



## The Weight of Night

*Christine Carbo*

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## **The Weight of Night** Christine Carbo

On most days, the wilderness gave me peace. But not tonight.

In a land sculpted by glaciers, the forest is on fire. Thick smoke chokes the mountain air and casts an apocalyptic glow over the imposing peaks and vistas of Montana's Glacier National Park. When firefighters are called in to dig firebreaks near the small town bordering the park, a crew member is shocked to unearth a shallow grave containing human remains.

Park Police Officer Monty Harris is summoned to the site to conduct an excavation. But with an incendiary monster threatening to consume the town, Monty seeks help from Gretchen Larson, the county's lead crime scene investigator.

While the two work frantically to determine the true identity of the victim, a teenager suddenly disappears from one of the campgrounds in Glacier. Could the cases somehow be connected? As chances for recovery of the missing boy grow slimmer and the FBI finds only dead ends, Gretchen and Monty desperately race to fit all the pieces together while battling time, the elements, and their own unresolved inner conflicts.

## **The Weight of Night Details**

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Author : Christine Carbo

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## **From Reader Review The Weight of Night for online ebook**

### **Cheryl says**

"After the vanishing of a child, the web that family members build to sustain themselves is so fragile."

This is the third book in the Glacier National Park mystery series. I've read the other two - THE WILD INSIDE and MORTAL FALL - and, while both of the prior books were good, this one is my favorite by far.

There's a lot going on in this story and it is action-packed. First of all, a number of out-of-control wildfires threaten the park and its inhabitants, both human and animal. Then buried human bones are discovered - of course in the path of one of the fires. And THEN a young boy disappears. Whew...

Glacier Park Police Officer Monty Harris is working on getting fire and evacuation news out to people when he's called in to investigate a shallow grave and the bones that were accidentally discovered by one of the firefighters. He calls in Gretchen Larson, the county's lead crime scene investigator, to help with the recovery of the skeleton.

And things haven't settled down from that when a young camper goes missing.

The story is told in alternating chapters by Monty and by Gretchen so we really get to know these two interesting characters in more depth. Both have back stories that really add to the story.

I like this series a bunch. It reminds me, as I've written before, of the Anna Pigeon series by Nevada Barr that takes place at different national parks across the U.S. and also the Joe Pickett series by C.J. Box about a Wyoming game warden. All three of these series are strongly written, with in-depth character development and authors that have the ability to describe beautiful country so it's easy to visualize.

I received this book from Atria Books through Net Galley in exchange for my unbiased review.

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### **Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says**

4 1/2 stars TOP PICK

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### **Linda says**

"Afterward, in the great shifting of the ice -- in the exquisite sorrowful moan of it -- I came to believe that I was being warned."

Those tiny hairs, elevated by nerves, stand at attention. The heaviness of your feet prevent you from treading where even the angels fear.....

But when it is your job and your dedicated commitment, you simply go. Park Police Officer Monty Harris finds himself in the midst of an out-of-control forest fire in the Glacier National Park of Montana.

Firefighters are digging trenches to divert the flames. A sharp clinking sound is heard as the shovel hits something hard. That ain't no rock, Sugar.

Hands dig deeper and reveal a skull and human remains. Monty calls in Gretchen Larson, the county's lead crime scene investigator. With only moments to spare as the smoke and flames almost engulf them, Gretchen is only able to retrieve the skull and some of the bones. But a once shiny belt buckle embedded in the dirt seems to beckon to the reality that murder may have been at hand here.

With a raging fire and an impending murder investigation staring straight up at them, Monty and Gretchen work the crime scene and the aged evidence trying to identify those bones. Suddenly, a phone call alerts them that a young teenage boy has gone missing from his family's campsite that very afternoon. Monty hits the trail before any clues have gone cold. To his dismay, it seems like the boy has disappeared into thin air.

Christine Carbo presents the third book in her Glacier Mystery series. Each book can be read as a standalone. Carbo maintains an uncanny talent for bringing the natural park atmosphere alive while delivering a top-notch storyline rich with mystery and intrigue. What I especially liked about this latest offering is her indepth highlighting of the character of Gretchen Larson. Right from the get-go, we come to find that Gretchen is a vessel of secrets. Those heavy-ladened secrets raise the atmospheric temperature both for their originality within the plot and also for the shaking fear of discovery. And it's huge, Sugar.

