



The Cruelty

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When Gwendolyn Bloom's father vanishes, she sets off on a journey she never bargained for. Traveling under a new identity in a world of assassins, spies, and criminal masterminds, she uncovers a disturbing truth. To bring her father back alive, she must become every bit as cruel as the men holding him captive.

Taken meets *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and *The Bourne Identity* in *The Cruelty*, Scott Bergstrom's action-packed debut thriller (optioned for film by Jerry Bruckheimer).

This program includes a bonus interview with the author.

The Cruelty Details

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From Reader Review The Cruelty for online ebook

Maren says

Hmm what to say about this book... I received it from the publisher in exchange for an honest review and I agreed to read it before I found out about all of the controversy surrounding this author and his comments about YA. When an author writes a YA novel and proceeds to throw the entire genre under the bus, it's hard to not take that personal as a reader who loves YA. Despite this, I tried to go in with an open mind. The premise sounded intriguing and reminded me of a reverse Taken. That being said... This book was just blah. Everything felt extremely flat, especially when it came to the main character, Gwendolyn. The author portrays her as the plain Jane who thinks she is unattractive, but as she begins her quest, she gets fit and fierce. The dangerous scenarios that Gwendolyn finds herself in resolve themselves quickly and easily. Certain events and settings were overexplained, while others left me wondering what the heck was going on. There are just too many things working against this book, including the fact that it's just not a good book.

Jen Ryland says

DNF.

This book felt soulless, like it was written from a how-to-YA recipe book. Here are the steps:

Step 1. Introduce main character

Unfortunately, the main character, Gwen had zero personality. I assume that the fact that she wears red Doc Martens is meant to signify to the reader that she has a deeply rebellious nature. Yawn. She is "tall and thick-waisted" with a "rectangular nose." Uh... what kind of weird description is that? She also thinks about the color of her own hair (also red, dyed) while at school, which is always a sign of a "look at me I'm edgy" character trapped in clunky writing.

Step 2. Make main character likable

Try to engender the reader's sympathy by making the other kids at school mean to her, except that fails miserably since Gwen is kind of bitchy herself. But she can tell people off in French -- I bet that will come in handy later.

Step 3. Set up a romance

By page 29 she runs into a classmate in the East Village. Their conversation is an awkward blend of accidental hand brushing and info dump and characters talking past each other. Him: "I thought you were Greek." Her: "No, but I can see that you're black." Him: "You're very observant." Her: "We're both outsiders." Him: "I'm going to Harvard because my dad is a rich hedge fund guy". Her: "You do smell expensive. Come here." By page 37 the two of them are making out in a cab. A cab that they had to get into ... because it was raining.

Step 4. Give the character a goal

By page 42, Gwen's father is missing. And he's not a State Department bureaucrat like she thought, he's a SPY. Well, how handy that Gwen speaks at least 6 languages and knows the secret to Three Card Monte and because she is a former gymnast is "all gangly raw power, like a chain instead of a whip." I don't think any woman ever described her body that way, but I don't really want to waste any more brain cells thinking about it.

I can guess coming next. Step 5: Gwen gets a disguise-slash-makeover before stomping off in her red Doc

Martens to get her father back. I just can't. DNF at page 50

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FTC Disclosure: Thanks to the publisher for providing a free advance copy of this book for me to review. If you are a regular reader of my reviews, then you know that getting a free book does not necessarily make me like it!

Kayleigh says

Note to self, do not read. Author is a jerk

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by...>

Reader X says

This would be a good, solid book with a nice plot and character development, if it weren't about a teenaged girl.

There are no real plot spoilers below, though I do point at some specifics in this review.

It smacks of "first novel", overwritten in some parts (slow in the beginning around things and people that don't end up meaning much in my view, and weirdly descriptive about New York in negative ways that are curious) and jumping from one setting to another in a confusing way--how does the main character get robbed on a train without any description of how it happened when we are supposed to believe she is facile with self defence soon after?

It also seems to need an editor, as the author's presumed gender and age shows through many times. For instance, how could a young woman who never really drinks surmise that a wine is from Argentina and describe it's character in specific terms? By the same token, how does this young woman know so much about so many things in general? Maybe it would have been better in third person of some sort? That way the political and cultural development of cities in the Czech Republic could be exposed more believably, but otherwise how would a 17-year-old know these things?

