



## **Taking on Water**

*David Rawding*

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When James Morrow, a social worker, first meets Kevin Flynn, he suspects the teen is being abused. To learn more about Kevin's home life, he gets to know the boy's father, Tucker, who's a lobsterman. James is able to put his suspicions to rest, and the two families begin to form a friendship.

When a kid at the local recreation center dies of an overdose, Detective Maya Morrow adds the case to the long list related to the drug problem plaguing the small New Hampshire coastal town of Newborough. But her investigation gets her much too close to the dangerous players.

Both the Morrows and the Flynnns are holding dark secrets, and when their lives collide, tragedy is inevitable.

## **Taking on Water Details**

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Author : David Rawding

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# From Reader Review Taking on Water for online ebook

## Jeff says

I thought this story was engaging and suspenseful, but too predictable and parts were totally unrealistic. Although the author developed these characters fairly well, I couldn't really relate to any of them.

Curt Simmons gave a satisfactory performance. He made some distinction between characters and his delivery was well paced. Some readers might enjoy this story, but unfortunately, it didn't really do it for me.

NOTE: I received a free copy of this audiobook in exchange for this unbiased review.

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## Michelle (Michelle's Book Ends) Shealy says

"She suspected that the drugs had gone underground in response to recent media attention. Her mind turned to the boy who had helped Derek Fanning overdose at the rec center. The red headed juvenile had turned out to be the only son of a wealthy local businessmen: Fred Hanson, the type of man who rubbed elbows with the town councilmen. Hanson had delivered his son to the station to turn himself in but not without a lawyer strapped to his side. ".....

Tucker Flynn is a lobster-man, trying to make a living up against men who don't play fair. Life is a little rough for the Flynn family, wife Melanie and son Kevin.

James Morrow is a local social worker. He suspects Tucker's son Kevin is being abused. Starting up a friendship with Tucker, trying to get some insight into why he saw Kevin with so many bruises.

Taking place in a small town on the coast of New Hampshire, fishing isn't the only business going on. There are drugs running rampant as well. James is seeing more than his fair share of the dark side of people.

James wife, Maya, is a cop. Maya is also has a front seat to the drugs and the wake of their destruction in her daily life. Together though, James and Maya are a great couple. There is a lot of emotion, love, friendship, and a genuine want to help others weaved throughout this book. Their relationship is what made me really love this part of the story.

From the very beginning the story line was engaging. Immediately drew me in. Characters were well written. Is Kevin being abused or is there more going on then first meets the eye? After the two couples become friendly though thoughts of abuse are deflected. Maya wonders what if the drugs are coming by water into town? Perhaps Tucker and his family are in danger.

Sad moments of drugs, death and abuse. Realistically told. This town has underlying secrets that can't be kept in the dark forever. Together maybe these people can make a change in a positive direction. Some shocking twists and dark turns. You won't be able to put it down. What would you do for money?

Thank you David Rawding.

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## Aditi says

*“Some of your childhood traumas may be remembered with incredible clarity, while others are so frightening or incomprehensible that your conscious mind buries the memory in your unconscious.”*

----Renee Fredrickson

David Rawding, an American author, pens his new psychological thriller called *Taking on Water* that portrays the story of a happily married couple- a social worker and a local cop, set in a small American fishing town, who tries hard to protect the young teens from abuse and drug addiction and use, all the while trying hard to fight with their own past issues as well as present. In the process, they get to meet a lobsterman and his wife and teenage son, who then become very close friends. This is a story about friendship, betrayal, drug trafficking and child abuse.

### Synopsis:

*When James Morrow, a social worker, first meets Kevin Flynn, he suspects the teen is being abused. To learn more about Kevin's home life, he gets to know the boy's father, Tucker, who's a lobsterman. James is able to put his suspicions to rest, and the two families begin to form a friendship.*

*When a kid at the local recreation center dies of an overdose, Detective Maya Morrow adds the case to the long list related to the drug problem plaguing the small New Hampshire coastal town of Newborough. But her investigation gets her much too close to the dangerous players.*

*Both the Morrrows and the Flynnns are holding dark secrets, and when their lives collide, tragedy is inevitable.*