You don't have to be a nature lover or a tree hugger to embrace this one. The writing skill of Carbo is remarkable. Just follow the savoring words right into this dark, dark forest with secrets of its own.

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### **Carol says**

Digital galley graciously provided by Netgalley, Atria Books and Author, Christine Carbo. Published June 6, 2017.

I took a chance and read this, the third Glacier Mystery without having read the first two. I shouldn't have worried as The Weight of Night worked quite well as a standalone. That's not to say I won't be going back to read the first two in this series as I am curious as to its beginnings.

The Weight of Night has everything I like, a raging fire, a cold case, a missing teen, a spirit of adventure, all taking place within the backdrop of Glacier National Park and the grand outdoors. Great characters too, ones sporting lots of baggage but with an abundance of passion for their work. In the case of Gretchen Larsen, the lead county crime scene investigator there's also a fascinating affliction, sleepwalking, which manifests itself into the plot in unexpected ways. Gretchen and Park Police Monty Harris make a fine team in their work, but their personal relationship is complicated by secrets they hold and guilt from their past.

I can recommend this book without hesitation for its depiction of the splendor of Glacier alone. Add its first hand look at fire containment, the quest to identify human remains, the hunt to find a boy before dire harm comes to him all combine for a solid psychological procedural, not fast paced but no slouch in its delivery of a good story.

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## **Sherrie says**

Very topical, given the wildfires presently raging through California. The book became a (good) mystery more than dwelling on the fires, but I found those scenes and descriptions the most compelling.

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## **Deb says**

Great who-dunnit! I stayed up well past my bedtime to finish because it was so gripping! The story is told by two narrators, Park policeman Monty Harris, and local forensics investigator Gretchen Larson, who both carry some serious baggage. As Glacier NP battles two major fires, a set of bones is discovered buried near the fire line. At the same time, a park visitor's son goes missing. And of course, there is a connection. I am enjoying Monty's development as a character, and I liked the way he and Gretchen worked together. I'm looking forward to the next installment.

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## **Mark Stevens says**

Come for the scenery, stay for the characters.

Christine Carbo's setting for her three books to date—*The Wild Inside*, *Mortal Fall*, and the new one, *The Weight of the Night*—is Montana's Glacier National Park. Against the rocky-snowy backdrop, she has conjured an ensemble cast of characters who drive rich, complex, and character-driven stories.

In *The Weight of the Night*, Carbo's tag-team co-protagonists are forensic expert Gretchen Larson and park police officer Monty Harris. Both are wracked by guilt from nightmarish incidents from their youth.

Gretchen suffers from parasomnia, a severe form of intense sleepwalking. During one of her unconscious sojourns when she was growing up in Norway, she committed a brutal act of violence. She was fifteen years old. All her other sleepwalking incidents had been "fairly innocuous." Except for this one horror. In fact, she earns the media nickname, "Nightmare Girl."

For Monty, it was the disappearance of a childhood friend. Monty may have been the last person to see his friend Nathan disappear into the dark forest. Monty was twelve.

Gretchen showed up as a minor character in both *The Wild Inside* and *Mortal Fall*. Monty played a side role in *The Wild Inside* and was featured heavily in *Mortal Fall*. In her third fictional trek, Gretchen and Monty are front and center. (Sure, read the earlier two but *The Weight of Night* is easily read as a standalone.)

Carbo alternates Monty and Gretchen in each chapter as they circle two troubling cases—and each other. The first case is a disappearance of a teenage boy. The second is prompted by the discovery of a shallow grave, and human remains, uncovered as firefighters battled a wildfire that is causing alarm and prompting evacuations. Gretchen examines the details at the informal grave: "I could see the skull, slightly tilted to the left as if it was keeping an eye on the ridge, waiting to see if the fire could be controlled." A metal detector turns up a belt buckle. That's all.