I believe that if this were about an older person, and male, it would actually be pretty good. I liked the story, and I liked the ideas and the writing in general, but it just isn't believable as it is. It's not about the physical stuff, it's more about the tenor of the thing, would a girl who lost her father be flirting with a boy she doesn't know within the week? It's hard to say I guess, but the setup and the payoff don't seem logical in many places.

The other thing that comes up over and over is a fascination with 'dystopian future novels', the author seems to hate these and takes at least three instances to point out that they exist, with a certain amount of disdain. I am not sure why, is it a dig at the Hunger Games series? If it is, then it's hard to understand why the author is clearly trying to get the same ball rolling with this character--strong girl, discovering herself, besting adults on the way.

Once again we see that women are objects to male writers, in addition, although it seems like the author is

trying to make some point about how bad this is. She "transforms" from being a little zaftig into a "lean" fighting machine, which is clearly the desired state for everyone, as she is more successful when she feels she can use her sexuality to get the job done. Is saying it's bad while including some lurid details about human trafficking really avoiding objectifying women? I don't think so. It makes me wonder how old the author is, some of this feels like a boy of 16, gleefully pointing out that guns go boom and cars are fast and women have bodies that are different.

In general, the abhorrent moral choices the author has his main character take notwithstanding, I don't think I would read a sequel, let alone a series of these.

Maybe an editor would help, or maybe it was originally written for an older male character and the author changed it to catch some of the lightning in a bottle that Hunger Games-type books have struck on with strong, young female characters. Too bad, I think I would read a follow up in this style, but not in this same mold.

Thibaut Nicodème says

Ah yes, you are the chosen one who will elevate the YA genre. I mean it's not like your financial success could have anything with your background as an ad executive or anything.

Stacee says

DNF at page 100

I was really excited to read this book. I thought the premise sounded interesting and author drama aside, I went into the book with an open mind. Sadly, this wasn't for me.

I couldn't connect with Gwendolyn. She's obviously way smarter than I am, but I am 100% on board with that. Annnnd at the same time, I think that's where I started to lose interest. The story doesn't read like YA.

I constantly put it down and would take days between picking it back up. At one point, I went to look at other reviews from people who had actually read it. I saw several people say there were scenes of rape and sex trafficking. I don't know if that's true or not {I didn't get to anything like that}, but it is a hard limit and I would immediately DNF at that part.

Huge thanks to Feiwel & Friends for sending me the arc and super awesome spy name in exchange for an honest review

Edit 9/23/16: another reader told me that she didn't read any rape scenes, but they were implied.

Bee says

I'm pretty sure there are plenty morally complicated YA books for me to read, so I won't need this one. So thanks, but no thanks, sir. I suggest you actually try reading a few YA books before you make a statement such as this. I'd be happy to give you a list of morally complicated YA books.

Lady Entropy says

It lost me at the sexist bullshit. Also a female protagonist who's "chubby" and does not accept the "patriarchy-imposed standards of beauty" but her quest imposes her to become standard-beautifully lean. Because god help us if less than perfectly thin women are portrayed as being athletic and physically strong (note: strongmen are all chubby and heavy set -- they're also the strongest humans on earth, because the "chub" serves to protect the inner organs. There is no reason why this couldn't have been applied to the protagonist)

Also, getting cat-called and harassed in the street is romantic, it seems.

Can you tell this was written by a man? Of course you can.

Lyn *GLITTER VIKING* says

I would rather claw my own eyeballs out.

Brenda Ayala says

After reading a whole slew of reviews about this book, I've learned two things.

One: bandwaggoners.

Two: Just because someone knocks a genre doesn't mean they don't still enjoy the genre.

Seriously though. The guy's allowed to say that YA is cookie cutter and always neatly walled up, because it is. He even took the opposite approach to this girl's physical appearance--all main character teenage girls in dystopian YA have the same characteristics and mannerisms. There's very few who stray away from this, and it gets old real fast. For example:

- brightly colored eyes and/or hair that makes them stick out like a sore thumb.
- moonlight pale skin to offset whatever striking eye color or hair color they have
- supposedly really really good at something--sometimes proven, sometimes not
- always end up the spokesperson for something. They're never on the fringes.
- a stupid love triangle
- wishy washy about murder; most of the time, if our heroine murders, it's accidental or unavoidable

The Cruelty took that and flipped it on its head. Our girl goes from dyed red hair to a dark color. She purposely tries to blend in, and succeeds. No love triangle. No qualms about murder. The action is absolutely like The Bourne Identity, too. Lots of shoot 'em up action and martyrdom. Plenty of seedy characters who deserve every punch to the crotch that they get. Yes, there are implications of rape. Then our girl beats the

shit out of the guys and murders them and all without a second thought.

