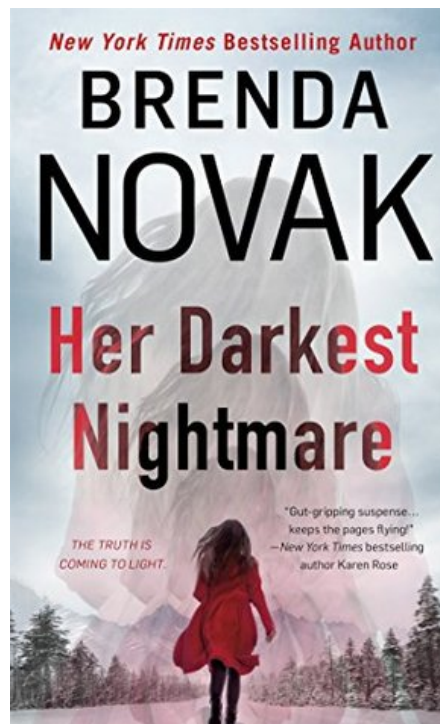




Her Darkest Nightmare

Brenda Novak

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THE HUNT FOR A SERIAL KILLER

Evelyn Talbot knows that a psychopath can look perfectly normal. She was only sixteen when her own boyfriend Jasper imprisoned and tortured her—and left her for dead. Now an eminent psychiatrist who specializes in the criminal mind, Evelyn is the force behind Hanover House, a maximum-security facility located in a small Alaskan town. Her job puts her at odds with Sergeant Amarok, who is convinced that Hanover is a threat to his community...even as his attraction to beautiful Evelyn threatens to tear his world apart.

BEGINS WITH AN ESCAPE FROM HER PAST

Then, just as the bitter Alaskan winter cuts both town and prison off from the outside world, the mutilated body of a local woman turns up. For Amarok, this is the final proof he needs: Hanover has to go. Evelyn, though, has reason to fear that the crime is a personal message to her—the first sign that the killer who haunts her dreams has found her again. . .and that the life she has so carefully rebuilt will never be the same...

Her Darkest Nightmare Details

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From Reader Review Her Darkest Nightmare for online ebook

Karen says

This review was done by **KissinBlueKaren**

I read the prequel to this book, HANOVER HOUSE, late last year. This new series by Brenda Novak follows psychiatrist Evelyn Talbot. She was tortured and left when she was only 16. Evelyn now works with the very same type of psychopaths that almost killed her. She needs to understand them. Her pet project has been creating the Hanover House in remote Hilltop, Alaska. It is the only facility that seeks to study and understand America's most dangerous killers. Evelyn's nightmare begins when the mutilated body of a local woman is found. For the only cop in the town, Amarok, it confirms his beliefs that Hanover House has brought crime to his town. When a body part is found in Evelyn's bed, she is sure it is her ex who was never caught. Together Evelyn and Amarok must figure out if it is the man who almost killed her or a new evil lurking among them.

This isn't my normal sort of read. I can't help loving the characters though. I love that Evelyn has made it her life's mission to understand how someone who looks so normal could be a serial killer. She is damaged goods, there is no doubt about that. She uses her past to motivate her. The only place that she isn't healed is in her love life. I could completely see how someone who was tortured by their first love might have issues getting intimate with anyone else. I was rooting so hard for Evelyn and Amarok to be together. I won't tell you if got my wish, but I think it was a nice distraction from all the horror these two face in this story.

Everyone who knows me, knows I would love to move to Alaska. The rugged terrain and remoteness really sounds peaceful. This location is actually anything but for the characters in this story. Between the actual work Evelyn does with the convicts and the sketchy people who work with her, Evelyn is surrounded by crazy. This story moves at a great pace. I was horrified for everyone at Hilltop and disgusted at the actions of some of the characters. I was eager to see what happened and how Evelyn would remain in control over Hanover House and if she could actually use her experience to outwit the killer.

The author starts every chapter with a quote from a known convicted psychopath. Although these infamous killers don't make any appearances in this story, their quotes add something special to this book. It helped me to remember that people like those Evelyn works with are real. This makes the behavior and speech of the patients Evelyn is working with all the more frightening.

I love the protagonist and the setting of this series. This story is complete enough to be a stand-alone. I am excited to know it is part of a series. I am definitely a fan of the Evelyn Talbot Chronicles!