James is a social worker who helps children from abuse in the town of Newborough. His wife, Maya, is a local cop, who is fighting hard everyday to protect young teenagers from drug abuse as well as trying hard to crack the drug trafficking ring. James meet Tucker, a lobsterman, through Tucker's young teenage son, Kevin. Soon these two families develop a strong bond of friendship over fishing trips and family dinners. But when a healthy fisherman kills himself in front of James and a young teenager from James social circle dies due to drug overdose, things get ugly in this small coastal town. Maya, on the other hand, with the help of her colleagues, is trying to find how the drug is getting in to the city and who are involved behind the trafficking. Little did she knew that she was putting her foot into a dangerous territory where friends can turn their back at any time to protect their own family. Whereas each incident is shaking up James from the very core of his heart and he is fighting hard with his own trauma from childhood. Will it be the end of James and Maya? What role does Tucker and his family plays in this whole scenario?

The writing is fresh and articulate with suspense brimming from each and every page. The narrative is extremely free-flowing and engaging enough to keep the readers on their edges. The pacing of book changes from being very slow to so fast that it keeps the readers hooked on to it till the very end. There are lots of shocking and unpredictable twists and turns in the story, thus making it one hell of a thrilling roller-coaster

ride filled with action, pain and lots of hallucinations.

The characters are drawn with enough realism and are very well developed, especially the character of James, who is very normal from the outside but equally disturbed from the inside because of his broken childhood and abuse. James tries hard to be a doting husband to Maya, even he is successful in it, but fights everyday with his hallucinations about his father, mother and other people who matter to him the most. Even the evil within him is portrayed with lots of pain and innocence. Maya on the other hand, is a strong character who won't stop at anything to get to the bottom of anything. Tucker, is someone, who is a loser, doesn't show much care on the outside, yet would do anything to protect his own family. Even the rest of the characters are so powerful, that some of them are bound to leave a lasting impression in the minds of the readers.

The story has so many elements- mystery, abuse, drugs and love. The love between James and Maya is depicted with so much compassion and deep emotions, more like they set an example of perfectly balanced married life, despite of their hectic job schedules. The mystery is projected with many twists and turns that makes the readers keep on anticipating and guessing until it's disclosure. The climax is drawn perfectly well and is completely justifiable with the story. The author tries to teach his readers a lesson about the effects of child abuse and drug abuse through this story with a loud and clear message.

In a nutshell, this story is quite mind-blowing, poignant, painful and even thought-provoking.

**Verdict:** *This is one of the quite promising psychological thrillers in the world of fiction.*

**Courtesy:** *Thanks to the author, David Rawding, for providing me with a copy of his book, in return for an honest review.*

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## **Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says**

James Morrow is a social worker who was abused as a child. He tries to avoid becoming like his dad by fighting the inner demons of his temper. He meets a young boy at the rec center and thinks the boy is being abused at home because he has some bruising that he says is from a bully.

He meets the boys father (Tucker) and gets invited to go out on his lobster boat, then they become friends. James's wife Maya is a local police detective who has been investigating heroin shipments in the coastal town that they live in.

I'm trying to figure out a way to tell just the basics of this book and it's escaping me. This book is a hot mess.

The writing is very choppy and incidents happen that really don't fit in with the story line.

The fact that James and Maya have an interracial marriage just seems to be harped on because it's the politically correct thing to do. I felt no connection to these characters.

Between James weird rages in his head and Maya doing the whole "baby talk" thing with him I was completely frazzled.

James seems to have every freaking accident or be in every wrong place at the right time known to man.

It wore on my damn nerves. I'm being generous with my 2 star rating. I was not a fan.

*Booksource: Netgalley in exchange for review.*

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## **Denise MacDonald says**

**This book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.**

I enjoyed this book. The author's words paint a beautiful picture of the town, the ocean and the setting in general. He also captures the essence of small town living and the desperation felt by families living on the edge of poverty.

It took awhile for me to get into the book. The beginning was kind of slow. It had a lot of seemingly unrelated scenes that made it a bit difficult to follow as the flow was choppy. However, everything came together nicely in the second half of the book. Once the action started it moved quickly and had quite a few surprising twists and turns. I don't want to say much about it because it would ruin the book for other readers. I did however especially like the ending.

