



## **The First Victim**

*J.B. Lynn*

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For fifteen years The Baby Doll Strangler has terrorized the East Coast, abducting teenage girls and leaving their perfectly primped bodies for their families to find.

Fifteen years ago, one girl escaped him.

That girl, now a 31-year-old woman, Emily Wright, believes she has also escaped the memories of her abduction, until a family emergency forces her back to her childhood home to care for her teenage sister.

As she tries to build a relationship with a sister she barely knows, the nightmares of her abduction return. When a girl from her sister's school is kidnapped, killed, and left on Emily's doorstep, her paranoia goes into overdrive.

Has her kidnapper resurfaced and returned to town too?

Emily must decide who to trust: her girlhood crush Deputy Bailey O'Neill, the FBI agents who have failed to catch the killer in the past, or the only person who has defeated this monster before: herself.

Family secrets and small town rumors abound as the body count escalates and the killer draws closer to the Wright sisters.

Time is running out and Emily must face her fears and unravel the secrets of her own kidnapping before her nightmares come true and she, or her sister, become the next victims of The Baby Doll Strangler.

## The First Victim Details

Date : Published (first published June 13th 2011)

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Author : J.B. Lynn

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Genre : Romance, Romantic Suspense, Mystery, Suspense, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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# From Reader Review The First Victim for online ebook

## Shirley Wells says

I loved this book.

Emily Wright managed to escape from a serial killer dubbed the Baby Doll Strangler. Fifteen years later, she's made a new life for herself in the city. But her father is in hospital and she has to return home to take care of her sister. And so the nightmare begins...

JB Lynn throws you straight in at the deep end and the suspense builds from there. If you like great characters, nail-biting suspense and serial killers coming back for their first victim, this is the book for you.

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## Mello ♥ Illium ★Harry★ ?Myrnin? Torin Ichimaru says

This was an excellent mystery/suspense book. I loved it. I loved that we had insight into several of the main characters' heads as well. Even though the mind of psycho was quite disturbing, it was really well written. I decided to read this book because I'd read JB Lynn's Confessions of a Neurotic Hitwoman and that turned out to be one of my favorite books. I'm quite happy to say that this one is another favorite. I can't wait to read another book from her.

This was truly a book of suspense. I did not expect the psycho to turn out to be who it turned out to be. Same with more than a few of the other secrets that had been revealed. Very shocking.

I enjoyed Emily as a character and absolutely loved Bailey. I don't want to say too much because I don't want to give anything away, but this is definitely a book to read. Really, really good.

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## Erin says

"Shhh, Baby Doll." The words should infuse comfort... Instead, they fill Emily Wright with terror. Those are the words her captor used to whisper to her during her 3-day trip to hell when she was sixteen. Three days - such a short amount of time, but enough time to change a person forever. Emily fought to survive and to escape not only the dark basement where she was held, but also the town that unknowingly flaunted the memories she so desperately needed to distance herself from.

The now thirty-one year old Emily is a co-owner of her own company, a New York resident, and an avid runner. Finally, she has a life she is both comfortable with and proud of.

The shrill ringing of her phone upsets the world that Emily has so carefully crafted... She's summoned "home" due to a boating accident that left her father in perilous condition and her fifteen year old sister alone. She reluctantly returns to her childhood hometown, not for her father (whom she hoped she'd never have to see again) but for the love of the sister she hardly knows.

It doesn't take long for the haunted and hunted feelings to return to Emily. Immediately, Emily begins

finding notes and other mementos from a secret admirer and teenage girls - friend's of her little sister - start disappearing, only to reappear looking like porcelain dolls... Dead porcelain dolls. Could the disappearances be related to Emily's kidnapping years ago? What does her secret admirer/stalker want with Emily? Why is this all happening in the quiet lake town?

The First Victim is a twisted tale of pilfered innocence, cunning deception, and predatory planning and trapping... If that isn't enough to lure you in, the sinister side of the book is coupled with a sweet story of realized and redeemed love between Emily and Bailey (Emily's childhood friend turned senior law enforcement).

There wasn't anything I didn't like about The First Victim, everything was spot on! The characters were wonderfully depicted, the pace was swift, the plot was well thought out, the climax had me biting my nails, and the resolution left me fully gratified.

This is definitely a romantic thriller I would recommend!!!! I give it two very chewed on thumbs up!!!!

Great job, J.B. Lynn!!!!!!