Teresa says

Dr Evelyn Talbot was held captive by her psychopathic boyfriend Jasper, when she was sixteen. He raped and tortured her for three days. He also did the same to her three best friends, the only difference - Evelyn lived to tell her horrific story, her three friends didn't. Jasper was never caught, and Evelyn went on to study psychiatry and became among the top in her field.

Evelyn went on to establish Hanover House, a mental health facility for psychopaths, the first of its kind. Here at Hanover House, buried in the heart of Alaska, Evelyn hopes to study a prison full of psychopaths, to discover what makes them tick, why they do the terrible things they do, and how to stop them. But then a

woman is found horribly mutilated and the hunt for a murderer is on.

The first half of this book was slow for me. There was a lot of romance, and racy love scenes which are not what I look for in a book. Evelyn annoyed me because she was so beautiful, every man good or bad wanted to take her to bed. The state trooper was impossibly handsome, and all the women drooled over him. Once I managed to get past this though, and the more the plot deepened and the excitement built, I really began to enjoy this book, and really tried to figure out who the murderer was, and believe me, there are a lot of red herrings here.

I loved the setting. Alaska in the middle of a bitter winter. Where the roads are impassable unless you drive a snowplough, and where there is only one law officer, despite a prison full of psychopaths just outside the town. This all added to a really creepy atmosphere.

At the beginning of every chapter we are presented with a quote from a real, true life serial killer, in which they explained or attempted to explain, how they felt, why they did what they did, essentially, what makes them tick. I really didn't like those quotes, and I wish they had been left out. Why should they be given a platform to tell us how or why they did what they did and how it made them feel. I don't want to know. I found their words deeply disturbing.

On the whole this was a good book. It came at things from a different angle to the usual thriller. This is the first in a series with Dr Evelyn Talbot at the helm. Before this book there is an e-novella, Hanover House and it might be a good idea to read it first if you can. I hadn't realized this and wondered why the characters would hint back to previous events the summer before which had obviously been covered in the novella, and I would have liked to have read it first.

Thank you to the publisher Headline via bookbridgr for my paperback copy of this book.

Carrie says

Evelyn Talbot has spent her life trying to find out what makes a psychopath and how to better understand them. She was tortured and almost killed by her high school boyfriend, Jasper, and is dealing with that as best she can. Evelyn obtained funding for her project the Hanover House, a maximum-security facility located in a small Alaskan town which will be the home to the worst of the worst killers to be sent there for study to try to understand how their minds work.

When there is a killing in the small town that Evelyn now calls home her facility is immediately under suspicion since it house so many killers. The investigation has now put Evelyn back to working with Sergeant Amarok to find out who is behind the killings, could it be that Jasper is back after Evelyn yet again?

Her Darkest Nightmare is the first full length book in the Evelyn Talbot Chronicles series from Brenda Novak. However, there was a prequel novella released to this series, Hanover House. In the prequel you get a closer look at Evelyn's move to Alaska and meeting Amarok along with the man that has haunted her since her attack twenty years before.

Now with this first full length story it could be read as a standalone novel as you do get enough background into the characters to read the current story but I'd highly suggest picking up the novella just for the depth it will bring to the series.

The series focuses on Evelyn and her work as a psychiatrist trying to study serial killers after her own run in

with one in the past. She's a very flawed character who has shut herself off most of her life and only concentrates on her work. Local law officer Amarok is taken with Evelyn but she has every excuse as she battles her inner turmoil of being close to anyone. The pair end up working together to solve the brutal homicide and grow closer while doing so.

Overall, I'm a fan of this series and will definitely be continuing on with it.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress....>

Sandra ~ ♥ Cross My Heart ♥ says

Evelyn Talbort has devoted the past twenty years of her life to studying the minds of the most depraved, evil, soulless killers in the world. She has a personal interest in what drives these psychotic killers to brutally torture and murder their victims, as she was a victim of one at age sixteen when she was kidnapped and tortured by her *boyfriend*, Jasper, who escaped capture. Eve is always looking over her shoulder, painfully aware that *he* is out there somewhere watching, waiting for his shot at revenge on her for escaping. She hopes her studies may someday prevent another woman from having to experience the same horrible nightmare she lived through.