People are unhappy that she chooses to use her body sexually to get what she needs? A bit silly, considering the whole point of getting rid of any double standard is making it okay for both sexes. A guy can use sex purely for gain, why can't a girl? Because she's young? Please.

I did have some issues with the book, but ultimately the nonstop action and the plot kept me interested. It was severely farfetched to me that she was able to master hand-to-hand combat so quickly and easily. I don't care that you told me it took a couple months; people take those classes for years and never get past the basics. It wasn't realistic enough for me. If anything, I think it would've been better if she'd already had some training growing up.

She was also conveniently good at finding out where to go. All she knows is that her father is related to the Berlin. She buys a train ticket to Berlin, and it just so happens that the first girl she runs into knows how to find gangsters. Shall we add a ribbon atop the pile of deus ex machina?

I just loved that she didn't care about saving any of the bad guys' lives. Human trafficking is especially vile to me, so I take my hopeful dreaming where I can get it. This author wants to write about a teenage girl getting revenge on human traffickers? Hell yeah, I'm on board.

Brittany (The Book Addict's Guide/Novelly Yours) says

Marked as DNF 9/19/16: I agreed to read THE CRUELTY before I even knew about the author controversy when the publisher asked me if I would be interested! I truly had no idea what had happened with the author and agreed to read the book since an international mystery sounded right up my alley! Still not knowing the drama, I managed to read a few chapters before I got that rude awakening.

I have to say... Finding out that an author who wrote a YA book totally puts down YA books in general did not help my motivation to read. I might have been able to ignore it and just read book but truly... the book wasn't good. Even before I knew about all the drama, I was having a hard time with it. Right off the bat, the tone is just... off. I have zero issues with young adult books that read older (or younger) but this was one of those books that honestly felt like it was written as adult/for an adult audience and then randomly changed to a teenage character to try to fit into a young adult market. And based on the author's comments and general foul attitude towards YA, he clearly doesn't understand how complex it is, how important it is to get characters right, and how easily readers see through poor structure.

I suppose I can't really comment too much about the plot since I didn't make it far enough to judge that but I had the absolute hardest time with the main character. Gwendolyn was such a caricature of a badass female but she wasn't actually a badass female. Everything felt very on-the-surface, easy to see through, and she wasn't a convincing character at all. I felt like the author was trying way too hard to make her come off as strong, confident, and all around kickass but it wasn't a natural feeling. It was all way too stereotypical and lacked the depth that true badass females radiate. Yes, men can write badass women but this just wasn't it. It's like he didn't understand what it really means to be a strong woman and it was all the surface things that you could possibly pick to make Gwendolyn seem strong.

I can't imagine I would have liked much later based on all of the reviews and what seem like unnecessary poor treatment of women and a sex trade plot that probably didn't need to be what it was. BUT that's speculation on my part so I'll stop my comments there.

All of the characters were just totally flat and the little plot that I did read was lackluster as well. Again, it all felt like it was just trying too hard to be awesome and it just seemed so obvious that it just wasn't working. Not to mention the boy she meets and it's like totally random instalove (maybe not love but like insta-trust, which yeah, that's likely considering her dad was just taken....) and it totally didn't work for me.

I did promise to give the book a shot for the publisher but it sat on my counter for weeks at a time and I just couldn't pick it back up. I did give it a fair shot, I think, and it just wasn't working for me. I really cannot make myself push through books because I just end up staring at the pages and even skimming felt like it was taking forever. I promised to give my honest feedback and my honest feedback is a DNF and not just because of author drama (though that didn't help me want to read it).

Ash Wednesday says

4 STARS

The hardest part about not believing in God isn't knowing there's no heaven.
It's knowing there's no hell.

