



## Pine Lake (Harlequin Intrigue Series)

*Amanda Stevens*

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## ***SLEEPWALKING WITH DANGER***

The murder of security expert Jack King's girlfriend has haunted him for fifteen years. Returning to Pine Lake, Texas, where the townsfolk still consider him suspect, might not be the smartest move, but a killer seems to be holding up a mirror to his past. The same witness to this new murder was also present the night Jack's girlfriend died...but both times, she was sound asleep...

Sleepwalking has gotten Olive Belmont into some sticky situations. Being the witness to both murders may have put her on the killer's list. Even so, she doesn't think the killer is Jack and is willing to help him. But will putting his past to rest ease her mind or leave her with even greater nightmares?

## **Pine Lake (Harlequin Intrigue Series) Details**

Date : Published October 1st 2017 by Harlequin Intrigue

ISBN :

Author : Amanda Stevens

Format : Kindle Edition 256 pages

Genre : Romance, Romantic Suspense, Mystery, Contemporary



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## **From Reader Review Pine Lake (Harlequin Intrigue Series) for online ebook**

### **Donna Repsher says**

Pine Lake is the first novel I recall reading by this author, and it was a very nice introduction to her work. More mystery than romantic suspense, it certainly kept me guessing until the very end and I give it 4.5 stars.

The hero, Jack King, is back in his hometown after 15 years away. During that time he's been, among other things, a homicide detective, and he's now working for an international security firm. He left Pine Lake after being falsely accused of killing his beloved girlfriend, Anna, but even after her killer was found, tried and convicted, he was still treated like a pariah in his hometown. After graduating from high school he left Pine Lake behind and moved on. When two of his old high school friends, Nathan Bolt and Tommy Driscoll, phone him out of the blue, each accusing the other of lying about their alibis for the night Anna was murdered, Jack's interest is piqued as to why his two friends lied under oath, and, since his uncle recently passed away and left Jack his cabin on Pine Lake, he returns to the town that still thinks he got away with murder to find out why.

No sooner does Jack return to Pine Lake when he witnesses a young woman's body being dumped into the lake in the middle of the night, just as Anna's was, but he also discovers Nathan's younger cousin, Olive Belmont, sound asleep on the bridge truss--she's always been a sleepwalker, and that habit has kept her returning to the old bridge repeatedly through the years. Jack rescues her from her precarious position, and calls the police about the dead body in the lake--both circumstances pulling him headlong into another police investigation of this new murder, reawakening 15-year-old suspicions about his possible involvement in Anna's murder, the mystery of what Olive saw or didn't see at the scene of both murders, the lies and motives behind Tommy and Nathan's lies, and a slowly developing romance between himself and Olive, who is just about to step into her role as the new high school principal.

There are also attempts on Olive's life, as well as Jack's, many secrets to be uncovered, and no shortage of possible suspects in this novel. The author's skillfully crafted and adept descriptions of the hot, steamy, swampy setting, created an excellent backdrop to the mysterious tone and atmosphere of this gripping whodunit of a novel.

My only issue with this novel is the ending. Since, as stated previously, there is a very slowly budding romance between Jack and Olive, the denouement is handled in very short order, the murders solved, and the barely-there romance between these two characters goes from not to hot far too quickly considering the slow and steady pace of the rest of the novel. However, that doesn't take much away from what was an otherwise excellent and well-written mystery novel.

I voluntarily read an advance reader copy of this novel. The opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Helen Bassett says**

Sleepwalking was a twist and made for an interesting mystery

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### **Amanda [Novel Addiction] says**

This was great! The Harlequin Intrigue line doesn't usually catch my eye, but I'm a fan of this author, so I figured I would give it a shot. And I'm so glad I did! This was a great suspense novel - I was actually desperate to figure out who the bad guy really was. I think the author did a great job tying everything together, and I'd definite continue to read more by her in the future.

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### **Books and Spoons says**

With the vivid, expressive images the author lured me into the tale and kept the interest elevated with the eerie, mystical atmosphere filled with secrets and veiled truths.

The story gave out strong 'Twin Peaks' vibes like I experienced with the original series. Every single person in town seems to have something to hide, secrets they could kill for to keep hidden. There is no one to trust, there is no one to have your back, each person is going for their own ultimate goal, and collateral damage is just part of the game.

Jack King is a cool-headed hero. He is determined to find the truth about the murder 15 years ago, the murder that changed his life for good. The old bitterness from being accused to be the killer of his girlfriend is still buried deep in his soul, the new doubts about her character and the possible truth about the events occurring in high school leave a sour taste in Jack's mouth.

Olive Belmont is not sure if she can trust the man she had a teenage crush on 15 years ago. He appears sincere yet the cold look in his eyes at times gives her chills. Olive was the outsider in high school yet now she seems to have the keys to all the murders, from the past and the present, if only she could remember.

I liked the chemistry between Olive and Jack, the passion and attraction are tangible. They obviously care and cherish each other, they want to protect each other from the threats surrounding them, yet the story leaves them more of a 'happy for now in a long distance fling' type of a relationship. The story felt at times a bit emotionless, cold and calculated.

