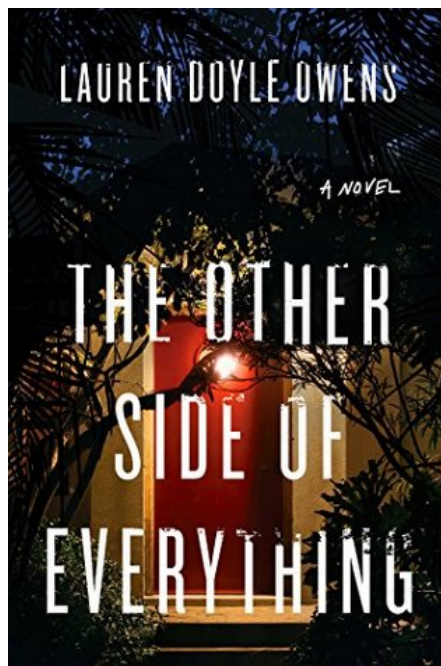




## The Other Side of Everything

*Lauren Doyle Owens*

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# The Other Side of Everything

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## **The Other Side of Everything** Lauren Doyle Owens

Laura Lippman meets Megan Abbott in this suspenseful literary debut about three generations of neighbors whose lives intersect in the aftermath of a crime.

Bernard White is a curmudgeonly widower who has lived in Seven Springs, Florida for decades and has kept to himself since his wife passed. When his neighbor is murdered, he emerges from his solitude to reconnect with his fellow octogenarians. These connections become a literal lifeline as a second, and then a third, elderly woman is murdered, and “the originals” as they call themselves, realize that they are being targeted.

Amy Unger is an artist and cancer survivor whose emotional recovery has not been as successful as her physical one. After the woman next door is murdered, she begins to paint imagined scenes from the murder in an effort to cope with her own loss. But when her paintings prove to be too realistic, her neighbors grow suspicious, and she soon finds herself in the crosshairs of the police.

And then there’s Maddie Lowe, a teenage waitress whose mother recently abandoned the family. As Maddie struggles to keep her family together and maintain the appearance of normal teenage life, she finds herself drawn to the man the police say is the killer.

As they navigate their increasingly dangerous and tumultuous worlds, Bernard, Amy, and Maddie begin to uncover the connections between them, and the past and present, in a novel that ultimately proves the power of tragedy to spark renewal.

## **The Other Side of Everything Details**

Date : Published January 23rd 2018 by Touchstone

ISBN :

Author : Lauren Doyle Owens

Format : Kindle Edition 272 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Suspense

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## From Reader Review The Other Side of Everything for online ebook

### Michelle says

I almost quit this one. Just couldn't get into the story or connect with the characters. I'd say I'm glad I finished it, but the ending...didn't work for me at all.

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### Patricia says

3.5 stars

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### MRIDULA says

Old women are being murdered and no one has the faintest of the clue about who the murderer is. So all the old people in the town, who call themselves 'The Originals', team up to keep themselves safe and to identify the killer. In the meantime, Amy Unger gets disturbing visions about the murder and the murderer. For someone, who hasn't finished a painting in three years, Amy finds there dreams extremely disturbing and decides to paint them.

With multiple deaths and multiple suspects, this story claims to be a thriller. Two third of the book goes perfectly well. There's mystery, confused folks, scared folks etc. There is also a detailed description about each of the characters, their present, past and future, including their habits and affairs. For me, this novel passes more as a community book rather than a mystery. It's very bland for my taste. The killer is unpredictably creepy and a surprise, because he is basically absent throughout. He suddenly appears out of nowhere, and hence the author fails at maintaining the thrill throughout the plot.

The only way this book wins for me is the bunch of old people, who are adorable at heart and trying so hard to be happy and forget the tragedies of their life. Also, the author's need to justify every character and give them a happy ending is evident.

Overall, this was a family drama and murder mystery crossover, mildly entertaining and mostly confusing.

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### Sarah Joint says

**This is crime fiction that's more emotional than thrilling, but that's not a bad thing.** You get to know the characters very well. They're all very different people, at different points of their life, but share one small connection: the neighborhood they live in.

