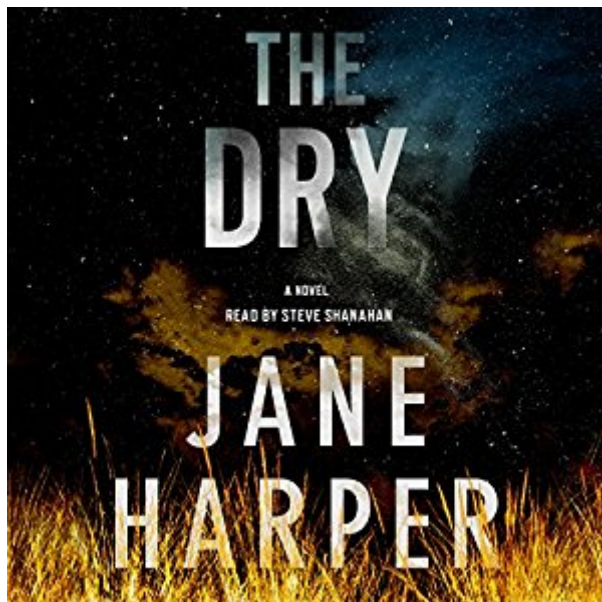


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The Dry: A Novel



Synopsis

A small town hides big secrets in *The Dry*, an atmospheric, captivating debut mystery by award-winning author Jane Harper. After getting a note demanding his presence, Federal Agent Aaron Falk arrives in his hometown for the first time in decades to attend the funeral of his best friend, Luke. Twenty years ago, when Falk was accused of murder, Luke was his alibi. Falk and his father fled under a cloud of suspicion, saved from prosecution only because of Luke's steadfast claim that the boys had been together at the time of the crime. But now more than one person knows they didn't tell the truth back then, and Luke is dead. Amid the worst drought in a century, Falk and the local detective question what really happened to Luke. As Falk reluctantly investigates to see if there's more to Luke's death than there seems to be, long-buried mysteries resurface, as do the lies that have haunted them. And Falk will find that small towns have always hidden big secrets.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Procedurals #45 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Small Town & Rural #99

in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime

Customer Reviews

Jane Harper - *The Dry* Overnight I finished Jane Harper's novel - a story I found difficult to put down until I reached the last page. For a first novel it is outstanding. The author writes in beautiful, descriptive language and, at the same time, keeps socking the reader between the eyes with the revelations that unfold in this terrible story of a brutal family murder in an outback country town - a town that seeps with anger, bitterness, violence, oppressive heat and blow-flies. As a reader I came to feel either a strong affinity or hate/anger towards each character.

It's that kind of book. The characters are developed so well that I am still thinking about them as real people as I write this review. I appreciated the details of country life and the little things described that only people who have lived in small Australian outback towns can fully appreciate. The complexity of the story - the "whodunit?" builds almost to screaming level by the time the truth starts to emerge. Beyond solving the brutal murder of three family members, we become immersed in other powerful stories from twenty years back that could be linked with the current crime. Or are they? This is a five out of five novel for me and I'll certainly be looking out for Jane Harper's future novels.

This debut effort by Jane Harper has been lauded as nearly perfect. And critics are nearly correct. The novel is as close to perfect as one can get in terms of plotting, character, and setting. Truly, it is a wonder to read (and I DO recommend you read it!). So why 4 stars instead of 5? I'll get to that in a moment. The story is set in a small rural town in Australia (wonderfully described....feels like you are there), Federal Agent Falk returns from his job in Melbourne to his hometown for the funeral of his childhood best friend, now dead of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound after killing his wife and young child (leaving their infant alive, though). Small towns usually contain small minds and judgement has been passed. It's not comfortable. So it's with considerable trepidation that Falk agrees to a request from the deceased's parents to look a little closer into the deaths. This present-day mystery is cleverly woven with the last questionable death that occurred in the community decades earlier, one that Falk was suspected of contributing to. As you may have seen from my status updates, I did NOT guess the culprit until revelation was imminent in the story. And that is a very good thing (who likes a mystery where you've known whodunit for hundreds of pages before it's revealed?). Just about everything about this novel was a very good thing. Which brings us back to my 4 stars rather than 5. I deducted one star simply because in 3 or 4 months, I probably won't remember the plot or characters. Some books - even if they aren't technically perfect - just have soul. They resonate with you. You remember them years after you turned the last page and still grab them for re-reads. *The Dry* just wasn't one of those books. I still recommend it (highly) because of the enjoyable experience of the actual read. And you might experience more "soul" in it than I did.

I really liked this book. You know how you end up with books in your kindle and don't know why? This was one of those. I didn't remember buying it, must have been a recommendation. I started reading it and was immediately hooked. Good story, plenty of twists and I didn't see any of them

coming. What I especially liked is the characters didn't do stupid stuff like they do so often in mysteries, that puts themselves in danger when any normal person would not do that thing. I'll look forward to more of her books.

THE DRY by Jane Harper A tightly woven mystery that jumps back and forth from the present to the past to solve a long ago drowning and now a family murdered. Who lied and why? Agent Aaron Falk is one of those accused of lying - then and now? Did he? Why did he come back and why does he stay where he is clearly not wanted. The time jumps are clear by the use of an italic font for the past. The suspicions will keep you reading. Some of the characters are more fully developed than others. The plot is clear and the red herrings are plentiful. This is an enjoyable and clever book. 4 of 5 stars

Being not much of a fan of Victoria the setting for the book rubbed a bit. Once over that things Australian rang out clearly particularly in the choice of vocabulary and commonly used Australian phrases. It made the book easy to read and understand because there was no necessity to decipher foreign allusions and most Aussies know all too well about drought and its debilitating effects. At times there was an Erie sense a la 'Picnic at Hanging Rock'. Others may not sense this but it did make the book all the more enjoyable. Just loved that Austrayaness and the strong plot. Keeps you guessing till the end.

The setting of this novel, the Australian countryside during a serious drought, almost becomes another character, that is how compelling the sense of place is. The character development is equally stellar and the writing in general is first rate. The dual mysteries at the center of the book, one in the present and the other 20 years in the past, are equally interesting and baffling. The suspense builds and the twists keep coming right up to the last page.

I enjoyed this book - it wasn't top notch but it paces itself along well and the prose is fine for what is essentially a murder/mystery novel. The characters are well developed and the story line is quite good. My only criticism is the ending which I felt was a bit weak - in fact a few weeks after reading the book, I couldn't actually remember "whodunnit?" ! When I did remember, my feelings are that this part of the story didn't fit well into the rest of the novel as it had a huge element of implausibility. I imagine it will be made into a teleseries or movie at some point.

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