Eve is now living in a small, remote town in Alaska, working as Director of Hanover House - a maximum security facility that houses the kind of monsters who stalk her nightmares. Eve is a loner who emits *No Trespassing* signals when anyone tries to get close enough to break through her emotional roadblocks. She knows psychopaths are masters at disguise, deceit, and manipulation - she was fooled by one once. She will never trust anyone again. And how well Alaskan State Trooper Amarok knows it. He's tried repeatedly to break through Eve's frigid barriers to no avail. Every woman in the small Alaskan town desires Sgt. Amarok - sexy, strong, protective, honest - all he has to do is smile at a woman and she'll climb into his bed. He, however, only has eyes for Eve. When a monster snow storm cuts the small town off from the outside world for several days, Eve finds herself snowed in with Amarok - and despite her rebuffs, things begin to heat up between them. And just as quickly, the walls drop back into place as female body parts start showing up around town. Eve's nightmares begin again - could it be? Has her past - Jasper - caught up with her? Or has one of the evil psychopaths escaped Hanover House?

There's a serial killer on the prowl in this frozen, isolated town, and his sights are set on Eve. An inmate with an obsession with Eve delivers a dire warning - *Not all monsters are locked behind these bars*. With twists and turns, Novak spins an ominous tale of lies, deceit, murder, and monsters in the dark as the edge of your seat suspense builds throughout *Her Darkest Nightmare*. A strong supporting cast makes guessing the identity of the killer difficult as the reader is led to suspect first one person and then another. While the story is riveting, the only issue I had came with a climax/ending that seemed a little...well, anti-climatic, after the heart-racing, ominous intensity of previous chapters. I felt it deserved a little more attention and time than it garnished. Having said that, *Her Darkest Nightmare* is a great read - one filled with everything nightmares are made of + a romance that gives you hope. A Must Read!

*Many thanks to St. Martin's Publishing & Netgally for an ARC of this book for review.

Reviewed at: Cross My Heart Writings & Reviews

KAS says

Whenever Brenda Novak releases a new book it always goes to the top of my to read list. There is a good reason, because she always delivers a fantastic read. This book is a mystery thriller and also an in-depth, up close and personal look into the mindset of psychopathic serial killers. It was a bit too in depth for me which is why I gave it 4.5 stars, but in true Brenda Novak fashion, this was extremely well written and compelling!

Evelyn Talbot thought she knew her boyfriend, Jasper, when she and he were high school sweethearts. She then finds herself kidnapped, raped repeatedly for days and left for dead when Jasper slits her throat and walks out the cabin door. Also gruesomely murdered by this boyfriend she was in love with, were three of her girlfriends. Jasper escapes into thin air and Evelyn makes it her life's work to track him down and also try to understand serial killers/rapists by becoming a psychiatrist. Now twenty years after being attacked, she has opened a maximum security prison named Hanover House in a small town of Alaska where the worst of the worst psychopaths are the inmates and she is studying and doing in depth interviews with them to try and understand what makes them tick. Since Hanover House opened, women who work for the facility go missing and are eventually found dead and viciously dismembered.

Due to the severe trauma she went through at age sixteen, Evelyn has been unable to have a meaningful relationship with a man. Pure panic sets in to get intimately close. Enter obscenely handsome police Sergeant Amarok, who has the hots for Evelyn and wants to tear down all the walls she has built around herself. He also has a full-time job trying to track down a crazed killer.

Really great read and Book 1 of The Evelyn Talbot Chronicles. I love a series ;)

sue says

I wouldn't call this a thriller, it's definitely a romance/suspense.

After something that happened to the main character it left her with a lot of questions.

Hanover House was born hoarding the most worst serial killers.
Body parts started appearing as staff went missing.

The first 40% was fine but I soon became a bit fed up with the plot.

This author is known for her romance. I've read some previous books and loved them but I just can't get the hang of her thought processes with a thriller.

My thanks for my copy though from St Martins Press via Net Galley

Melissa says

3.5 stars

I loved the first half of this book. Seriously loved it. A great mix of romance and suspense, I was convinced

it would end up a new favorite. ~~I don't know what happened though.~~ Strike that. Yes, I do. The ending didn't live up to the rest of the story.

Coming off of an emotionally draining read, I wasn't sure what I was in the mood for. I started six different books, only to set them aside in frustration because I just wasn't feeling it. Lucky number seven did the trick though. There was something about *Her Darkest Nightmare* that hooked me from the start. Well, a few things - the ominous tone, the remote location, the gaggle of psychos and the sexy Alaska state trooper.

