclusion: Not bad. Some decent writing and a solid story (sans the twist). I would definitely read another series by this author, but I won't go out of my way to read the previous books in this series. The characters just didn't impress me.

Ryn says

I heartily dislike McFadyen's style of writing as well as his characters. I had previously read another book featuring the same protagonist and found her irritating as heck. The plot and the hunt for the killer was good, but the ending was a fail.

Strangely enough, I most liked James (an antisocial member of Smoky's team), Alan (another member of her team) and one of the minor antagonists (whose name I can't recall atm). Smoky herself seems a little sex-crazed, over-dramatized, and... too-perfect? I realize that this is something strange to say about a woman whose face was carved up by a rapist, who lost her perfect husband, daughter, and unborn child to said rapist, and has generally had a pretty sh*tty life, all things considered. However, she is remarkably calm, while at the same time being remarkably badass, she has the sexiest, quietest, most perfect new husband, and she is

the most hard-ass-but-at-the-same-time-perfect mother to a severely traumatized little girl (with somewhat psychopathic tendencies?) whom she has adopted. And through it all, Smoky regularly manages to interject deep, insightful soliloquies about the moon, evil, and love. Oops, did I say insightful? I meant cliched, over-dramatic, and over-generalized.

The killer's history was quite interesting, but the reason behind the crimes was most certainly not. The Son was brilliant, totally uncaring, and without a hint of narcissism (or any other emotion, really, which gives the impression that the killer is a an android from the distant future). Smoky catches him precisely because he is so... brilliant and... didn't leave any real tracks? ...I didn't really follow how she worked out where the killer would be, but the thrill of the chase was interesting. However, I still hope I'm not fooled by another one of McFadyen's wonderful synopses, because I've been disappointed twice now.

Emma says

Considering my review of Shadow Man included an homage to John Connolly (comparing the effects these books had on me), it was brilliant to read a dedication from Cody McFadyen to that same author in his introduction. Sometimes the stars just align that way.

In this, the last of available Smoky Barrett series, the antagonist eschews the usual bloody rituals and locks people alone in the dark. For years. Years! If the idea of that doesn't make you shudder, I don't know what will. I'm particularly freaked out because I just watched a Cold Case episode in which the same thing happened. He bricked people up in small rooms and left them there. Honestly, my dreams are dangerous enough without this input.

I love these books for the same reason I love ones by Connolly: for the incredible characters, the pacing, plotting, and the Evil. Proper Evil. But I also love them for the same reason I love books like those written by Iris Johansen: they're kinda cheesy. Team Good all have their flaws (including being killers themselves) but they're just so darn loveable. And they love each other. And they'll die to protect one another. Nearly everybody gets married/finds a life partner, who they love. New characters who get added to the team, get added into the love. You get the picture. But it contrasts very well with Team Evil. Which is rarely, in fact, a real team. This is why they fail.

I really, really hope McFadyen is going to get that next one out to us. Fingers crossed. There's a lot of stuff going on and James doesn't have a love interest yet.

Annina says

Ich ging ohne Erwartungen an dieses Buch und fand es toll. Ich konnte fast nicht mehr aufhören zu lesen und fand es sehr spannend. Die Auflösung am Schluss gefiel mir leider nicht so und ich fand es dann auch etwas fad. Daher nur 3 Sterne. Ich freue mich aber weitere Bücher von C. McFadyen zu lesen.

Magdalena says

There's no need to say anything. It's Cody, one of my favourite authors who never dissapoints.

Morana Mazor says

Smoky Barrett i sajko kileri- uobi?ajeno odli?na kombinacija.

Brenda says

This book was partly a deep philosophical look at the relationship between man and woman, especially men who hate women. The case involved a perpetrator who abducted women as a business. Yes, to earn a living. The main characters are all here, including Leo from the first book, except Elaina is mostly sidelined.

I wasn't really happy when Smoky and her team went undercover in an online chat room. I found that to be a bit boring. Much of the philosophical discussion was by the perp, and I have to believe it is due to insanity. It was really crazy. I just shook my head and didn't even want to think about it or try to understand it.

This is the fourth and last Smoky Barrett book that was published in the U.S. The author wrote a fifth Smoky Barrett book, *The Silence of Death* (my translation), but it was published only in Germany. A single standalone book, *The Innocent Bone*, was also published only in Germany. There is a great mystery why Cody McFadyen has disappeared from the publishing world.