**Bernard has been in this neighborhood for what seems like forever.** He's watched as some people move on, some people die, couples become one half of a whole... new people move in, everything changes. A widower, he lives a solitary existence, his adult children being scattered around the country. It's just Bernard

and his ghosts in the house... his wife and the lover he lost. Every day seems to be the same, leaving him to look forward to the one day a week he runs errands and gets to interact with other people. One day, a neighbor is murdered. **An old woman named Adel, she was supposed to die peacefully in her sleep... not bludgeoned in her kitchen. Who would do such a thing?**

**Maddie is a 15 year old waitress, missing her mother who simply took off one day.** Her best friend recently left town as well, leaving her with only her younger brother and father. Lonely and restless, she has a hard time dealing with the abandonment. When someone she's grown fond of is arrested for murder, she's shaken to her core. He couldn't have possibly done it, right?

**Amy is an artist who hasn't been creating.** She's had huge health issues and turned to the bottle while pushing away her husband. He left town to work, but she's unsure if he'll ever come back... and she's not sure if she wants her too. Upon learning of the murder, she can't stop thinking about it. She begins to create again... sketches and paintings of Adel, of her final moments, of the murderer.

A lovely read, even if it is dark at times. The characters are so fleshed out, you feel like you know them. It's a great character study with a mystery attached, and a nice quick read I managed to finish in only two sittings.

*I received an ARC of this book from Net Galley and Touchstone, thank you! My review is honest and unbiased.*

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## Out of the Bex says

Wow. Less than 24 hours later and here I am, closing the last page of this book with a sense of immense satisfaction.

This mystery novel explores more than just whodunnit, but the often painful, complicated, yet beautiful experience of life itself with fantastically crafted characters. Characters so well influenced, in fact, I cared more for them than the answer to the plot's mystery.

It's a beautifully done debut with plenty of moments that will fill your heart and empty it again. More than a mystery novel. I wouldn't change a thing.

To those curious, don't go into this read expecting a thriller novel. While the writing is fast paced and unputdownable, I read it within 24 hours after all, it is not a thriller. It's a story about people with a mystery included as a centering anchor.

I'd love to know what you think! Drop me a line here or on instagram @outofthebex

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## Faith says

In a Florida town a serial killer is murdering elderly women. This book is told from three separate points of view. Unfortunately, I was interested in only one of the three so most of the book was a waste of my time. Bernard and some of the other elderly residents band together to try to protect each other and, in the process, expand their lives. The Bernard story held my interest. Amy is a cancer survivor and artist who starts painting imagined renderings of the crime scenes. Her paintings attract the attention of a reporter and then

the police. The Amy story is mostly tedious and then becomes extremely improbable. Maddie is a teenaged waitress with a cutting problem and frankly I have no idea what she was supposed to add to the book. And then the murders are suddenly solved because the killer is both insane and a moron. Everything in the book after the crimes are solved was really just awful. I don't think I would be interested in reading more by this author.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher.

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## **Donna Hines says**

A mystery, thriller, and thought provoker all rolled into one with a strong emphasis on empathy, emotion, compassion, and the will to live a full life.

Three generations of neighbors become intertwined upon several crimes being executed in their own tight knit community and now everyone is on high alert while seeking answers.

Hindsight is 20/20 but lord if the walls could talk what a story they'd tell with this close knit neighborhood of Florida residents.

Three main set of characters: Bernard White - Widower-Homebody- Womanizer-Affair extraordinaire seeking love and romance even into his latter stages.

Amy Unger-- Artist , cancer survivor, and realistic crime scene painter who solved her own case after being labeled a suspect.

Maddie Lowe-- Teen waitress , abandoned by mother, left to pick up shattered pieces of her troubled life of self mutilation; pregnancy; while keeping her family together and trying to make ends meet with a low salaried job.

Well, it just so happens that 'the originals' -- group of elderly women are being targeted-- and the community is up in arms as to how to stop the murders and solve the crimes. Who could be behind the killings and why? Questions surround possible motives and solutions such as forming crime watch groups, self defense classes, armed and dangerous using the second amendment to bear arms and protect themselves, or should they shack up and all the widows hook up with the widowers....

A dilemma for sure but as time goes on we learn that this group is truly connected by more than just mere friendships. Affairs are the rage and apparently there is plenty to go around here; even while married.

When Charlie the homeless beggar winds up as a suspect and is arrested for the murders the community believes 'case closed'.

Well that's until more murders turn up and the buddy system is put into effect.