Carbo gives honest narrative. Both Gretchen and Monty are told in first-person and Carbo dives equally deep

into each point of view. Gretchen is aware of the incidents that haunt Monty. Monty is clueless to what weight Gretchen is dragging around. He only knows she doesn't want to get too close. "Not that she ever said it directly—I could just tell by the precise and utilitarian way she treated me, treated everyone around her, for that matter. She had a lot of boundaries for reasons I didn't understand but ultimately accepted."

Monty knows about "emotional burial." But "damn if I wasn't curious," he thinks.

So are we.

Gretchen's deep, troubled world view is palpable. Once we know her inner landscape, we know how her past imbues every exchange and thought as she moves forward on the case. There is no short-changing here. The parasomnia bit is no gimmick. Gretchen's dread is 24-7. She wears the incident like a "cloak of guilt." Except, of course, when she sleeps—and does everything to protect herself, including sleeping inside a sleeping bag with mittens and various tricks to prevent her from finding an easy way out to civilization should an episode occur.

Monty is haunted, too. Yes, there are things he could have done to perhaps prevent Nathan from vanishing. Such as, follow Nathan. But Monty's woes are more generalized. All he must do is avoid doing the same thing again, including being a 12-year-old. Monty is plenty aware of his emotional baggage, but it's Gretchen's sleep cycle (and the condition she does not want publicized) that makes us nervous. Still, both are keenly self-aware of their emotional DNA.

As the case moves forward, Gretchen approaches clues via the elemental details. In a land of tracking and wide-open vistas, it's a man-made bit of fiber that puts her on the right trail. Threads. Monty has more of the standard police work to do—interviews and theorizing, trying to come up with scenarios. Both Monty and Gretchen encounter the rugged, raw citizens of Montana that Carbo has portrayed before. Government distrust runs deep.

As the fire roars, Gretchen and Monty find themselves in increasingly close orbit and Gretchen, laying down to rest in an unfamiliar spot after an arduous day, unwittingly gives Monty a harrowing glimpse of the power of parasomnia. When you think Carbo might take a trip down romance road, you breathe easy knowing the writer isn't looking for a cheap thrill or a cliché entanglement. And then Gretchen finds herself in a dire spot and the only way out is to do precisely the thing that both her unconscious and fully-awake self would never contemplate again—that is, injecting fear in another human being. (I know that's not a spoiler, you'll be too carried along by the story and depth of character to feel cheated by that little give-away.)

Will these cases help Monty and Gretchen better understand? Or cope? Or see a future? A way forward? Is it enough to merely survive?

Carbo leaves us with the characters—two very real human beings finding their way in the world and still struggling with the weight of life and their pasts—and some crackling good questions that resonate down deep in our bones.

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Final note: I listened on audio and the reading by Sarah Mollo-Christensen (Gretchen) and R.C. Bray (Monty) were knockout. Sarah in particular used a breathy, thoughtful cadence inflected with a Norwegian accent that brought the brooding to life in terrific fashion.

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## **L says**

I love the way Carbo does "place" in this series. This time she used wild fire as "the weather element."

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## **Christa says**

Christine Carbo has quickly become a must read author for me. I loved her first two books, and this one was even better! She writes wonderful characters, engrossing storylines, and stunning settings. Her books really come alive for me, and I can't get through them fast enough.

In this one, the Glacier National Park area is experiencing devastating fires, and Monty Harris is called upon when human bones are discovered. With help from crime scene investigator Gretchen Larson, the bones are excavated. Soon they have another emergency to deal with - the disappearance of a teenager. As new information surfaces, Monty and Gretchen work to piece together what is happening in the area.

Monty is still dealing with the disappearance of his best friend at age twelve in this one, and we also learn of Gretchen's heartbreak past. These two characters who carry so much baggage are very sympathetic, and I wanted the best outcomes for them.

Living in Montana, it is wonderful to me that Carbo gives such an accurate feel to the area. Her settings almost seem like another character.

I am already eagerly awaiting the next installment featuring Monty Harris.

Thanks to the publisher and NetGalley for providing an ARC in return for an honest review.