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## **Tracy says**

~\* 3.5 Stars \*~

### **Terror that Spans Time**

Emily Watson grew up in a small town and for the first sixteen years of her life she was a normal girl doing normal girl things. She had a best friend, she liked a boy, she was sometimes frustrated by her parents. Normal. Until one sunny autumn day, when she was abducted by a sick monster as she hurried along the path from the lake to her lakeside house.

After that, after three interminable days of being held captive, being beaten and molested, nothing was normal for Emily ever again. Her abductor was never caught.

She fled Lakeside Acres as soon as she could, her hometown having become a source of terror that haunted her even fifteen years after her abduction. She had thought there wasn't anything that could force her back there, but when her old childhood friend Bailey O'Neil, now a Lakeside Acres police deputy, calls to inform her that her father has been in a horrible accident and her young sister needs her, she's left with little choice. No matter how contentious her relationship with her dad, she cares about her sister and can't let her own neurosis keep her from taking care of the teenager.

No sooner is Emily back in town than the creepy "Welcome Back Emily" messages start showing up everywhere she goes. Then she finds the body of a murdered girl dumped on the property of her family home and her nightmares turn to terror. The murdered girl is a friend of her baby sister's, a victim of a serial killer the FBI have been tracking for years. Not even the arrival of the FBI, called in by Bailey, makes Emily feel safe. She's being targeted, tormented by a past that haunts her day and night.

The only time she feels any safety at all is when Bailey is near. They were best friends as children, and as adolescents - before her abduction - she was wildly infatuated with him. Now, as adults, the hunger for the man is still there, but the terror is snapping at her heels and a monster has her in his sights. Emily is painfully aware that giving in to one may very well mean falling prey to the other.

My reading preferences in the romantic suspense sub-genre leans towards exactly this kind of psychological thriller that features the sort of hunt for a serial killer that Lynn has created here with *The First Victim* (we'll...um...just ignore what that may imply about the state of my psyche). I've read a lot of them, and this book holds up fairly well against some true gut-wrenchers. The suspense and thriller aspects of the plot were handled well and created then maintained a level of tension and atmosphere throughout the book, offering glimpses of a sadist's twisted desires without letting the reader know who wears the face of a madman.

I also appreciated the depth in the plot, the question about old loyalties and emotions, the mystery surrounding the destruction of Emily's family and the people it affected, as well as some angst generated by Bailey's family problems. There were enough secondary and ancillary threads to keep the book from feeling one-note, but they didn't overwhelm the narrative or bog down the pacing. In that regard it was a solid, disturbing read with enough meat on its bones to entertain all the way through.

There were some clichéd moments, like the uncharged cell phone, or the crazy lady that every small town has, the one no one listens to but should, but those annoyances were balanced out by some subtle foreshadowing and a few dramatic plot twists that took me by surprise. I liked most of the characters quite a lot, and Lynn maintained a satisfying pragmatic approach to the plot threads outside the primary threat of the serial killer that added a layer of realism to the story. I had a couple of issues, though, and both of them were fairly large.

I never warmed up to Emily. I tried. I really did. I just didn't find her sympathetic. The visceral fear that crippled her so long after her abduction, locking her down and ruling her actions...well, that just struck me as weakness. What happened to her was horrifying, yes, and they never caught the guy who abducted and molested her, nor did she get much parental support after the fact - and that's tragic. Still, she's alive, and she's an adult now and as such, is responsible for herself. I would have had more respect for her as a character if she hadn't perpetuated her victimization by allowing fear to rule her when she got back to her hometown.

I loved the rest of the characters, though, especially Bailey. I would have preferred more character development in the FBI guys. I liked them a lot. They felt very organic and they seemed to have the sort of backstory that alludes to a previous novel, which I enjoyed because they felt like very robust and nicely established characters, but I wish they'd been allotted a larger presence in the book.

The other major issue came late in the book, when the plot took an odd twist as it started to build towards the climax. I'm loathe to mention any specific details given the nature and timing of my issues, so instead I'll just say there was one thing that made me say, "Oh, *come on*. How did *that* get there?" and that was quickly followed by another that had me thinking, "You're just going to *sit* there? *Really*?? Wow, that's...unwise and remarkably unproductive."

Fortunately, after that somewhat contrived bobble, the action ratcheted up again and raced towards a very satisfying climax and dénouement.

I liked the story of *The First Victim*. I think it was told quite well. I just wish my prejudices against weak female leads hadn't hamstrung me so severely when it came to Emily's character, and the bobble with the plot late in the book hadn't been so glaring to me. I'll definitely keep my eye on Lynn though, because I really enjoyed several important aspects of this story and the other characters she created in it. I look forward to trying more of her work.