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## **Petra says**

Taking on Water totally took me by surprise! Set in a New Hampshire fishing town, David Rawding draws a deeply atmospheric picture of the connection between, and the devastating consequences of, poverty, drugs, crime, mental health and abuse.

The story follows James, a social worker, who befriends Tucker, a lobsterman.

Both men have personal demons they are struggling with. James is married to Maya who is a local police detective investigating drug trafficking. The lives of the two families become entangled resulting in tragic outcomes.

There is a slow build-up of tension and mystery as the author introduces the background and all the characters involved. The coastal setting with the fishing industry focus was really interesting and something quite different. I was impressed by how authentic the characters felt. I loved the relationship between James and Maya. I don't want to give the plot away, but there was an instance in the book where I actually shouted out loud OH NO!!! So yeah, I definitely felt connected to the characters. I read the last third of the book in one go. The action really picked up and it turned into an edge-of-your-seat page turner. The ending was absolutely brilliant and a thought provoking final twist.

Thank you to the author and the publisher for providing me with a complimentary copy via NetGalley in exchange for an unbiased review.

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## **JoJo says**

"...we are the products of our memories, for better or worse. They make us into the people we are. Owning and understanding the traumatic times in our lives is very important".

Memories can haunt a person. Memories can make or break a person. How one chooses to handle one's memory is how one chooses one's own path. However, no one ever talks about how it is a constant struggle to deal with memories, especially when they are traumatic. This story portrays (perfectly, if I may be so bold to say) how simple it is to give up the fight and switch paths,. A story that takes you on a harrowing spiral downward as everything that was perfect crashes, and almost burns (I would explain why the story almost burns, but that would give away a spoiler). This concept is portrayed in two very different characters (James and Tucker) that come together through a rather unlikely friendship. As this friendship develops, tough situations start to fray it. These tough situation reveal a mutual struggle in both James' and Tucker's childhood that threatens to overcome each of them throughout the plot.

I found the characters to be beautifully complex, fully developed, and incredibly captivating. I laughed, I gasped, I cried. The bittersweet ending was a wonderful way to close this emotional journey. Therefore, 5/5 stars, very well done!

Please note: a copy of this book was generously provided by the publisher via NetGalley.

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### **Philomena Callan Cheekypee says**

I found this to be a very good mystery thriller from a new author to me.

It's hard to say much about the storyline without spoilers.

James Morrow is a social worker in a small fishing town. An unlikely friendship starts with James and a local fisherman called Tucker. Both have a troubled past that we find out about through the story.

James wife, Maya, is a police detective trying to investigate drug trafficking in the town.

I found this book to be slow to start off with and then all of a sudden it changes direction and the pace quickens.

Although parts of this story just didn't click for me I found it to be an interesting read and give it four stars.

Looking forward to reading more from this author.

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### **Stacey Wright Aumock says**

I just finished this book and all I can think is, "WTF?" I'm seriously angered about the mental illness angle. You don't typically just develop paranoid schizophrenia. A psychotic break would've been a bit more believable.

And the writing was disjointed and choppy. I almost stopped reading several times. There was also no character development.

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## **Kathi Defranc says**

Excellent story! This is a psychological thriller about a small fishing town, the hidden issues in the backgrounds of many people living there and the 'new' job on the water- carrying heroin to their town and many beyond it. We have a social worker, James, who was beaten and abused by his father, his wife Maya, a black woman police officer in a sea of white men, and several lobster men, Tucker, also abused by his Dad, and several who take a large part in the heroin trafficking. The mind games all characters go through show just how much what happens during your formative years carries through in your own mind, coloring all you see, do and feel.

The ride along with these people sees all of our emotions, as we laugh, cry and jump from pain. The story rumbles along, showing that the deep memories of our early lives color everything we do later on. The intense pain felt while struggling with Maya, as a 'friend' hits her, the struggle in Tucker's mind when all seems lost...

Take a deep breath before you open this book, settle yourself where you feel safe, then start turning the pages into a different style of life, with past abuse part of everything you do..

I received a copy of this story from Hidden Gems, who I thank for this engaging read and my ability to write my thoughts to you.