These four books contain the most despicable, depraved, criminally insane individuals I've ever encountered in a book. They also provided me an emotionally charged journey like no other. The books let readers look at the dark while hopefully keeping them grounded in the light. I did read a different book between the third and fourth books, and I think I needed that. And I think my next will be a lighter book as well.

Sladja_n_a says

Ovo je ?etvrta knjiga ovog autora koju sam pro?itala. U pitanju je serijal pa je najbolje ?itati hronološki. Dakle, za ljubitelje krimi?a ovo je izuzetna poslastica. ?ini mi se, sa svakom slede?om knjigom koju napiše, kvalitet je bolji, strava i užas ve?i. S obzirom na koli?inu brutalnosti u ?etvrtoj knjizi, kada peta do?e na red, ?ita?u je sa rukom preko o?iju, kao kad gledam horor film.

?esto sam zahvalna što ne živim u Americi, ?ini mi se da ovakvi bolesnici koje Cody u svojim knjigama opisuje, ne uspevaju na našem tlu. Ne sumnjam da zaista postoje ovakvi ili sli?ni likovi negde u svetu. ?itaju?i ovu knjigu, ne možete a da se ne zapitate na šta je neko spreman i koliko daleko je sposoban da ide da bi zaštitio sebe i svoje najdraže. Ako ste tankih živaca, ne po?injite ovu knjigu. Ako pak volite krimi?e, imate moju preporuku.

Janet says

A woman stumbles into a wedding that features Smoky's colleagues and her team at a really choice moment. It's clear she is not well and is rushed to hospital. And that's where book four begins as an investigation into who exactly this woman is and what her story could be.

The regular players are present with some having a bigger part than others. But, honestly, there were some aspects of the book that I didn't like. I'm a little tired now of Smoky appearing almost super human. I mean I get that she's good at her job, but some of her actions here just didn't ring true. The story itself is a look at the relationship between men and women and what happens when it all breaks down. But all too often it felt like McFadyen was narrating in a rather preachy way. The same points were revisited again and again which became irritating. Aspects of the plot fell short and implausible and dare I say it, tiresome.

I have loved the previous books, but here it fell short of what has been before. I can't really talk too much about plotline because a lot of it was the author's musings it felt but it still was a read that held my attention until the last page. Even when McFadyen is not totally on form for me, he still writes a cut above. There were some lovely resonant sentences at times that would have me going back to reread and marvel at the structure and composition.

Abandoned does not reach the dizzy heights of the previous books in the series but it's still a book that I'm glad I read. Sadly more of the series doesn't appear in print except in German though I hear it may be available as an ebook in the near future. I may wait a while to read the next and possibly the final instalment - as it appears that McFadyen seems to have disappeared from the literary world - and give Smoky Barrett a break.

I do, though, highly recommend the series. Just be prepared for a lot of depravity and taking a walk into the very bowels of all things hellish.

Lejla says

?itanje ove knjige po?ela sam s nadom da je bolja od prethodne... Ne da je bolje od nje, ovaj dio je zasad najbolji o Smoky. :)

Jean says

"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." – Gautama Buddha

When FBI Special Agent Smoky Barrett attends a colleague's wedding, the last thing she expects to happen when the newlyweds kiss is an interruption from an uninvited guest – courtesy of a psychopath. Abandoned, Cody McFadyen's fourth book of his dark thriller series, begins with an idyllic vacation scene in Hawaii. The setting quickly shifts back to LA when Smoky and her cohorts gather for the wedding, and a shell-shocked, nearly naked woman is dumped for them to deal with, along with a message that basically says, "Look what I did!" The woman had been deprived of light and freedom for eight long years. Now she appears to be a shell of a human being, timid, unable to speak, traumatized.

As the Barrett's team digs into the woman's disappearance – who she was, her marriage and relationships, her job – a frightening picture begins to take shape. This kidnapper is controlled, precise, disciplined, and impersonal. Does he have a soul? As I read the chapters that dealt with "Father" and "Son", another phrase came to mind: "Nature, or nurture?"

In this book, even more than in the previous three, I think, Smoky wrestles with her inner self over her belief system. She struggles with anger, hatred, and her desire for revenge, even her urge to kill anyone who would harm her loved ones. Yet she knows the depths of love as well. She is also gifted with the ability to ferret out

the motives of others. At one point, while acknowledging that Kirby has done some bad things, she tells her, "but you're not evil." Can she say the same of the perpetrator of these disturbing acts?