The thing with human trafficking is, it has been glamorized beyond recognition in contemporary romance it has started to sound like an appealing way to meet your one true pair. Such a horrible reality has been fluffed out by exceptionally attractive, kinky and ruthless alpha heroes with a heart of gold in fiction that it has started to become a selling point in books.

This is not that kind of book.

For readers who have seen the film *Taken*, this is exactly that storyline except it's the daughter who has to find her kidnapped father who turns out to be a CIA field agent. With the help of their former Mossad agent neighbour and a hacker friend, seventeen year-old prep school senior Gwendolyn Bloom discovers the truth about her father who just disappeared after a "meeting" in Paris. The secrets that he harbours sends her on an elaborate chase across Europe, opening her eyes to a world beyond the comforts of the Upper East Side that she loathes, changing her from a bullied introvert to a creature of infinite cruelty in order to save her family.

At its core, *The Cruelty* should be a five-star, favourite shelf book for me. It's 4472 kindle pages, with an addictive, easy to latch on narrative dragging Gwendolyn in an impossibly adrenaline pumped, gruelling adventure with Mossad operatives in Paris, prostitutes in Berlin and the Czech Mafia in Prague. It takes you to their seedy underbellies, the world of desperate refugees and runaways. A culture and a civilization away from our own, shrouded in an atmosphere of abandon, hopelessness and decay.

This is the Paris of the Nigerians who wash the visitors' coffee cups, the Paris of the Arabs who sell them little Mona Lisa magnets from blankets spread out on the curb by the Seine.

The pace is unrelenting and makes you sorry for that third caffeine cup you had this morning. It has Krav Maga taught by a bacon-eating Mossad agent. Achilles tendons get slashed. Balls get kicked numerous times. Somebody fires a rocket launcher somewhere in the story. I now know it takes two hours to wire transfer money from a Swiss Account, four hours from a bank in Seychelles or Cyprus. North Korea is apparently good in making two things: nukes and rat poison.

It's that kind of an adventure.

And like any other spy thriller post-Cold War, this used some well-trodden twists, employed complex characters with unreliable motives and alliances that makes you question everything up to the very end. I love the kind of characters this managed to bring to the fore. The bad guys were believably evil but the personality given the foot soldiers brought a new complexity to the story. Everyone sounds like an extra in Jersey Shore! I love it! The Eurotrashiness of it all was fresh and convincing, adding texture to the already decrepit feel of the novel as a whole.

"The English phrase is 'slumming it,' not 'slamming it,'" I say over the awful Czech rap blasting through the speakers.

"Fuck do you know? You're Russian," he says.

"Can I turn down the music?"

"That's me. That's my album. MC Vrah is my name. It means, like, gangster, assassin. Did you know I was a rapper?"

He's a human trafficker and a sentimental rapist by the way.

The story is told entirely from the POV of Gwendolyn who certainly lived through interesting days but, I found in the end, I had very little emotional investment to start with. Before the story kicked into Robert Ludlum territory, what I know of Gwendolyn is that she speaks five languages, her mom is dead, she likes jazz and she's getting bullied by her rich classmates for being poor. Oh and she likes her red Doc Martens, because she's a rebel that way. I had very little sympathy for her cause in finding her father because not much was established about their relationship. The sentimentality is often ephemeral, the emotional foundation of the chase shaky and vague. Such that this missed on capitalizing on certain scenes, failing to give me that scratchy feeling in my throat, that pinch in the feels.

This will also require some suspension of disbelief, some leniency in logic. Certain parts of the story were far too convenient for my tastes, clues were found a little too easily. The day before her father gets kidnapped, she meets a boy from school who just happens to be a hacker. A secret warehouse storage? Of course she'll search the box where her father left the next clue, right before the authorities come in. She finds a torture chamber? Of course there's a flashlight handy for her to explore its every corner.

Gwendolyn's evolution from point A to point B was also a little uneven. A little bit of insta-bad-assery was at play: a three week program where you become as dangerous as an undercover Mossad agent? How much water do I need to add? It was a bit jarring to have that fantastical quality to it juxtaposed with the intense realism of where Gwendolyn finds herself in towards the end that it breaks a bit of the spell this has managed to put me under.

Not that you want the old Gwendolyn back but you have to ask: **How did we get here?**

The inability to choose your next read, rush hour traffic, that asshole customer service representative you just got off the phone with, that's our reality. Though far from flawless, this book mirrors a reality so distant from that it's easier to pretend its all fantasy. Where the trafficker will fall in love with the contraband and take her away from all that horror and into the beautiful sunset and have kinky, but love-filled sex in their HEAs.