Could there be more to these crimes? Is it someone perhaps close to the group such as a delivery man?

Cries for help go ignored as several women wound up committing suicide yet among all this pain and anguish the killer was never located until...

Always be on guard as you never know who you'll run into as Amy learned and thankfully Maddie was in the neighborhood to assist.

Ironically things usually have a way of working themselves out and in this case they appeared to do just that. The ending for me was a bit weak and the plot may not have been strong enough for some readers to label it as a thriller but for those who go in without expectations and allow this story to unfold naturally I think those readers will be pleased with the overall outcome. It's not really edgy , not fast paced, not thrills and chills but it's a great read and does show that often these crimes are committed by someone close and well known to the victims .

So keep that in mind as you read...and enjoy!

Thank you to Lauren Doyle Owens, NetGalley, and Aldiko for this copy in exchange for this honest review.

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## Joyce says

5 stars

This story is told from the points of view of three people: Bernard an elderly man, Maddie a teenager, and Amy.

An elderly woman named Adel Minor is beaten to death in her own home. The smoking remains of her supper alerted the neighborhood and the fire department to that fact that something was wrong.

Bernard White is an octogenarian widower who still talks to his wife. He mostly stays home except for Wednesdays when he ventures out to the dry cleaners and to go grocery shopping. When he runs into an old friend, he begins to reconnect with his old friends. The murder of Adel is the talk of the town of Seven Springs.

Maddie Lowe is a teenager and a waitress. Her mother has left the family and it has fallen upon Maddie to try to keep her family together. She misses her mother and wonders where she is and what she is doing. Maddie has a guilty secret. When interviewed by the police about Adel's murder, she doesn't tell them everything in order to protect her friend Charlie.

Amy Unger is an artist who has survived cancer. But she is not well emotionally. The murder of Adel has thrown her into a crisis. She finally takes up drawing again. She is in a frenzy as she reimagines Adel's last day. She decides to clean up her abandoned studio and go to buy canvas and paints.

Angela Greene is the next elderly woman murdered in her home. The police begin their second investigation without making any headway in Adel's murder. While talking over the situation with his friend Danny, Bernard suggests that they contact all of the "originals" as they call themselves. These were the original settlers of the small community. Not to start a vigilante group necessarily, just to talk things over. The Originals conceive an idea that those who want to should pair up so that they won't be alone. They must ensure that their doors and windows are locked and not open the door to strangers.

When the police arrest a homeless man – the Charlie Amy was trying to protect – the little community is thrown into confusion. Charlie couldn't be the killer. He was kind and harmless. What were the police doing? When another woman is killed, with Charlie still in jail, it is now clear that he didn't do the murders. Charlie is released the next morning. Who is doing the killings?

Amy begins to draw and paint Adel's attack and death. She becomes obsessed with it. Her paintings are the best she's ever done. Maddie has a relationship. Bernard begins to become very attached to the woman he is staying with for her protection.

This novel is about loss, mistakes, hopelessness, memories both good and bad and hope. The three people who are the main characters are not really all that different. One elderly, one teenager and one middle-aged, but they are all tied together not just by the murders, but also by their seemingly different lifestyles.

The identity of the killer comes as somewhat of a surprise, but why they did it makes sense – sort of.

The book is very well written and plotted. The tension in the story increases and decreases as different things occur, but it is a gentle tension. The reader wonders who could be doing the killings and why. Ms. Owens creates an atmosphere of a small community rocked by the murders, yet as they strive to survive, they are disconnected. They finally gather together to protect and communicate with one another. It's a beautiful story. The reader is there feeling what the individual narrators are feeling at that time. Very well done, Ms.

Owens! I immediately went to Amazon to look for other books of hers.

I want to that NetGalley and Touchstone for forwarding to me a copy of this most remarkable book to read and enjoy.

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### **Searavens says**

Absorbing...finished just a little over 24 hours after beginning. Beautiful writing, very believable characters and dialogue. Some other reviews seem to be rating it as a murder mystery but it's more of a thriller with women in jeopardy, a disturbing, violent killer on the loose...and sociological drama of aging, shifting neighborhoods, parental estrangement, and struggling marriages.

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### **Jay says**

I read an ARC of this book.