*Disclosure: An ARC of this book was provided to me by Carina Press via NetGalley. This rating, review, and*

*all included thoughts and comments are my own.*

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Reviewed for One Good Book Deserves Another.

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## **Liz Fichera says**

I have two pieces of advice for people who read *THE FIRST VICTIM*: (1) Save it for when you have uninterrupted time and (2) Make sure you're not alone in the house. Wow. Well-drawn characters and lots of unexpected twists and turns. Great read.

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## **Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says**

Originally posted at: <http://longandshortreviews.blogspot.c...>

### **A LASR "BEST BOOK"**

Romantic suspense has many great authors like Sandra Brown, Nora Roberts, and now I must add JB Lynn to the list. This was by far the best book I've read this year.

*The First Victim* started out with Emily Wright returning back home to the place she left behind. Many years ago, she had been kidnapped and abused. Although Emily vowed to never be a victim again, she has been resistant about returning to the place where tragedy had struck. In the initial chapters of the book, we are pulled into Emily's head which gives us an understanding of her personality. She feels guilt and always expects the worst. She expects to be welcomed back home with hatred because she ran away and is shocked when she receives a warm welcome, especially from her little sister, a person she feels like she abandoned.

Emily is not the only one returning back home, however. The Baby Doll Strangler, the same killer whom Emily escaped from is back as well, and his goal is to finish what he began fifteen years ago. JB Lynn lets the reader have a glimpse into the killer's mind, something that is both creepy and shocking. I enjoyed those scenes and with each one despised the killer more and more.

The suspense had me on the edge of my seat as I kept turning those pages to find out the identity of The Baby Doll Strangler. The suspicion fell on a few characters and the thrill of who could it be had me reading the book at every chance I got. If only real life could have taken a break so that I could have read it in one shot. When I did learn who the killer was, I was honestly shocked and surprised. It was very well written and I didn't see it coming.

The romance factor was just as thrilling. It was a slow buildup with both Bailey and Emily dancing around their feelings rather than acting on them. I love second chance at love stories and this one was full of past problems for our lovely characters to face. They did share a few desperate kisses that they later claimed were a "mistake" so when the real kiss happened it was explosive. I was rooting for these characters all the way.

As new authors go, JB Lynn is one to watch for. She's definitely going places and I personally can't wait for her next book. And if she would write a sequel for *The First Victim* then I would be indebted to her forever.

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### **Naomi says**

I must say that I am really pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed this book! It had just the right amount of suspense/graphicness to romance(i.e.light) for me. I will seek out more by this author.

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### **Maureen Miller says**

I join the ranks of the readers who said they could not put this book down. The suspense was prevalent throughout, and I was surprised and delighted by the romantic aspects of the book. Emily's fear was so real to me that I was actually getting nervous reading what would happen to her next. I don't usually have a lot of time to read, but in the case of THE FIRST VICTIM I had to make the time. Especially for the last quarter of the book. There was simply no opportunity to stop reading. I took the ride along with Emily. I might as well have been in the van with her. Excellent work, Ms. Lynn.

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### **Wendy-Lynn says**

Looking for a suspenseful thriller? Then The First Victim by JB Lynn is the book for you. From the first word to the last word this novel will keep you hooked. Emily Wright is called back to Lakeside Acres after 15 years because her father was in an accident and she needs to take care of her younger sister Laurie. Fifteen years ago, Emily escaped from a sadistic killer who has yet to be caught. The Baby Doll Stranger is still in Lakeside Acres and is waiting for Emily. Once she arrives, he starts to send her messages "Welcome Home Emily" and begins to kill again. This time targeting those close to the Wright family. In particular, Laurie's High School friends. His signature is leaving his victims dressed as baby dolls adorned with lollypops. Emily enlists the help of friend and deputy, Bailey O'Neil, after one of the victims is left on Emily's doorstep. She now knows that her and Laurie are next on his list. From the time you found out who the killer was until the end was the most suspenseful part because I couldn't put it down until I finished it. What a great first novel by JB Lynn. I can't wait to read her next one. Received courtesy of Net Galley.

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### **Lisa says**

I received a copy of this book from the author for my honest opinion and review.

My favorite genre these days is romantic suspense. I have only experienced this genre from a few authors so when the opportunity to read a debut book from a new author i was happy to volunteer to read it. First Victim is the debut novel by author JB Lynn. Let me start with the blurb as a introduction to the book.

Available June 13, 2011 from Carina Press  
THE FIRST VICTIM

For fifteen years The Baby Doll Strangler has terrorized the East Coast, abducting teenage girls and leaving

their perfectly primped bodies for their families to find.