Evelyn's made a career out of studying psychos, all in an effort to better understand Jasper, the boyfriend that held her captive and left her for dead when she was 16. Even now, twenty years later, those three horrific days color her entire life. She's spearheaded the opening of a prison that's housing the most dangerous psychopaths in remote Alaska. I'm talking so remote there's only one trooper to protect the entire town. When body parts start turning up, things get scary. Throw in the blizzards, the perpetual darkness and the lack of cellphones and I was on the edge of my seat.

In steps Amaroke to handle the investigation. They have history and he wants a relationship. Of course, she doesn't think she can handle it, so she pushes him away. If you were going to try with anyone, it would definitely be him. **Amaroke is perfection.**

It was around the 60% mark that the story started to take a turn and I found myself less and less engaged. Evelyn's insecurities and her constant nagging about the age difference felt really repetitive.

The biggest thing that bothered me though was the ending. It felt weak in comparison to the rest of the story. **There were too many things thrown in to keep the reader in the dark about who the true culprit was.** I just didn't buy that so many men were out to get Evelyn. How unlucky could one woman be? It felt like overkill. And it was all resolved way too easily for my liking.

Even though this wasn't my favorite book, the epilogue intrigued me enough to consider picking up book two.

ARC provided by St. Martin's Press and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Lillian ? Cloud 9 Books ? says

***** 4.5 Stars *****

I highly recommend reading **Hanover House** before starting this book. The prequel will give you a better idea of Evelyn Talbot's traumatizing history, and it will also explain why she is in the middle of Alaska studying psychopaths.

This thriller has everything! Mystery. Suspense. Romance. My mind was always spinning.

I can't wait to read the next book!

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life in Books.

I thought that this was pretty good. It wasn't great but it was good. I have been excited about this book since I read the prequel novella Hanover House a couple of years ago. This is the first full length book in the Evelyn Talbot series but I do recommend reading the prequel novella first if at all possible since it really sets up the series well. I had a pretty good time with this book and was eager to learn how everything would work out in the end.

Evelyn Talbot has a lot of experience with psychopaths. As a teenager, her boyfriend killed her friends and almost killed her as well after torturing her for several days. As an adult, she has dedicated her life to learning more about psychopaths. She was the driving force behind opening Hanover House, a facility that houses and studies these individuals.

Sergeant Amarok is the local law enforcement. He is an Alaskan State Trooper and the only real authority in the town. He has to deal with dangerous weather condition and whatever other issues come up in the area. When it appears that a murder has occurred, he is the one tasked with figuring everything out.

This book had a lot of really great elements. It was an exciting story. There was more than a few scenes that really had me worried that things might go poorly for the characters. The mystery was rather complex and kept me guessing until the very end of the book. I liked the romance between Evelyn and Amarok. They really seemed perfect together and I loved how their personalities complimented each other.

There were a few things about the story that seemed a bit off. I did like the romance between Evelyn and Amarok but I didn't care for the way that it seemed to take over the rest of the story at times. The book spends a lot of time in Evelyn's head and she spent so much time thinking about Amarok. I kind of thought she should have been thinking about the murderer running around the town but that is just me. I also thought it was unrealistic that Amarok would have been left to deal with everything on his own. I would think that a murderer on the loose would have been enough to get a few reinforcements sent to his little town.

Therese Plummer did a great job with this book. I found the book to be a pretty quick listen that I really enjoyed. Overall, I think that the narrator did a nice job with the character voices although I did find a couple of the voices to be rather similar at first. I thought she did a great job with adding excitement to the book at just the right moments. I would definitely listen to this talented narrator again in the future.

I do recommend this book to others. This wasn't a perfect book but I had a lot of fun with it. I am really looking forward to finding out what else might threaten Evelyn and Hanover House very soon.

Initial Thoughts

This was good. Not great, but good. Right now I am giving it 3 stars but I may bump it to 4 after I give myself some time to think about it. The book focused on the romantic relationship of Evelyn just as much as the murders and corruption happening all around her. Some parts of the book were unbelievable although entertaining. I thought that the narrator did a good job with the story.

