



# Reagan's Ashes

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## **Reagan's Ashes** Jim Heskett

A cathartic hike becomes a dangerous race to solve a mystery...

Imagine yourself deep in a forest. You notice your travel companions rifling through your backpack while muttering to themselves at half-volume. Unsettled, you retire to your tent where you find a mysterious key. You don't know what lock it might open, but you have a hunch the others will do anything to get it...

Filled with intimate and visceral details about hiking and backpacking in national parks, Reagan's Ashes mixes the genres of amateur sleuth mystery, psychological suspense, thrilling wilderness survival, and action adventure, with a touch of romance. Plenty of twists and turns will keep you turning the pages to find out what happens.

## **Reagan's Ashes Details**

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Author : Jim Heskett

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## From Reader Review Reagan's Ashes for online ebook

### **Douglas Black says**

Reagan's Ashes is an edgy wilderness suspense/mystery that did not disappoint. The protagonist's world is rocked by the sudden death of her father, but the adventure lies within the mystery that shrouds his last wishes. Heskett does a great job of weaving the tale through Reagan's flailing emotions that is rather eerie at times. I enjoyed this book thoroughly.

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### **S.J. Hermann says**

One of the things that stood out for me while reading Reagan's Ashes by Jim Heskett was the vivid detail given of the Rocky Mountains. Reagan Darby must fulfil her father's wish of spreading his ashes in Lake Nanita. Seems easy right? Not really, along the way she is joined by two of her cousins who appear to have alternative plans, she must contend with the weather, wildlife, and she is bi-polar, which bring out some of the best written parts of the book. There is a mystery involved pertaining with her father and money. There were several spots that dragged, but it wasn't enough to pull the rest of the book down, and certainly not enough to drop a star rating. I found this book to be really well written, and besides a few before mentioned slow parts, flowed extremely well and kept me engaged throughout. I really enjoyed Reagan's Ashes and if you are the kind of reader who enjoys stories set out in wildlife, this is defiantly a book to pick up.

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### **Stormi (BMReviewsohmy) says**

This is my first book by this author and although I almost quit because of the slowness in the beginning I am glad I stuck with it because the last half turned out to be pretty good thrill ride.

It's a story about a young woman who is making that last trek in the park where her and her dad use to go all the time, so that she can spread his ashes. A simple hike turns out to be not so simple when she figures out why her cousins have decided to join her and has to get away from them.

She is also bi-polar and has lost her meds so there is a part in there that I was like, what on earth is going on. The girl pretty much goes a bit mental, then I realized she didn't have her meds. She makes it out of the park but finds trouble on the home front as her Uncle wants what he thinks is rightfully his and is willing to do what ever to get it.

The story flips back and forth between her trek in the park and her boyfriend (who was injured so he couldn't go with her) who finds out what is happening and tries to learn more as he fears for the safety of Reagan.

Reagan is a strong character with a mental illness and the story is a lot about how she deals with it and her fear of being rejected by her boyfriend when he finds out. She wasn't easy to identify with but she was still a pretty cool character. Spoon is her boyfriend who is from Australia and I really liked him because the guy is injured and has to use crutches but he still had the spunk to try and see what Tyson was up too. The poor guys gets beat up a few times but never stops trying to help his girlfriend and that is my kind of guy. :)

Overall even with the bump at the beginning I really enjoyed this backpacking excursion through the Rocky Mountain National Park. If it sounds good I say give it a try. :)

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### **Alexander says**

There were many twists in this novel making one to wonder if they were truly needed in their entirety, however, the character exploration in the "Reagan's Ashes" was indeed quite enjoyable. Seeing how general practice of putting a large cast of characters in novels without any of them serving other purpose than making transition from point A to point B is taking place everywhere you look, I was pleasantly surprised with characters in this work who all of them found their place in the story and reasons for acting one way or another.

The main character, accompanied with whole set of different moods and delusions in the shape of bipolar disorder, felt genuine, which struck me as not easy to achieve but a "must" for the novels integrity, so finding all the bits of her personality shifting here and there making sense throughout the twists and suspense was refreshing by the end of the story.

As already said characters were well developed it seemed to me, and it was comforting to see some stereotypes not fitting in their usual role even though one suspects them to. Anytime the focus is on doubts, thinking or emotions story works perfect, at other times there were some issues with certain events likelihood but, strange to say, I passed them over eager to see how will Reagan carry herself in-between them.

Pacing is ok, writing uninhibited and the overall impression enjoyable.

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### **Joannes Rhino says**

I couldn't put this book down. It was impossible to guess what's the real mystery of this story, and the author did a wonderful job of projecting the terror she's facing. The author also keeps upping the tension level, while keeping you guessing where the plot is headed next. With all of the twists and turns in the story, you are never quite sure where your headed next. A well developed and terrifying plot, with solid characters.