Fifteen years ago, one girl escaped him.

That girl, now a 31-year-old woman, Emily Wright, believes she has also escaped the memories of her abduction, until a family emergency forces her back to her childhood home to care for her teenage sister.

As she tries to build a relationship with a sister she barely knows, the nightmares of her abduction return. When a girl from her sister's school is kidnapped, killed, and left on Emily's doorstep, her paranoia goes into overdrive.

Has her kidnapper resurfaced and returned to town too?

Emily must decide who to trust: her girlhood crush Deputy Bailey O'Neill, the FBI agents who have failed to catch the killer in the past, or the only person who has defeated this monster before: herself.

Family secrets and small town rumors abound as the body count escalates and the killer draws closer to the Wright sisters.

Time is running out and Emily must face her fears and unravel the secrets of her own kidnapping before her nightmares come true and she, or her sister, become the next victims of The Baby Doll Strangler.

Emily Wright was kidnapped at the age of 16. Three days later she escaped when by luck Evan Swann a fellow classmate saw her trying to escape and helped her get away. She left town as soon as she could to get away from the memories that haunted her and because her father a psychiatrist insisted she get over the kidnapping like it was that easy. Now 15 years later she gets a phone call that her father has been seriously hurt and she needs to come home for her 15 year old sister. That's where the killer wants her though and so it begins.

I really enjoyed this book but there was more suspense than romance in this one. It was more chilling than most romantic suspense i have read but i was still drawn into it. You have to remember that i also have not read a lot of different authors that write romantic suspense so this romance/suspense equation for this book might be the norm for a lot of other romantic suspense readers. That being said i really liked this book. The suspense was damn suspenseful and quite scary. lol Half way through or so i suspected who the bad guy was but i was never sure to closer to the end and still surprised in what was really going on and who the real bad guy is. To read a excerpt of this book and find out more about the author JB Lynn please click here <http://www.jblynn.com/>. I give First Victim 4 out of 5 Modokker Book Pick stars. Available from Amazon and Carina Press.

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## **Tracey Avequin says**

I picked up this book because I had just finished JB Lynn's other book, Confessions of a Slightly Neurotic Hitwoman, and was literally craving more. While The First Victim is not at all the same genre as the other book, I still enjoyed the author's style and am glad to add this one to my collection. The storyline is somber,

creating suspense, mystery and thrill, but is laced with a bit of romance that keeps you hoping the heroine will pull through in the end -- and finish happily ever after with her highschool crush. I loved it. It was a good read while waiting for the second in the Hitwoman series (which has more humor and light-heartedness).

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## Scooper Speaks says

**Favorite Lines:** “He couldn’t wait to play with them. But not yet. It wasn’t time. Soon though. Right now there was another girl he wanted to toy with. He was putting the finishing touches on their playroom right now. The walls had been soundproofed. No one would hear her scream. The tools were laid out. Waiting for when he was ready for them. The brand-new clothes he’d bought to dress her up i had been washed in rose water. Crushing them in his fist, he raised them to his nose. They smelled so good. Not as good as she’d smell though.” (p. 41 e-ARC)

*The First Victim* is 72,000 words of pure suspense. Sure I knew who the killer was as soon as he was introduced, but the details surrounding all the events of the book took me by surprise. The cover of *The First Victim* does nothing to showcase the story making this one of those “don’t judge a book by its cover” cases.

The story is a romantic suspense, but the emphasis in the story are on the “who will survive” aspect. I wasn’t invested in the love story line at all. I didn’t feel their attraction and I really didn’t care. I cared about whether the heroine would survive another encounter with a monster. JB Lynn has done an excellent job stretching out the heroine’s story. She gives just enough to get the reader worked up and excited then lets go of the throttle letting the reader sweat it out until the next injection of adrenaline is unleashed.

Buy or skip it? Buy it. It’s a nice foray into the dark side of humanity. It’s light on the romance, but there is a romantic edge which should please both romance readers and those new to the romance genre. It’s a quick read. My biggest issue with the book was the sex scene. I just didn’t feel it. There was no sexual tension building up to the event and afterward I didn’t feel an emotional attachment. I felt two old friends reconnecting through sex, but no real attraction or life altering change.