Book source: Audible purchase

Jonetta says

The story resumes about six months after the prequel with Hanover House up and running. Dr. Evelyn Talbot has a team of psychiatrists in place who are analyzing some of the most twisted minds in the country, all serial killers. When a woman's mutilated body is found in the middle of a developing snowstorm, Evelyn finds herself embroiled in the case and questions whether Jasper Murphy has found her in this Alaskan frontier.

What I liked about the story was the underlying suspense of whether Jasper was behind the murder. Drawing Evelyn's past history into the forefront provided a good level of tension. I also liked Amorak's role in the story, as well as his developing relationship with Evelyn.

Where things bogged down for me was with Evelyn's constant ruminations about her past and reasoning for this specialized prison. It just became tedious and slowed the pace. There were some moments, too, where I had to do some serious belief suspensions regarding Evelyn's behavior.

This is a unique series that continues to intrigue me, even though the full immersion into these sick minds got to be a bit much at times and I guessed the villain early on. Be sure to have a palate cleansing book waiting for you after you read this one! 3.5 stars

(I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review)

Liz Barnsley says

Very much enjoyed this one - its very twisted. And sexy. All good things. Review to follow!

Lo Bookfrantic says

FULL REVIEW TO FOLLOW!

This was a slow and torturous suspenseful ride! I truly enjoyed it, when I thought I had guess right I well I didn't shit!! What a twisted ride. I love the couple in this book and I can't freaking wait for book two already definitely a great start of a new series!