"These girls are, you know, too young. I think about it and maybe they have family who miss them. I think maybe that redhead wants to be a schoolteacher or something back in Petersburg,

but now we make her a whore.”

“So it does anger you?” I ask, looking for something human in him.

“When I think about it, yes,” Emil smiles. “That’s why I don’t think about it.”

So do you want to read this book?

I lay out the accessories any good princess would take for an evening at a fancy-dress ball:

Dove-gray satin elbow-length gloves made in Paris.

Black beaded clutch made in Milan.

Brownish yellow-capsules of rat poison made in North Korea.

I dunno, you tell me.

ARC provided by JKS Communications thru Netgalley in exchange for an honest, unbiased review. Quotes may not appear in the final edition.

Also on BookLikes.

Bookread2day says

I would like to thank the publishers for sending me *The Cruelty* in paperback to review. The story is a little heartbreaking. Gwendolyn Bloom's mother was killed the official cause of death was with fourteen stab wounds to chest and neck. After her mother's death she started gymnastics. When her diplomat father is kidnapped, Gwendolyn seems to be the only one with the will and determination to find him. I did find this book hard to get into. The book is designed well in a bright red cover and when the book is closed it has eye catching red edging to the pages.

Sean Peters says

When her diplomat father is kidnapped and the U.S. Government is unable to help, 17 year-old Gwendolyn Bloom sets off across the sordid underbelly of Europe to rescue him.

Following the only lead she has—the name of a Palestinian informer living in France—she plunges into a brutal world of arms smuggling and human trafficking. As she journeys from the slums of Paris, to the nightclubs of Berlin, to the heart of the most feared crime family in Prague, Gwendolyn discovers that to survive in this new world she must become every bit as cruel as the men she’s hunting.

The story starts off very slow for 2-3 chapters, and nearly gave up.

She travels to Paris and she meets and works with Yael, the best character in the book.

With the story travelling from New York City, to Europe and through cities like, Paris, Berlin and Prague, seeing the underground areas of these cities.

The book travels through at a reasonable pace, some quite far fetched action scenes, not really much tension, twists or gripping story.

To me just an average pace okay book, nothing special. Not much more you can say. Over hyped about !

Three Stars !

Lizzy (Bent Bookworm) says

Full review with links to source articles on The Bent Bookworm!

This book has already had a lot of buzz, mainly because of the author's condescending and inflammatory comments about YA in general. I have a LOT of thoughts on his comments and general attitude, but I tried – I really, really tried – to not let my view of the author color the book. I agreed to the review before knowing anything about all the drama, so I felt like that was only fair. Usually when I try a new author, debut or not, I don't research a lot about the author. I like to let the book speak for itself. In the end, I feel like *The Cruelty* (Scott Bergstrom's debut, releasing in February 2017) mostly did that. I ended up giving it 3/5 stars, in spite of feeling like the author himself probably deserves 2/5. Or maybe 1/5. Because really, sir, you are not special, your book is not going to revolutionize YA, and it's definitely not going to dazzle long-time readers of the genre. Also, sidenote: even though you've already made enough money to be able to quit your advertising executive career, you might want to work more on networking with your fellow writers instead of alienating and insulting them. But enough about Scott Bergstrom. After all, a lot of creative people lack social skills and if their work is dazzling enough we excuse them for it, right? Anyway, that was how and why I approached reading this book. Sadly, overall I felt like Mr. Bergstrom is not genius enough to be excused for his behavior.

So, the positive: the pacing is really spot on. I whizzed through this in a single afternoon/evening. There's none of the stream-of-consciousness dwelling that bogs down some YA books. Even though there were aspects of the writing and characters that bothered me, I was interested enough in the plot line to ignore everything else I had planned for the day and read it all in one go. Also, the ending left me with enough questions (while not being a true cliffhanger) that, had the sequel been available, I would have picked it up right away. That in itself added the extra half star to me. The suspense and anticipation is definitely the most well-written thing about this book.