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## **Sharon Mensing says**

A buried skeleton is found just as a boy disappears. Glacier National Park is experiencing devastating forest fires, making the excavation of the burial site rushed and incomplete and the search for the missing boy both intensely pressured and difficult. The story of both boys, one dead and one whose fate is unknown until the end of the book, is told from two points of view. Monty, a Park officer, and Gretchen, a forensic scientist, team up in the race to find the missing boy and understand what happened to the boy whose skeleton they found. Chapters alternate between the two investigators, and each chapter is full not only of action but also of introspection. This helps the reader understand the characters and their motivation, but it can distract from the plot at times. Carbo's writing about the natural world is beautiful, but perhaps the best descriptive writing occurs when she explains the feeling of entering a huge abandoned industrial plant. This is a compelling plot, bolstered by deep characterization and beautiful writing about the location.

Thank you to netgalley and the publisher for providing a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Alecia says**

I rounded this book up to 4 stars, but I am actually giving it 3.5. I am a fan of Christine Carbo, and her first book, *The Wild Inside*, is my favorite of the three that she has written. I thought this book was a bit too long, and might have benefitted from some editing, especially at the end.

This book brings back Monty, the Glacier National Park police officer, and Gretchen, a forensics specialist. They both have their own demons to contend with, and the chapters are told in alternating first person narratives. We especially learn quite a bit about Gretchen's background as the chapters go on.

The story is set against the background of fierce, out-of control fires in the park. Carbo writes especially well about nature, and there is a visceral feel to her prose in these parts. A young boy goes missing from the campground, while he is vacationing with his family. Monty and Gretchen try to find the boy and piece together a possibility of a link to other missing boys. This is another well-written mystery set against a glorious backdrop by Christine Carbo.

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### **Helen Dunn says**

I've been enjoying this mystery series set in and around Glacier National Park. This story was a little different as it alternated between the POV of a park police officer and a forensic investigator who both deal with some tragic personal history. I enjoy books with multiple POV and I like both of these characters so this totally worked for me.

Core mystery here was good and had added tension because of the wildfires threatening the crime scenes and in the ways it hit close to home for the two main characters.

Looking forward to the next book in this series.

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### **James Thane says**

Following her first two Glacier Park novels, *Mortal Fall* and *The Wild Inside*, Christine Carbo returns with *The Weight of Night*. The third book in the series finds the national park under siege from wildfires that are burning largely out of control in several sections of the park. Dense smoke hangs heavily over the park and the surrounding countryside, making it difficult to breathe. The sun has largely disappeared from view, and the fires themselves are ravaging the forests, which are tinder-dry as the result of a prolonged drought. People are being evacuated, and firefighters are trying desperately to save their homes and livestock.

As firefighters dig a break in front of an oncoming fire, one of the fire crew members uncovers the bones of a body which had been buried in a shallow grave. Park police officer Monty Harris arrives to investigate, but with the fire bearing down on the gravesite, there's simply no time to wait for a forensics team to arrive and properly unearth the body. Harris thus turns to Gretchen Larson, a crime scene investigator for the Flathead County Sheriff's office. Larson insists that she is not properly trained for such a situation, but with no other alternative, she unearths as much of the skeleton as time and the raging fire will allow.

Monty and Gretchen must now attempt to identify the body, but at virtually the same time the body is

discovered, a child goes missing from a park campground. It's possible that the young boy simply wandered away and got lost in the woods, in which case he's not only in danger from exposure, starvation, drowning, falling and breaking a limb, getting eaten by a bear, and all of the other hazards that might befall a child in such a situation, but in this case, there's also the fire danger to consider. In the alternative, of course, it's possible that someone may have abducted the boy, in which case he could be facing an entirely different set of dangers. In either event, though, it's imperative that the child be found ASAP.

Ultimately, it will be Monty's responsibility to try to find the missing child, while Gretchen attempts to identify the body that's been unearthed. The story is then told in alternating chapters from the viewpoint of each of the two protagonists. Monty and Gretchen both have demons of their own to contend with, which will impinge on their investigations and so, as in the case of her first two books, Carbo has combined a compelling psychological story with a tense criminal investigation that will keep readers turning the pages at a brisk pace.