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## **Jen La Duca says**

In *Taking on Water* we follow the story of James Morrow, a social worker with an abused past, and his wife Maya, a detective with the local police department who's investigating the sudden increase of narcotics in their small New Hampshire town. When James meets a local teen named Kevin Flynn, he initially becomes concerned that the teen is being abused at home. He decides to meet and befriend the boy's father, a lobsterman named Tucker, but after spending some time with him James feels like he was at first mistaken and so the Morrow's and the Flynn's become close family friends. That is until tragedy descends upon one of the families and unfortunately that's all I can say about the plot without giving too much away ;)

I'm always a little hesitant to start a book that surrounds a character who's a social worker, a foster child, or a foster parent. This comes from reading far too many books where social work and foster care is portrayed not only incorrectly but also in a very negative light. I've worked in Social Services for over 7 years and can be extremely sensitive of this topic, and its portrayal, in both fiction and cinema. I'm so glad I put these initial feelings aside though and decided to read this book because Rawding writes with a remarkable understanding towards the issues of abuse and social work. It was at times touching and almost too hard to read because of how realistic it was portrayed, so for that alone I say bravo to Rawding! Just be warned that this subject matter could be a trigger for some.

As for the rest of the story? Wow, this was such a thrilling page turner! The story did start out a tad slow but it was also clear to me that Rawding was setting up his story so therefore a little patience was needed. This totally paid off because soon I was sucked into the story and I found it extremely hard to put down after that. The New Hampshire coastal town setting and the portrayal of the fishing industry was brilliant and fascinating. All of the characters in this story were so real and complex; especially James and Maya who were so relatable, I adored them!

As the story progresses it becomes frighteningly clear that the lives of the Morrow's and Flynn's are becoming far too entangled which could potentially lead to a devastating outcome. I had a few thoughts and



ideas on where I thought the story could be headed but I then dismissed those ideas thinking for sure the author would in no way go there. Boy was I wrong because he absolutely did! This is not a HEA story so if that's what you're looking for then you better move along because you won't find that here. What this story is though is real, honest and so devastating and thought provoking. This is one I'll be thinking about for quite some time!

Many thanks to the publishers, Red Adapt Publishing and to NetGalley for providing me a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review! And a huge thank you to Sage's Blog Tours for inviting me to participate in the tour for this amazing book!

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## **Jan says**

I have to say, this book really took me by surprise....

Set in a small fishing town in northern New Hampshire, Maya Morrow is a detective trying to find who is responsible for the drugs being transported through her town. Her husband Jack is a social worker who struggles with demons from his past. When looking into the possibility of a child abuse situation, Jack befriends Tucker, a down on his luck lobsterman who has his own dark secrets that he struggles to keep buried. The two families bond and form a quick friendship that sets the stage for how the rest of the story unfolds. The build up is slow and steady for the first half of the book, then BAM! You are thrown onto a speeding train with no breaks for the second half... Intense!!

I found myself a bit sad at the end as I was hoping for a better outcome for some of the characters...but I suppose once you cross over to the dark side there is no going back.

An easy 4 stars from me and a new author to keep my eyes on!

My thanks to NetGalley for the ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Linda Strong says**

Dark secrets and many lies abound in a small coastal town.

James Morrow is a social worker, married to Maya, a detective with the local police. When James first meets Kevin Flynn, he's highly suspicious that the teen is being abused. Meeting and socializing with Kevin's father, James feels that he was mistaken and the families begin to form a friendship.

Detective Maya Morrow is investigating drug-related deaths among the young teens and when she gets too close to the truth, there are devastating consequences.

I think the author did a bang-up job of placing her very believable characters in the fishing industry. The tension starts building shortly after the families meet and the more they become involved in each others lives, the stronger the emotions grow stronger. I found the book hard to put down.

Secrets have a way of coming to light ..... and although they say the truth will set you free ...sometimes it might have been better to hold your tongue.

Many thanks to NetGalley / Red Adept Publishing, LLC for furnishing a digital copy in exchange for an honest review.

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## **sue says**

I hadn't heard anything about this book or author until I agreed to read it for Red Adept Publishing, and agreed to be on the tour.

Having read what the book was about it seemed I had a good chance of settling down and enjoying it.

I need to say though, its on a slow burner for me at the start and didn't start picking up and get my full attention until half way into the book.

I am not much into boats, fishermen and lobster catching, but I have to say, I did learn a lot along the way, so I guess that was a bonus.

When this book **took off for me** I really threw through the pages as it was then starting to get very very interesting.