The animated, dramatic images the author draws into the reader's mind made the story flow effortlessly off the pages and gave the story intensified, profound ambiance that kept me captivated until the end

~ Four Spoons

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### **RachelW (BamaGal) says**

I don't usually read category romances; but I'm a fan of Stevens 'Graveyard Queen' series, so I thought I'd give this a shot. It was a well written and suitably creepy murder mystery. A little more small town angst and backstabbing than I care for, and the ending was rushed; but I still enjoyed the book.

After reading about the Blackthorne Security Agency, I got the impression that this may not be the first book featuring the agency. If it is, then Stevens really should use it for another book, maybe even create a series around it.

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## **Paris says**

I love it when I can't figure out who the bad guy is. I thought I knew who it was, I really felt like I was figuring it out and then Amanda Stevens blindsided me with the truth. This was a really great, suspenseful read. I really liked Jack. He was a character that was pretty easy to connect with even though he had walls the size of Texas surrounding him. I would have actually liked to dive into Olive a bit more and also the relationship that brewed between Olive and Jack. The story was more about the murders (one 15 years before and the one that happened recently) which I actually didn't mind at all.

I really loved how the story brought Jack back to his hometown for the first time in 15 years. He didn't leave on the best terms, but there's no doubt he had to come back, especially not after receiving two phone calls that brought up old memories. I found Olive to be an interesting character. I was intrigued by her and that's why I would have loved to explore her a bit more. What we did get though, drove the story along and added an interesting layer to the mystery.

This was a really quick read for me. It was a thrilling ride that I enjoyed from beginning to end. If you've read other books by Amanda Stevens, including her Graveyard Queen series, I would be careful comparing those books to this one. This is definitely different, but enjoyable. I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys thrillers/mysteries/suspense.

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## **Jo Anne says**

Jack King is a loner, a serious cynic with trust issues, ostracized by his entire hometown when he was barely eighteen, accused of his girlfriend's vicious murder. Olive Belmont is a small town girl with guilt issues plagued by sleepwalking and nightmares. When Jack returns to Pine Lake after fifteen years, determined to find out the truth about the old murder that changed the course of his life, and the body of another girl is found the night of his return, all hell breaks loose.

As the first two on the scene of the new murder, Jack and Olive are thrown together, and from the beginning, danger follows close behind them. The mystery is well done. The secondary characters are multi-dimensional, testing readers with whodunit. I loved this story. It's full of suspense, with a solid romance that develops at an honest pace. I haven't read a Harlequin Intrigue in quite a while, but I'd read this author before, and knew I'd get a great story. I wasn't disappointed!

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## **(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys\_sidekick says**

Originally posted at SmexyBooks-<http://smexybooks.com/2017/10/review-...>

Jack King, a former homicide detective turned security expert, is a Harlequin alpha through and through; the quiet hero with a dark past riddled in anger, bitterness, and betrayal. Driven out of his hometown of Pine Lake, TX, by the town's false accusations of murder, he's come back 15 years later after receiving some odd phone calls from his former high school buddies who hint that some of the details behind the death of his high school girlfriend aren't exactly true. Especially when he learns that she kept some secrets from him.

Upon his arrival, he is instantly embroiled in another murder that takes him back down memory lane and has him viewing the town with prejudicial eyes. His discovery of the body also reintroduces him to Olive Belmont, the cousin of his former best friend, Nathan. She is all grown up and the local high school principal. Olive has a habit of sleepwalking which is how she ends up at the scene of the murder. Jack saves her life and Olive's former teenage crush roars to the surface. Only, this Jack is nothing like the old Jack and that scares Olive. However, she doesn't feel he is guilty of anything and vows to help him clear his name for good and discover the truth.

Jack's investigation into both deaths and the attempts on his and Olive's life leads him into the town's seedy drug culture and the ties that bind it to some of the city's top residents. As Jack grows closer to discovering the truth, he also grows close to Olive. But unless Jack can let go of the past, he may not have a future to embrace.

As a fan of Amanda Stevens Graveyard series I was intrigued when I learned she had written a nonparanormal romance suspense for Harlequin Intrigue. Set in the small town of Pine Lake, TX, Stevens uses her sharp writing skills to build an atmospheric mystery that has ties to the past and present when a young woman's murder mimics another murder from 15 years ago. Dark and descriptive, this story has all the elements of a classic who dun with a brooding alpha hero, a slightly damaged heroine, and a slew of suspects and motives all converging together in a sleepy little southern small town with a long memory. The storylines straightforward reveal blends well with the solid suspense-filled mystery. A steady pace and engaging narrative serve to keep the reader guessing as Steven's expertly juggles multiple plotlines while she fans the flames of Jack and Olive's attraction. Some may be disappointed by the low key romance but I found it provided nice fodder for the story's much stronger mystery elements.

The storyline's straightforward reveal blends well with the solid suspense-filled mystery. A steady pace and engaging narrative serve to keep the reader guessing as Steven's expertly juggles multiple plotlines while she fans the flames of Jack and Olive's attraction. Some may be disappointed by the low key romance but I found it provided nice fodder for the story's much stronger mystery elements.