[image error]

The story takes place in several different countries. In my experience, you can almost always tell when an author is writing about a locale they've never personally seen or lived. It just rings false or like they're ticking off a list, and having lived abroad myself I notice it more than I ever did before. Now, I haven't been to all of the countries Gwen visits and don't claim to be any kind of expert, but the descriptions feel very real. I think that Bergstrom has probably visited these countries or he researched very, very well.

Now for the negatives. I'm going to try not to rant on and on about these...but who am I kidding, I'm probably going to rant.

The book starts off REALLY rocky. I almost DNFed it at page 15. We start off with the special snowflake trope (OMG, she speaks French! even thinks in French and accidentally blurts it in class! oops!), followed by much angst. Sigh, page turn, and then –

I pull a book out of my backpack and lean against the door as the train shoots through the tunnel under the river toward Queens. It's a novel with a teenage heroine set in a dystopian future. Which novel in particular doesn't matter because they're all the same. Poor teenage heroine, having to march off to war when all she really wants to do is run away with that beautiful boy and live off wild berries and love.

Let's start off by throwing rocks at dystopian YA!! Yay!! Because we're not writing almost the EXACT SAME type of book and calling it special, are we, Precious? *insert much eyerolling* I'm not even that much a fan of the dystopian type books! What I'm NOT a fan of, is generalization – and buddy, you just hit every student in the room with your spitwad. And this wasn't even the point of the almost DNF.

Guys out on the sidewalk in front of the shops whistle and catcall after me. They love this – the school uniform, the flash of seventeen-year-old legs.

What the...? I mean...who even talks or thinks that way? It seems totally out of place in the current context and setting, and is just such a jolt of stupid and bad writing that I came *this close* to throwing the book across the room and doing something else with my afternoon. However, I continued. Mostly because I wanted to see if it could really be THAT bad. There were a few similar instances, like this one:

He uses as his tools reason and facts, a whole orchestra of them. But in the end, they bounce off the armor of my stubbornness.

Not quite on the same level as the seventeen-year-old legs quote, but close. Most of the female-specific points or themes in this book sound utterly redonkulous. Like a seventeen-year-old boy was trying to imagine how girls think. Big fat fail. The body image comments really grated on me...like somehow, when the book begins, we're supposed to see Gwendolyn as overweight...I think? Only she's an overweight gymnast, which totally makes sense. Also she doesn't like being looked at but dyes her hair bright red...and then in the grand scheme of changing herself so she can go hunt for her father she has to dye her hair a more unnoticeable shade and become this lean, muscled, martial artist type. Well, I have news for you...that shit doesn't happen overnight, and not even in the several weeks Gwendolyn has to work on it. If she's indeed overweight/out of shape as it seems we're supposed to believe. I don't know. I'm confused as to what the perception there was supposed to be.

Then, the love interest is lame. A plot device. Gwendolyn needs an ally back home, one with smarts, money, and connections...and suddenly she's all weak-kneed for this boy she's barely even looked at before. There was no buildup, just suddenly she runs into him and starts shaking. Sorry, but I have no feels for this at all.

Actually, I pretty much have no feels at all for the entire story, which is really sad. I mostly feel annoyance. I wanted more from the characters. Characters are easily the biggest and most important part of a book, to me. Gwendolyn, her father, even the people that help her, just aren't generally likable and while yes, Gwendolyn definitely changes through the book, I found the changes a bit far-fetched. She morphs rather quickly from a slightly bitter, spoiled high school girl to a lean, mean, killing machine. Really? But, ok. I'm willing to suspend disbelief a bit – after all, that's what we do for any book, right? But it's the author's job to sell us on it. Sadly, the writing style is such that I couldn't STAY suspended in my disbelief. I was repeatedly jarred out of it. But I still wanted to know what happened. How's that for a quandary?

“Justice isn't some abstract thing, Gwendolyn. What you did tonight, that's what it looks like. Ugly and mean.”

Best line in the entire book, I swear. And it does get ugly, the longer it goes on. It's like a train wreck you can't stop watching, as Gwendolyn delves deeper and deeper into the criminal underworld in her search for her father. She develops an amazing poker face and some steel nerves, even in the face of a rising body count and discovering a sex trafficking ring – somehow she manages to stay cool. But at what cost? That's the real question, and in the end, the question of what was saved and what was lost is still somewhat up in the air.

Many thanks to Feiwel & Friends for sending me an ARC in exchange for an honest review!