Scooper Speaks

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## Tammy says

3.5 Stars! Fantastic!

**Summary:** *Fifteen years ago, Emily Wright barely escaped from a serial killer dubbed the Baby Doll Strangler. She wants nothing to do with the small town where she was abducted, but when her father is hospitalized she reluctantly returns home to care for her teenage sister.*

*When her sister's friend is killed and left in front of Emily's house, Emily begins to relive the nightmare she endured long ago. Soon she realizes that her sister, too, is in danger from the killer—and the only person who can help is the man Emily left behind: Deputy Bailey O'Neil. Together, Emily and Bailey must discover the killer's identity before he claims his next victim...*

A fantastic debut novel for J.B. Lynn. This story has all the right elements: suspense, fear, plot twists and

love. I am so pleased to have discovered a new author in the same category as Sandra Brown and Lisa Gardner. I will be looking for her next book!

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## **Jess the Romanceaholic says**

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review, please visit The Romanceaholic.

Expected Release Date: June 13, 2011 (Available Now!)

Publisher: Harlequin

Imprint: Carina Press

Author's Website: <http://www.jblynn.com/>

My Source for This Book: Netgalley

Part of a Series: No

Series Best Read In Order: N/A

Steam Level: Steamy

Fifteen years ago, Emily Wright was kidnapped by a serial killer. Barely managing to escape with her life, she has put her past behind her, refusing to return to the small town where she was abducted -- and where her father and younger sister still live. When her father is hospitalized in a serious boating accident, she returns home to take care of her sister, never quite able to put aside her feelings of unease at returning to the place of so many horrible memories.

Soon, her sister's friend is killed and left in front of Emily's house for her to discover. Shocked and horrified to realize that this killer may be after her and her sister as well, she turns to the one man who has always been able to make her feel safe -- Bailey O'Neil, her best friend from "before".

A deputy for the small town's Sheriff's Department, Bailey's father has just been killed in a traffic accident when Emily returns to town. Having always harbored a secret crush on her, Bailey knows that Emily is meant for so much more than their small town, and he, can offer. Discovering that Emily's life could once again be in danger, he calls in some favors from the FBI, and joins with Emily to discover the identity of the killer before anyone else gets hurt.

The whole time I was reading this, I couldn't help thinking that this book would translate very well onto the big screen. There was something for everyone -- romance, action, murder, and mystery, and at the end, I was literally reading it with my jaw open saying "NO WAY!". Beautifully, beautifully done. The solution to the mystery wasn't an obvious one like so many are these days, and the romance itself was both sweet and delicious. I adored the small-town dynamics, with gossip and secrets both confusing the investigation, and the climax of the book was full of heart-pounding excitement.

Recommended for fans of small-town romantic suspense that keeps you guessing until the end, childhood friends who later become lovers, and of dysfunctional families finally coming full circle. A very enthusiastic 4.5/5 Stars

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## Laurie Carlson says

“The First Victim” by JB Lynn

Brilliant! Captivating! This should be a Book-To-Movie!

This book was so engaging. I could feel what the main character felt. I could relate to her emotions, they were so well described. I could relate to her fear, yet at the same time, relate to her newfound strength of being able to control situations.

The main character, Emily, had previously been kidnapped by “The Baby Doll Serial Killer” when she was a young child. She was saved by a friend who happened to be in the area of where she was trying to escape from. She had always felt a deep felt gratitude towards him for helping to save her life.

About fifteen years later, she is called back home because her father is hospitalized and she needs to take care of her sister who lives with her father. Reluctantly, she returns home. She was never at ease. While back at home, “The Baby Doll Serial Killer”, or so the police think, has struck again. He is back and doing what he did to her. Is this a coincidence? She is terrified because whoever this is must know her. Why else would he have killed and left behind the body of her sister’s friend in front of her father’s house. This can’t be a coincidence. Not only is ‘she’ in danger, but her little sister is in danger as well. What did she do by coming home? What did she cause? Is this her fault?

This book was a page turner for me. I was so involved in this story, I never expected things to turn out the way they did.

The author did an excellent job developing the characters, making them believable, and the storyline was easy to follow great twists and turns.

This was a very intriguing book to read, fast paced, did not want to put down, hard to solve, suspenseful mystery. Just when you thought you might have an idea as to who this killer might be you are wrong. As I said in the beginning of this review, I think this book would be a great ‘on the edge of your seat’ movie thriller.

I received this book for “FREE” from Carina Press through NetGalley, through their Book Reviewer’s Program in exchange to read and write a review about this book. It is NOT required for my review I write to be either positive or negative, but, “of my own opinion.” I was NOT provided with “ANY” monies to accept this book, “NOR” to read it, NOR were “ANY” monies given to me to write the review for this book. All that was ‘expected’ of me was to enjoy the pure pleasure of reading it. Again, the opinions expressed for and about this book are ‘of my own opinion’. I am disclosing this information in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255, <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/wa...> Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.

Laurie

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