The ending wasn't a surprise (I had guessed who the villains were) but their motive was and I commend Steven's for her clever little manipulations and subterfuge. Though a definite deviation from Steven's usual fare, Pine Lake is an enjoyable bit of escapism for fans who enjoy a mystery that keeps them guessing.

Grade: B

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### **Jessica Figueroa says**

Its been 15 years since the murder of his girlfriend and Jack a scrutiny expert now is back to his old home town after some strange phone calls from his old friends. Just when he enters his home town he manages to come upon a dead body oddly similar situation to the one of his ex. Olive is a sleepwalker and has managed to be present at both crimes found sleeping near where the body is disposed of. Both of the two have some type of connection going on and they'll stick together while Jack tries to find out more information about what's going on before he's accused of killing this girl this time.

Geez I must of tried writing that description at least 4 times before I settles on the one that currently posted. I love a good mystery, I loved that this book had enough clues to the readers pointing fingers at who they think is the true killer. I have to say that I was suspicious of at least 3 to 4 people throughout this book and

still managed to be semi-surprised of who it was in the ending. I loved that even though there was that connection between the two main characters their romance didn't over power this book it was more mystery then anything. I really enjoyed this book it was something I could escape into for a couple of hours and I liked it.

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### **Toni says**

Jack pretty much gets duped into coming back to his hometown to get closure on an old murder he had originally been charged with. And you know how small towns are... they still think he is guilty even though he was not charged with the murder in the end.

I found a few of the situations a little "out there" in the "hard to believe" category but the story was good, the characters were interesting and the whodunit kept me entertained for most of the book.

Definitely check this one out.

I bought this book with my own money.

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### **Christa says**

I'm a big fan of The Graveyard Queen Series, so jumped at the chance to read a new book by this author. Pine Lake was an intriguing romantic suspense that features Jack King and Olivia Belmont. The murder of his high school girlfriend has haunted Jack, and now a new murder has taken place. Olivia, who sleepwalks, seems to have been an inadvertent witness to both murders. She may be the killer's next target, and Jack is determined to keep her safe while finding the killer.

Great characters, an interesting storyline, and a good balance of romance and suspense made this a book to enjoy!

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### **Sarah says**

This book was a fun, quick read. The characters are well developed and I loved the way the setting of Pine Lake was described. The author did a great job building suspense. About halfway through, I couldn't put it down. I had to find out the answers! If you are looking for a mystery with some romance, this book is for you. ARC review

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### **Sunny says**

ARC Review, 3.5 stars

Being a huge fan of the Graveyard Queen series, I was curious to see how Amanda Stevens would write a more traditional romantic suspense book. When I think of this author, I think of her ability to write incredible

descriptions that make a scene come alive. I was not disappointed with this book. With descriptions like: "Sinewy bodies glided through the dark shallows. Frogs plopped, herons fished and the water lilies closed up tight, their bloom heads drooping drowsily in the waning light", the muggy, swampy world of Pine Lake, Texas comes alive.

The story is suspenseful, but a bit too straightforward. I thought the mystery could be flushed out more and I would be happy with a little more relationship development. It felt short. Nonetheless, this book has good bones and I would recommend it to those who enjoy the genre.

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### **GONZA says**

I can see one my favorite author trying to do something different from "The graveyard's queen" series and almost failing at it, because some pieces and bits were still pretty scary for a romance, even if it is an "intrigue" one. The story is also not bad and the couple is good, but I will forever miss the scary books she used to write, even if she started with romance I also think it's too late for her to go back ;)

Posso anche apprezzare lo sforzo che ha fatto una delle mie autrici preferite (The graveyard queen series) di tornare al romance senza troppi drammi - anche se questo fa parte della serie intrigue- m mi sembra che abbia anche fallito perché questo libro aveva dei pezzi francamente paurosi! La coppia regge, ma non mi dispiacerebbe che l'autrice mollasse definitivamente il romance per tornare a fare quello che le riesce meglio!

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### **Monica Cardoza says**

This was a good read it was full of mystery and suspense. There were so many possibilities of who killed Anna and what was happening in Pine Lake. You have Jack King a man that of course was the prime suspect when Anna was found dead because he was the deceased boyfriend. Shortly after they had the person they suspected murdered her Jack had to leave Pine Lake. Now after so many years away he is back and ready to investigate who killed Anna but during his return he runs into Olive. Olive is a wonderful woman that had a crush on Jack when they were in high school but now they are all grown up and there is this instant chemistry between them. Olive suffers from a sleeping disorder and Jack is fortune it to find Olive that night when a body was dumped in the river. I couldn't believe that she was actually climbed on top of the railing of the bridge and was peacefully sleeping. Jack and Olive were great together and in order for them to be happy they need to figure out the mystery of Anna's death. Secrets are going to be revealed and people will finally see who had been a true friend if they were friends at all.

Pine Lake was a good read with good characters. The storyline was good but it was a little too slow going for me. I wanted things to move along or maybe I needed more detail about the other characters. The ending was okay but I felt that I needed more of a closure.

I totally recommend this read!!

Received ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an Honest Review

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