So many deeds in this book are evil. They are vile, greedy, narcissistic, and cruel. That is the darkness. But this is a tale of a child whose father taught about darkness. That child grows up to be a psychopath. The fathers of the others show their children how to overcome the eclipse and find the light. There are very intense scenes of violence. Heart-pounding scenes of impending danger. Terribly heart-breaking endings for some characters. And there is a shocking twist that caught me totally off guard.

But it doesn't end there. Thank goodness. Smoky and Alan and Tommy have all stepped into the dark places in their hearts, but they are not psychopaths. They come out as richer, more fully human beings in the end, I feel. Scars and all.

The plot drags in places, especially in the early stages of the investigation and when the team sets up the online chat room surveillance. But there is some real meat too – and I'm not just talking about our criminal's sick perspective. Over, under, around, and through the fear, the pain, and the unknown that this person causes so many people on a primal level there also develops among Smoky Barrett's team and her family, individually and collectively, a stronger bond than when this whole traumatic trail started.

Smoky herself is tested once again, not just physically, but in a profoundly emotional, moral and spiritual way. I love her sense of duty – to her job, to her daughter, to Tommy, to humanity, and to her very self. Her self-awareness and self-love is growing by leaps and bounds, and she's not only a fine agent; she's a remarkable human being.

Petra says

With the fourth book in his Smoky Barrett series, Cody McFadyen is back up to standards. This was dark, disturbing, and heartbreaking. My favourite so far. Smoky and her team are chasing a psychopath who has been abducting women. The perpetrator has developed this into quite a well-organized business. I was surprised by a few of the developments in the storyline. Deeply saddened by one, and definitely haven't forgiven Bonnie quite yet. It was a very intense listen, and while I would recommend the entire series, it is certainly not for the faint of heart.

Looking forward to getting hold of the newly released fifth book in the series now.

?Susan? says

Some crazy nut job throws a young woman from a car right at a wedding reception where Smokey and her whole elite crew of FBI agents are attending. Obviously this deranged person is trying to get her attention. The despondent, young woman has been held captive in the dark for seven years and the message to Smokey is to not investigate or the rest that they still have imprisoned will end up dead or worse. Of course it is ludicrous to think that Smokey will not be involved, but the case is still considered to be under local police jurisdiction. But it turns into a serial kidnapping case the following week when the young woman's adulterous lover, who has also been missing for seven years, is dropped of at a hospital lobotomized, she and her team are on the case.

I thought this book in the series was as good as the first and hope that the next book comes out soon. I

recommend this to those that like crime procedural, but beware it is not for the faint of heart. A gritty, torturous and gripping story that flows at a good pace.

Tina says

4,5 *

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

I love this series!

Danielle says

Ridiculous. Absurdly goulish. The alternating present/past thing was cool - but didn't seem to carry through. The Smoky character was confusing and trite - she's tough, she's vulnerable, she's a woman who is acting in a man's role..i don't know...i didn't get it. and the constant, irrelevant references to amazing sex. These people were all having sex all the time. Cut those references out and the book would have been half as long. And the oh-so-perfect-hunky boyfriend for Smoky. Irritating stereotyped character whose inclusion did nothing to drive the story forward. The 'thriller' part itself - well we know who did it and why up front - and not much mystery. Just too long, uninteresting, not worth the time.

ExpectoLukas says

4,5 / 5

_moni_loves_ says

Callie heiratet, alle sind versammelt, es wimmelt nur so von Polizeibeamten und Ermittlern unter den Hochzeitsgästen. Gerade in dieser glücklichen Stunde erhält Smoky eine SMS, die sie nichts Gutes ahnen lässt. Doch mit dem kommenden Albtraum hätte wohl niemand rechnen können.

Ein Motor heult auf, vor der Hochzeitsgesellschaft wird eine nackte Frau aus dem Auto gestoßen, mit tiefen Narben und einer Haut von solchem weiß, als hätte sie seit Jahren keine Sonne gesehen.

Der Beginn eines neuen Falles für Smoky Barrett und ihr geniales Ermittlerteam, der furchtbare Opfer mit sich und alle an ihre Grenzen bringen wird. So grausam und sadistisch und kalt.

