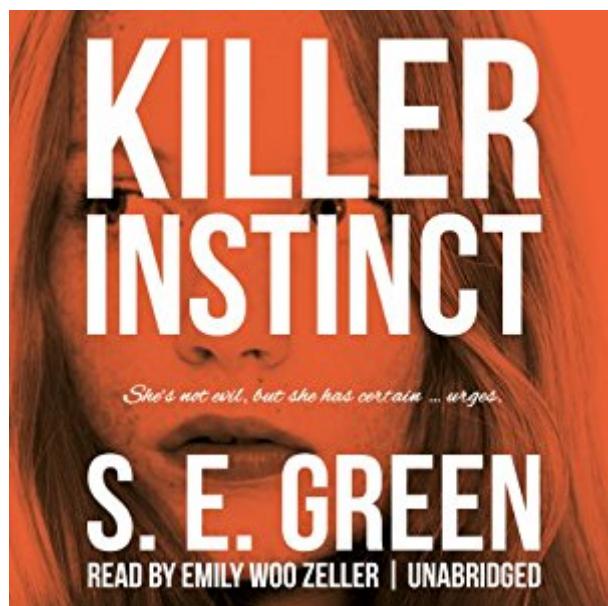


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Killer Instinct



Synopsis

She's not evil, but she has certain...urges. Lane is a typical teenager - loving family, good grades, after-school job at the local animal hospital, martial arts enthusiast - but her secret obsession is studying serial killers. She understands them, knows what makes them tick. Why? Because she might be one herself. Lane channels her dark impulses by hunting criminals - delivering justice when the law fails. The vigilantism stops shy of murder. But with each visceral rush the line of self-control blurs. And then a young preschool teacher goes missing - only to return in parts. When Lane excitedly gets involved in the hunt for "the Decapitator", the vicious serial murderer that has come to her hometown, she gets dangerously caught up in a web of lies about her birth dad and her own dark past. And once the Decapitator contacts Lane directly, Lane knows she is no longer invisible or safe. Now she needs to use her unique talents to find the true killer's identity before she - or someone she loves - becomes the next victim.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have been in a really serious book drought. I don't know what my problem is, but lately, every book I try to read bores me to tears. This has happened before, usually after reading something super duper cool, like when I finished Goblet of Fire I couldn't get interested in anything for days. So I did what I usually do, I switched genres. I have tried mysteries, cozy mysteries, romance, historical romance, sci fi and fantasy and all I got was a big pile of NO. But Killer Instinct is too good to put down. It's a mystery and a coming of age story. It has a hard to like protag and believable side

characters. It breaks the mold of sweet, good natured, pretty girl heroines by making the heroine into a serial killer wanna be who has secret part of her life that she doesn't share with anyone. What I liked best about Lane is that as hard and cold as she seems she's trying to be better in her interactions with people. She is very self aware and knows that one small step could lead to slide straight into darkness. Whenever a story has a murder mystery, people come out of the woodwork claiming to have figured out the murderer from chapter one. I guess I'm not as sleuth-y as they are because I was pretty surprised by the ending. I truly did not see it coming but in thinking back over the book it totally makes sense to me. Not the best book I've read this year, but it was more than enough to lure me away from tv.

Highly intelligent and socially uninterested, Lane has a morbid fascination with crime and serial killers in particular. Convinced she would make a good one, she targets people who seemingly got away with murder and other crimes including animal abuse and rape. But when a real serial killer dubbed the Decapitator contacts her she is both terrified and elated. But she chooses not to tell her mother, the director of the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit or her stepfather, also an FBI agent. Instead she proceeds to investigate while juggling her job at a veterinary clinic, her crush on the handsome vet and her quasi romance with his brother, and chauffeuring her younger brother and promiscuous sister to school. But her head to head confrontation with the killer leads to a shocking revelation that will forever alter Lane's life. I was disappointed with the many similarities to Dexter. Unlike Dexter, Lane does have emotions. She loves one of the dogs at the clinic and likes the love interest Zach. She adores her little brother and does have more than a superficial connection to her family and single friend. She feels for the victims of the crimes she attempts to right. She presents more like a person who is attempting to protect herself from being hurt than someone with genuine sociopathic or psychopathic tendencies. Although the book moves along at a good pace and is an easy read, it has some troubling messages for teens. Sexual activity, including the dangers of stds and pregnancy, is treated casually. Lane and her friend are nonchalant about being deflowered by boys they barely know. Lane's sister is openly promiscuous, something that apparently doesn't concern her parents or her siblings. Lying, cheating, hacking and stealing are all okay in Lane's world. The twist at the end only serves to underscore the fact that Lane is at most a vigilante, not a serial killer. Fast and fun, this story lacks real suspense. There are no great scares. I wish the author had trusted in her own creativity instead of relying so strongly on the Dexter backstory and plots. It engages but does not impress. Although not more violent or perverse than the fodder on TV, it is probably most appropriate for older teens.

Warning: If you make it through to the end, you will think why the hell did I waste my time finishing this. Had serious potential to be an awesome female version of Dexter book, but got really weird really fast.

High-school senior Lane seems fairly ordinary. She has a younger sister and a younger brother. Her grades are respectable; she has a part-time job at an animal clinic. But that's where typicality seems to end. Lane's mother and stepfather work for the FBI. Lane herself has a dark side – a fascination with serial killers and what makes them tick. She craves justice, whether the perpetrator is a serial killer or someone who injured an innocent animal or child. Lane takes on an alter ego – sneaking out in black clothes, ski mask, stealing sedatives from the veterinary clinic – to take up her vigilante system. As she tries to uncover the identity of a serial killer who has been on the prowl for fifteen years, she learns that much of what she thought she knew about herself and her family may or may not be true. The ending – when Lane finds out who the serial killer is and what happens next – is a big surprise. These things keep readers wondering whether Lane will succeed and what more she might uncover. Though she is a far from perfect example, she does show older teen girls that they do have power. As one would expect, this novel is violent. Also, though Lane's heart might be in the right place, parents probably wouldn't see her as the best example (theft of medications from the veterinary clinic, out after teen curfew). There is also some sexuality; Lane has what is apparently her first sexual experience, and her sister Daisy is promiscuous. Because the criticisms I point out have become commonplace in literature for older teens, I give this novel four stars. Older, sophisticated teens would likely find this novel fun to read. They will learn that they are powerful, but they must use their power appropriately.

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