As in the first two books, Carbo also excels at describing the setting. Glacier National Park is one of the most scenic places in the entire country, if not the world, and she describes it beautifully. She also captures very well the fires that threaten both the park itself and the characters in the novel. A couple of summers ago, there was a horrible fire season in the park and in the surrounding area, and Carbo captures the effects of the fires perfectly. Reading the book immediately took me back to that summer, standing out on the deck in the thick smoke, with the fire ash falling out of the sky, wondering if there would be any real relief before the snow began falling in September. As I'm packing to return to the Flathead for the summer, I'm very much hoping that I won't ever have to experience a scene like that again outside the pages of this very fine book.

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## **Jen says**

I've read all three of Carbo's novels set in Glacier National Park and each one has been better than the last.

The Weight of Night combines a gripping plot, compelling characters, and beautiful, descriptive prose.

Both Monty Harris, a Park Police officer, and Gretchen Larson, crime scene investigator, were featured in Mortal Fall, Carbo's second novel. The narrative In The Weight of Night switches back and forth--from Gretchen's point of view to Monty's.

The book begins with Gretchen's memories of Norway--evocative descriptions of her hometown and the fjord make visualization easy. She also, as early as the second paragraph, mentions her problems with sleepwalking, a REM behavior disorder that "takes sleepwalking to absurd levels." She awakes that morning to find that all the books on her bookshelves have been removed and stacked in rows. Although this is the first evidence of an episode in five years, Gretchen begins reviewing her strategies for dealing with her problem.

Chapter 2 is from Monty's pov and his overview of the fire situation. He meets with the head of one of the fire crews and is present when the firefighters digging a fire break uncover buried skeletal remains. Gretchen Larson is called in for the excavation and preservation of the remains, but is forced to do a hurried job when the wind changes direction and an evacuation of the area is required.

Before leaving, Gretchen's examination of the remains leads her to suspect the victim is a young male. Her remark stirs up memories of the disappearance of Monty's best friend when they were fourteen.

In the midst of the evacuations necessitated by the separate fires that threaten large areas of the 1,583 square mile park, a boy is reported missing from his parents' camp site. Gretchen continues the investigation of the bones, and Monty works with the search for the missing boy.

Tightly plotted, the narrative moves from Gretchen to Monty as they work on the two investigations, but there are also underlying stories being revealed. Although Gretchen was a secondary character in Mortal Fall, this novel largely belongs to her. Her REM behavior disorder is a fascinating element in the novel, her descriptions of her beloved Norway are evocative. That there is a tragedy in her life is revealed in the first chapter, and her gradual revelations are riveting.

Highly Recommended.

Read in Jan.; blog post scheduled for May 17, 2017.

NetGalley/Atria Books

Crime/Suspense. June 6, 2017. Print length: 304 pages.

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### **Sheyla ✍ says**

This is my first book by this author.

The Weight of Night is also book #3 in the Glacier series. **It has a good suspense thread into the storyline with a couple of interesting subplots too.** I think I would have enjoyed it more if I knew the characters from prior books.

The story develops in Montana. Specifically, in the Glacier National Park. At the beginning of the novel, firefighters are fighting a wildfire affecting the park. During the process, they uncover the bones of a young male but due to the fire, they have to move fast and get the local CSI involved ASAP before the fire destroys the evidence.

Monty Harris is a park police officer. He's divorced and still dealing with the loss of his best friend Nathan when they were younger after Monty's brother's prank ended badly. Nathan's body has never been recovered. Finding the skeleton of a young male makes Monty wonder if this could be Nathan.

Gretchen Larson is originally from Norway. She left her home when she couldn't deal with her past any longer. She's part of the CSI team and she's called to unearthed the remains. Little by little, we learn of the tragedy surrounding her life.

I like both main characters. I like their interactions and I'm hoping a romance will develop in the next book. The suspense was good enough and learning more about Gretchen's difficulties made her more likable too. Even though, the story was slow at times it still kept my interest. These two damaged characters were both well written.

Cliffhanger: No

3/5 Fangs

A complimentary copy was provided by Atria in exchange for an honest review.

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