Dieses Opfer (die Frau aus dem Wagen) hat der Täter bei Verstand gelassen, alle anderen sind zu einem klaren Gedanken oder selbstständigem Leben nicht mehr in der Lage. Doch auch das "verschonte" Opfer kann keine genauen Hinweise liefern. Acht Jahre weggesperrt, in völliger Dunkelheit, in Ketten, ohne Hoffnung oder das Wissen um das Warum? Der Partner des Opfers wird daheim vernommen, eine unguetes

Gefühl bestätigt sich auf abscheuliche Weise, die ich (als Mutter) einfach herznerschütternd empfand.

Die Ermittlungen nehmen ihren Lauf, die Opfer können nicht helfen, alle wurden ruhig gestellt. Lobotomie, niemand kann sagen, was und ob sie irgendwas von ihrer Außenwelt wahrnehmen. Herr über ihre Körper sind sie nicht mehr. Auch Smoky wird Bekanntschaft mit dem Täter machen. Wird sie brechen, aufgrund ihrer Vergangenheit verzweifeln oder kämpft sie?

Durch Rückblicke erfährt man über den Täter, doch was uns am Ende erwartet hat mich komplett überrumpelt. Die Motive und vor allem die Vorgehensweise waren für mich dann noch weniger nachzuvollziehen, gerade da die meisten Opfer Frauen waren. Erschreckend wozu ein Mensch in der Lage ist wird er schon in der Kindheit so stark geprägt. Solch eine abscheuliche Grausamkeit, in dieser Größenordnung, ist durchaus möglich und gerade dies ist so beängstigend.

Wann wird man Böse? eine Frage, der sich auch Smoky stellen muss. Ab einem gewissen Punkt gibt es einfach keine Umkehr mehr.

Dieser Thriller wird mir noch lange im Gedächtnis bleiben und für Denkstoff sorgen. Woher nimmt Cody McFadyen nur all seine Inspirationen? Diese kranken, seelenlosen Mörder, einer abscheulicher und sadistischer als der andre. Grauen in seiner vollsten Vollendung.

Brennend würde mich interessieren wie es mit Smoky weiter geht, vor allem auch in der privaten Ebene. Zum derzeitigen Zeitpunkt sieht es, aufgrund Krankheit des Autors, wohl schlecht aus mit der Fortsetzung aus. Wünschen wir ihm alles Gute, das er sich wieder erholt, um die Welt mit seinen Thrillern zu ängstigen und auch wachzurütteln.

Kathleen Dixon says

I worry about myself a little bit, enjoying a book this much when it has such evil in it - but I think I've worried similarly here on Goodreads in the past, so I won't go on about it.

I found this compelling reading. I like the way Smoky Barrett (the protagonist) shows an acceptance of people's differences. For example, she is friends with a hired assassin, even though she would never be that herself. I'm reminded of a friendship I had many years ago with a man who had been a mercenary. He was a real gentleman, and not the sort of person I ever would have imagined as a soldier for hire. But then, I was only in my 20s and didn't really have enough experience to be able to see "whole pictures". Even then, nevertheless, I was a pacifist. Yet we were developing a very real friendship, which may possibly have evolved into more. Sadly, he had a heart attack and died.

I like Smoky's philosophical musings. This is a particularly nice segment: (pg.5-6)

I close my eyes for a moment and listen. The ocean beats against the shore outside like an unending exhalation of someone greater than us. If I was certain where I stood on God, I'd think of that sound as His heartbeat. But God and I are on shaky ground, and though we're closer now than we were years before, we rarely speak.

Something is out there, though. Something undeniable and endless rides those waves into the sand, again and again, in rhythm with the world's metronome. There is a vastness to the ocean in this place, a purity of sound and color and sweetness too unbearably wonderful to be an accident. I'm not sure it cares about us, whatever it is, but perhaps it keeps the world turning while we make our own choices, and perhaps that's the best we can ask for.

I like McFadyen's writing style. I shall put the other books (that come before this one) onto my Waiting to Read list.

Claudia / BeautyButterflies says

Wieder ein fantastischer Smoky Barrett Fall - Und mit einem Ende was ich so bis zum Schluss nicht erwartet habe. Der Thriller ist grausam und herzlich zugleich - Immer dann wenn es um Smoky, ihre Familie und ihr Team geht. Nun bin ich mehr als gespannt auf den (bisher) letzten Fall der Smoky Barrett Reihe von Cody McFadyen, der so lange erwartet wurde und dann so vielen nicht gefallen hat....