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### **Roger says**

I'm hooked! An amazing author! I've already gone out & gotten more books by him. Heskett does an amazing job of character development, I'm a character reader, I get into what makes a character who they are. What makes them tick. His story line is complete & satisfying as well. When I read about this book on Goodreads I asked him for a review copy & he sent it right away! As I said I'll be reading more by this author! Now how do I get Dalton and the Bear?

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### **Kyle Wendy Skultety (gimmethatbook.com) says**

this review originally appeared on my blog at [www.gimmethatbook.com](http://www.gimmethatbook.com)

Many thanks to author Jim Heskett for gifting me this book in exchange for an honest review. He's also generously donated a copy for giveaway--click the link at the end of the review!

This book is a combination of hiking primer and introduction to the bipolar mind. The descriptions of the national park are breathtaking, and the reader will be able to discern the author's personal experience with the great outdoors at once. I learned many quick facts about how to prepare for a trip up a mountain, and gained a new appreciation for those that hike on a regular basis.

Reagan is a sympathetic character right from the start. Her emotions at losing her father threaten to overwhelm her, and Heskett paints their relationship beautifully through memories that pop up in Reagan's mind throughout. You can understand the stability that he brought to her life, via camping, as her recollections alternately overwhelm and reassure her.

As Reagan's medications begin to wear off, she slowly returns to her disabling manic state, complete with grandiose ideas and racing mind. I was wondering what turn the plot would take from here; would the author leave her in the wilderness, raving and eschewing humanity?

Thankfully he lets the character join the world again, and the story moves on. Reagan and her boyfriend Spoon clash with the evil cousins and other relatives, all searching for the item that the silver key will open. Greedy family members are painted realistically, and the suspense ramps up as the end is in sight. There is a twist that made me exclaim "oh NO!" but then we see what really happened.

Heskett's writing style is easy to digest and creates interest on every page. The portion that takes place in the park is authentic and full of tension, as a bit of evil is juxtaposed against the beauty of Nature. The plot is a simple one, but Heskett creates tension and emotion in a satisfying way.

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## **Sheri says**

\*\*I was given an ARC in return for an honest review\*\*

This book started out really slow. For me it didn't get truly "interesting" until more than the midway point. Why the four stars you ask? Because the descriptions were beautiful, and despite the very slow start, I really wanted to know what happened to Reagan. I rooted for her. You will too.

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## **Eisah Eisah says**

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

(Spoilers within)

This was a good book. Paced well, and the plot was fairly solid for the most part. Reagan's father has left her a parting wish - to copy a hiking trip she took with him and dump his ashes in the lake. Reagan loves her father very much and wants to find some sort of closure about his death, so she gets ready to go immediately. When she gets there, she finds that two of her cousins are suddenly planning on tagging along and much more is going on.

There were things I appreciated, like Anne. Though she's at first painted off to seem like the evil step-mother, that gets left behind and she's not evil so much as someone who has had to deal with a lot while being married to Reagan's father, and she feels abandoned when he leaves her with nothing.

It has a good setup with Reagan hiking and being isolated from help, and with Spoon being injured and far from his home. It puts both characters in vulnerable and stressful situations. On top of that, Reagan has forgotten the medication she needs for her bipolar disorder, and after several days she starts falling apart, making her a loose cannon when it comes to making decisions.

It does have a few things that annoyed me about 75% of the way in. Spoon, Reagan's boyfriend, gets beaten up by Tyson, the man who wants to get his money back from Reagan's dad. He then wakes up outside of a hospital. There was a lot of flaws with that setup, the most obvious being that he's five second away from being able to contact the police. He decides not to go to the hospital or contact the police because he thinks he'll be stuck for hours being interrogated while Reagan might be being tracked down. But Spoon has a broken leg and doesn't know where Reagan is anymore than the police know. What exactly is he going to do?

Read the rest here.

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### **Shaheen Darr says**

Reagan Darby has an important task to perform, she has to carry her father Mitchell Darby's ashes into Rocky Mountain National park and scatter them into Lake Nanita. She cancels her plans to go to New Orleans with her Australian boyfriend Liam Witherspoon or "Spoon" and decides to undertake the journey alone. This should not be difficult; after all, she has been well trained in all aspects of camping and hitch hiking by her late father. But things aren't what they seem, what secrets does her father's urn hold and why are her cousins Dalton and Charlie suddenly so interested in joining her in her mission. Moreover, Reagan has her own demons to deal with, she has bipolar and she keeps a control on her mania and depression through medication. As the story unfolds new characters like Reagan's mother and grandfather are introduced and Reagan discovers that her father was not the man she originally thought. Will she be able to stick to the original plan or will the ashes find a new home? Will she be able to repay her father's debts and repair destroyed family relationships? Will she gain anything after she has done what she set out to do? Jim Heskett relates the story with fluidity, each chapter reveals new twists that help maintain interest throughout. I was also impressed by Heskett's expert knowledge of Rocky Mountain National Park; each aspect of the landscape is described in vivid detail allowing the reader to hitchhike around the park and explore its nooks and crannies with Reagan. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and highly recommend it to nature lovers who also enjoy a story with a feel good ending.