While I did read the entire book, I was hard pressed to find anything mysterious or thrilling about the story. Despite the presence of three murders and the eventual uncovering (by complete happenstance instead of someone actually seeking out the killer), this book was more about three people spending the majority of the book stuck in an endlessly repeating circle of regrets and self-recrimination.

For me, this is not what I would've chosen to read had I known that there was little in the way of actual mystery to be read in the story.

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### **AnisaAnne says**

You can also read my reviews of WP: <https://anisabookreviews.wordpress.co...>

On a stormy day, a gruesome tragedy will unsettle a quiet town in Florida. Bernard was the first to smell the smoke and called 911. But it was too late. When the paramedics carried Adel out covered in a white sheet, life in the Seven Springs would never be the same. Especially for Bernard, Amy, and Maddie.

The Other Side of Everything is about the intersection of three individuals, three different generations, living in a small town. Bernard, a widower, lost his wife from Cancer and a lover from suicide. He lives alone in his home which he rarely leaves. Amy, an artist and cancer survivor has lost her spirit to live. Numbing her pain through alcohol, her marriage is slowly whittling until her husband leaves. Maddie is a 15-year-old trying to navigate herself in an adult world. With her father working at night, she fumbles through life making some wrong decisions to placate the wound left by her mother's abandonment. The murder creates a shift in all these individuals, bringing back some feeling from the numbness. Creating movement where there was stagnation. It causes everyone to take a hard look in the mirror.

Owen's ease of writing creates a novel that is pleasurable to read. She uses just the right words and amount to fill our imaginations with the characters and scenes. She develops each character slowly and carefully, revealing relevant details while leaving some questions for the reader's imagination. The plot of the novel is unique and different from other mysteries I have read. The piece almost comes across as more psychological

rather than a crime story. The three main characters have experienced loss in several ways. Bernard his wife and a lover, Amy her uterus, and Maddie's abandonment. All of these individuals are in a stagnant state of purgatory crippled by their pain. As we learn the backstory of the characters, we understand their present life. Each of these characters finds a way to deal with the crime, some finding their passion again. And then there is another murder.

Owen's creates an emotionality charged atmosphere of an elderly population. There is a polarization of loneliness and isolation to companionship and love. With the loss of life in the story, the emotional fragility of age gives the reader a deeper awareness on the backside of life.

As I former resident of Fort Lauderdale, I really enjoyed being transported to the Sunshine state. From the afternoon threats of thunderstorms, the no-see-ums longing to nip at your skin, the endless display of canals and waterways, Owen's depiction of Florida is on point. Tropical Acres!

Overall, this was an entertaining novel and binge-worthy read, I recommend The Other Side of Everything.

Thank you, NetGalley, Touchstone, and the author for the ARC in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Diane S ? says**

3.5 A different and unique take on a murder mystery. First, note that there is no girl, mother, daughter nor sister in the title. So refreshing. Second, in the books summary there are no comparisons to Gone Girl or Girl on the Train. A big zing!! Third, the murders concern three women, all octogenarians, all part of a group that referred to themselves as "The originals."

They once had mates, but now one could not help but notice how many have died, leaving a wife there, a husband here. But who or why is someone targeting the elderly? They decide to protect themselves as much as possible and come up with another plan. Two other young women will involve themselves peripherally in these cases. one an artist, a young women, who has already lost much. The other a teenage girl who has an unusual crush, and then later a secret. Layer by layer we peel back the stories to the very beginning, finding that the motive was one that has a long past.

Character driven, neighborhood illicit doings. The reason I liked this book so much, is that after the murders, rather than stressing on the high cost that the neighborhood suffered, it focused instead on the opportunities made apparent after the murders. Doors closed for some, but new doors opened for others. Very well done, I do believe I didn't roll my eyes once.

ARC from Edelweiss.

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### **Kelsey says**

Despite the serial killer, this suspense novel is actually an emotional, even sweet story with A Man Called Ove vibes. What has stayed with me is the way the elderly characters come together as a community during this tragedy. It's definitely a page-turner, but one with a ton of heart.

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## Catie says

Review copy provided by Touchstone Books - January 2018

Favorite Quotes:

“The beauty of the world will break your heart, and put it back together again.”

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## Touchstone Books says

The \*\*\*starred\*\*\* Publishers Weekly review said it best: "For fans of crime fiction wanting literary flair and emotional depth." If you like your crime fiction with a ton of layers and heart, this is the book for you.

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