suspense, crime, mystery, serial killer? Sign me up!! Even if I eat all y nails by the time I'm done lmao

~~~~~**BLURB**~~~~~

### **THE HUNT FOR A SERIAL KILLER**

**Evelyn Talbot knows that a psychopath can look perfectly normal. She was only sixteen when her own boyfriend Jasper imprisoned and tortured her—and left her for dead. Now an eminent psychiatrist who specializes in the criminal mind, Evelyn is the force behind Hanover House, a maximum-security facility located in a small Alaskan town. Her job puts her at odds with Sergeant Amarok, who is convinced that Hanover is a threat to his community...even as his attraction to beautiful Evelyn**

threatens to tear his world apart.

#### **BEGINS WITH AN ESCAPE FROM HER PAST**

Then, just as the bitter Alaskan winter cuts both town and prison off from the outside world, the mutilated body of a local woman turns up. For Amarok, this is the final proof he needs: Hanover has to go. Evelyn, though, has reason to fear that the crime is a personal message to her—the first sign that the killer who haunts her dreams has found her again. . .and that the life she has so carefully rebuilt will never be the same...

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### **Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says**

#### **4 Cradle Robbing Stars**

##### **\*Mild Spoilers**

*"Well? What are you going to choose?" "Depends." "On what?" "Are you read to spread your legs for me?" -Evelyn and Amarok*

Let me just say that when I started this book I honestly wasn't very excited. It took so long (a year) for this book to come since I read the last book Hanover House, that I lost interest. I hate when books take forever to come out. I read 100s of books and I tend to forget something I read a year and 200 books in the past. The good news is that Brenda Novak did a great job of grabbing my attention immediately and had me hooked on the story from page 1. I really enjoyed this book almost as much as the Hanover House (the first book). It was an excitingly suspenseful thriller that kept be guessing til the end. The only thing I didn't really like was how much Evelyn was trippin' over herself dating a younger man. Amarok was 7 years younger then her and the way she went on you would have thought she was 60 and he was 18. She used it to push him away and it got on my nerves. I can understand that a older woman might feel a little insecure, but He was 29 and she was 36 that isn't a huge deal and she made herself out to be a cradle robbing cougar.

*"You didn't mind being my friend last night. Maybe we didn't have sex, but we came damn close to it. I can still smell you on my fingers." -Amarok*

*Quick question Amarok why haven't you washed your damn hands yet?? lol*

The age difference was just a little bit too much. Evelyn and Amarok already had a ton to overcome with her horribly traumatizing past and the age thing just felt like overkill drama. Other than that I really loved this book. I was absolutely over the moon for Amarok. He was so sexy, understanding, charming, and just an all around good guy that he really made the book for me. Evelyn was also very endearing. She had lived through something that would have broke many but she has been fighting back and empowering herself since she was a teen. I loved her drive and understood her pain and fear of a relationship. I was glad that she was brave. I love strong, smart, take charge heroines! I also felt that Evelyn and Amarok's relationship was realistic and very sweet. It wasn't rushed which is good because after everything Evelyn suffered I wouldn't believed their feelings if she just jumped into a relationship without problems and fear. Amarok was so support. God I loved him!

*"I didn't expect this. Not so soon." "I figure if I want you to lower your defenses, I have to lower mine*

*first. One of us has to take the lead. I can't put that on you, not after all you've been through." "So you're going to be our fearless leader?" she teased. "I'm going to fight for what I'm feeling," he said. "In spite of Jasper. You already mean too much to me. I don't want to lose you."-Evelyn and Amarok*

*"I hope you don't mind that Penny knows we're together." "We're together?" she echoed. "I'm not merely worshiping at your feet?"-Amarok and Evelyn*

The action and suspense in this book was great. The whole in the psychopath minds thing was very interesting. The quotes at the start of each chapter from real life serial killers really upped the creepy, thrill factor for me. This book kept me guessing. Just when I thought I knew who the bad guy was something else would happen then I was guessing again. It kept the book's pace flowing and I never got bored. The ending OMG the ending was so subtlety creepy that it gave me chills. It also gave a glimpse of things to come. I can't wait to get my hands on the next book. I just hope I don't have to wait a year for it. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves romantic suspense and criminal mind thrillers.

<http://jessicasoverthetopbookobsessio...>

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## **Petra says**

Following last year's prequel *Hanover House*, *Her Darkest Nightmare* is Brenda Novak's first full-length novel in *The Evelyn Talbot Chronicles*. The prequel provides a bit more details about the protagonists but even without it, it's easy to follow this, as there is plenty of background information provided.

*Hanover House* is a maximum security facility in a remote Alaskan location housing some of the most dangerous serial killers. It was founded by Evelyn who has made her career studying psychopathic behavior after she was brutally attacked and left for dead by her boyfriend, Jasper, when she was sixteen years old. When employees go missing and body parts turn up, Evelyn and her on/off love interest Amarok, the sole State trooper in the area, must determine whether the greatest danger comes from within or from outside the walls of the prison.

I thought this was an okay romantic suspense novel, but for my personal taste, it was a bit too mild. The pace was a little slow in parts, but at the end, suddenly everything was resolved in no time at all. It was just far too easy. While reading *Hanover House* last year, I really enjoyed getting the killer's point of view. There were a couple of passages here from the perpetrator's perspective, but I would have liked more. I enjoyed the storyline about corruption and "services rendered" within the facility, but the person responsible for the murders was far too predictable.

I really like the premise of these books, though. The combination of the cold and wild location in Alaska with the setting of a facility where psychopaths are being researched is really interesting, but I wish there had been more depth to that setting. Instead, there was too much focus on a woman having a relationship with a man who is 7 years younger. Didn't see the big deal in that.

Recommended for anybody who enjoys light and entertaining romantic suspense without my preference for dark, twisted, and complex.

Overall, 3.5 stars and I definitely intend to pick up book 2, *"Hello Again"*, because the excerpt seemed very appealing.

Thanks to St. Martin's Press for my ARC via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

## Chloe says

Her Darkest Nightmare is the first book in the Hanover House series. I was eager to read this book after I read the prequel and it did not disappoint.

Dr. Evelyn Talbot runs an institution that houses the worlds notorious psychopaths. She wants to study them in hopes to prevent the same type of attack she suffered when she was a teen. Her high school boyfriend was a psychopath who murdered her three best friends and tortured her . She escaped and after putting that behind her and opened a maximum security facility in a small Alaskan town dedicating her life to stop these monsters. But a winter storm that brings her closer to Alaskan State Trooper Amarok also brings terror back in Evelyn's life. When Sgt. Amarok gets a call about a dismembered head turning up Evelyn realizes she knows the victim and evil is closer than she thinks. Will Sgt. Amarok and Dr. Evelyn overcome the emotional barrier between them and discover who is behind these heinous crimes in time or is it already too late?

Brenda Novak keeps the readers on edge in this well written suspense novel . I love the idea behind the series and the way she has developed Dr. Evelyn's character, who though tormented by her past will not let anyone keep her down . I cannot wait to read the next book in this series and know what the future holds for Amarok and Evelyn. Overall a solid 4 stars and would recommend this book to anybody who is into a little romance and suspense.

Many thanks to the publisher & NetGalley for this advance reader copy in exchange for my honest and fair review.

This and more reviews at <https://chloesbooksblog.wordpress.com/>

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