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### **morrie billmeyer says**

#### **Review**

The author did a great job of describing what a person who is having a manic attack can feel. Great story all around with a great ending

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## Aly says

This was a great book with so many twists and turns you want to find out what is going to happen next. I really enjoyed how terrifying the author made the plot. I love to camp so I enjoyed the camping "lingo" in the book. I enjoyed the surprise ending as well. This was a good book. \* This book was given to me from the author in exchange for an honest review\*

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## G.S. Bailey says

This smart, edgy thriller begins in the middle. When we walk into the forest with Reagan and her creepy cousin we're already in the midst of the action. There are several preceding strands to the mystery that are carefully revealed to us as our heroine treks toward we-don't-know-what. These factors culminate and propel us forward into the depth of a thriller with a surprising climax that has a few twists... The story is crisp and fast moving with the various viewpoints and time-frames quite seamlessly melded together. The trek is an interesting visit to the Rocky Mountains – the descriptions transporting. There's a tinge of humour with a play on accents that is well done. There's an interesting delve into the mind of our emotionally unstable heroine... This book has a lot going for it.

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## Jason Dias says

I picked up this book at Local Editions, a small bookstore in Longmont that carries only Colorado authors. I intentionally bought things I'd probably not have read otherwise.

Full disclosure: I've since connected with Jim vi Fakesbook and we've probably been proximal at writers' conferences.

So, the book.

The formatting is the tiniest bit weird. Deep indents vaguely distract the eye, and the print was small enough I needed my reading glasses. Being reminded of one's mortality might affect one's review...

The prose is solid and results in believable characters. Jim seems to know Colorado pretty well and that's reflected in a pretty firm grounding in places through the prose, descriptions, action. This is true enough that we can forgive some of the story being set in Austin. [I kid - Austin is as nice a town as you can find outside of Colorado.] One weakness is the prose is accounting for time. Sometimes hours are summed up in a few lines but the reader [me, in this case] just doesn't know the time has passed - so we have a drive from Longmont to Boulder that takes the time passed by two paragraphs of conversation.

At the same time, I found this one hard to put down. I kept turning pages, getting into the next chapter, wondering who would win. Jim has done two things really well here. One is to create a character with bipolar who is sympathetic and self-aware; another is to investigate moral ambiguity.

Reagan has to take lithium to keep balanced. One of her crises is finding herself in the wilderness without the drugs that keep her level. She is portrayed lovingly, with a full four dimensions - a real person with real problems. She isn't reduced to symptoms, isn't caricatured, but given her own point-of-view in the story that jibes well. Nicely done.

Money is at the heart of this story, right alongside courage. Someone has stolen from someone, and the victim is also an aggressor: he'll do anything at all to get his money back. This is almost an adventure story from the 50's, with various parties all chasing one goal: a fantasy grounded in real-life Colorado. It reminds me of King Solomon's Mines, in fact. In the end, though, it isn't quite clear who we should be cheering for. It seems that any ending is going to leave someone out, some loose end not accounted for.

Then the book actually ends, and... well, that part I shall leave to you. I recommend Reagan's Ashes. It is fresh, original, grounded in reality while being a nice escape, and does diligence to diversity.

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## **F.C. Etier says**

Author Jim Heskett takes readers on a vicarious hike with Reagan Darby on the Rocky Mountain National Park's Tonahutu Loop. But Reagan's plan for a spiritual sojourn ends abruptly when she is joined by two uninvited cousins.

Reagan is on a mission.

The cousins have an agenda of their own.

Reagan's boyfriend, "Spoon," is on a parallel journey with other adversaries. While Reagan deals with the cousins, weather, and wildlife, Spoon has a whole flock of soon to be in-laws with which to deal. If only this were as simple as *The Newlywed Game*.

Nothing goes as planned.

Both Reagan and Spoon must overcome physical and mental challenges cloaked in the burden of grief. The ensemble cast has been assembled by Heskett as the result of a funeral. We're reminded of the motley crew from the movie, "The Big Chill." In this case, the dearly departed is Reagan's father and has some surprising connections with each of the others.

A significant sum of money is missing and the urn containing Dad's ashes is this story's maltese falcon.

Author Jim Heskett is himself an avid hiker and skier (living in Colorado), and has hiked almost every trail in Rocky Mountain National Park. He says, "I wanted to capture the grit of the trail, to make a book that almost felt like a hiking guide." He accomplishes his goals in fine style. In addition, Heskett pulls the reader into Reagan's world of desperation, anxiety, and hallucinations with his deft use of tools available to the savvy author. Sudden and dramatic changes in tense, person, and setting gives readers a sense of what it is like when a bipolar patient misses their medicine for several days.

Reagan relies on advice learned in a mental hospital, "You have one thing you have to do: stay alive and keep on breathing." Heskett weaves a provoking tale and keeps his readers interested and reading.

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