James is married to Maya. James is a Social worker who used to be 'hands on' working for the abuse children protection side of things, now he is on the telephones and works mostly in the office. We learn about James past as we read along which was surprisingly heart rending due to him going back in his mind and we see how the author actually showed us readers the experience he had when young.

I really felt for James.

Maya works as a Detective for the Police force. She is strong, hard and needs to be all what she needs to be when working among her peers. Only James gets to see her "soft" side.

James gets to meet a lad named Kevin. He notices he has bruises in places and is concerned about him. But when he gets to meet Kevin's father and mother, his suspicions change as they seem a lovely couple so James relaxes. As time goes on the two couples bond and spend time together.

Maya has a big job going down, she is on the case of a drug related crime.

This story goes to an unexpected turn of events that really enthrall you. You then get to grasp all the characters involved.

The author David Rawding has really pulled some great characters out of the bag, so believable and as for the fishing? Well, let me say that I even got used to that and the lobster catching. Learnt a lot about the sea Police and the nets.

Secrets. Secrets and lies. Doe they really stayed buried? And if they did, should they? And if they didn't, do you wish they had!

I loved reading this despite the slow start and take off for me.

So my thanks to the author and Red Adept Publishing, LLC plus Net Galley for my copy.

Facebook author page: <https://www.facebook.com/davidrawding...>

Goodreads: <http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/...>

Website: [www.davidrawding.com](http://www.davidrawding.com)

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## Fictionophile says

I chose to read this novel because one of the protagonists is a lobsterman. Since I live in Nova Scotia, where lobster fishing is a huge industry, I thought it would be fun to read a mystery centered around this physically demanding, arduous way of making a living.

Let me introduce you to the two male protagonists in "Taking on water".

The main protagonist is **James Morrow**. A social worker, James works for New Hampshire Child Protective Services. He is married to Maya, one of the town's only black female police detectives. Crazy about each other, they are trying to have a baby. In his free time James volunteers at a Youth Recreation center. James comes from a dysfunctional family where his father was an abusive alcoholic. Like his father before him, James has anger management issues which he struggles daily to keep under control.

*"We are the products of our memories, for better or worse. They make us into the people we are."*

When James meets Kevin, a young boy with bruises at the rec center, he fears the boy may be abused, so he contrives to meet Kevin's parents. He learns that he is mistaken about the abuse, but finds a new friend in lobsterman Tucker Flynn. Tucker takes James out on his boat, and the two couples socialize.

**Tucker Flynn**, is a lifelong fisherman, married with a young son. (He had two sons, but the eldest one died). He inherited his lobster license and boat 'Periwinkle' from his father. Along with these, he inherited loads of debt and is in danger of losing his house. A volatile man, he is now being threatened by a fellow fisherman, his lines are being cut, and his livelihood sabotaged. When a devastating storm hits, Tucker loses thousands of dollars worth of fishing gear. He is now a desperate man.

*"Lady Justice seemed to lift up her blindfold and wink at the privileged."*

The novel is set in the small New Hampshire coastal town of Newborough. Heroin is taking its toll on the small community. Maya has been involved in the arrest of one of the supposed dealers, but fears that this is just the tip of the iceberg. A man jumps to his death from the town's bridge. A teenager overdoses at the youth recreation center where James volunteers. Maya has a theory as to how the heroin is entering the town. Proving her theory may endanger everything she holds dear...

David Rawding's writing has a wonderful flow. Nothing stilted or contrived - with equal skill at dialogue and

narrative. The characters were fully rendered with a mixture of attitudes, thoughts, and past memories making them very 'real' for the reader. The plot itself had a realistic feel that I appreciated and I am very anxious to read more work by this author. This is a novel about the lengths desperate men will go to when they feel they have nothing left to lose. About how avarice breeds corruption, and how corruption can undermine even the most altruistic.

For me, the ending let the novel down in one respect. Since I never include 'spoilers' in my reviews, I can say only that the personality and moral fiber of one of the main characters changed drastically from what it was throughout the rest of the novel. This change seemed hard for me to come to grips with. Also, I must warn you that if you like books where 'they all lived happily ever after', then this book is NOT for you.

You WILL enjoy it if you like crime thrillers that are well-written and have complex characters. Recommended!

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