



First to Find

Morgan C. Talbot

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Death is the hardest puzzle to solve.

Margarita Williams escaped death at a young age, but its shadow has followed her all her life. Now, amidst the chaos of a new Australian roommate and mysterious, menacing neighbors, Death has set the puzzlemaker a puzzle of her own. Someone is killing her fellow geocachers, one by one.

Supersmeller Bindi Ryan left Australia to marry a man who abandoned her the minute her plane landed in Oregon. When thieves steal a local sculpture and a teenage friend is blamed, Bindi and her nose must prove him innocent and find the real culprits. But are she and Margarita working on two mysteries, or one?

If they can't solve the final puzzle, the killer will strike one final, deadly blow.

First to Find Details

Date : Published October 22nd 2012 by Amazon Digital Services

ISBN :

Author : Morgan C. Talbot

Format : Kindle Edition 216 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review First to Find for online ebook

Cresta McGowan says

The Plot:

First to Find by Morgan C. Talbot traces the journey of Margarita Williams, a girl who escaped death at a young age. But, it seems death is not so easily thwarted as it keeps cropping up in Margarita's life through the people she loves. The latest victim is Graham, a fellow geocacher. What at first appears to be an accident of the trade (more on this later), Margarita soon discovers that Graham was murdered. Death, once again, takes a heavy toll on her life.

Using her "mad skills" as a geocacher, Margarita makes it her quest to find Graham's killer. However, death has other plans for Margarita and her GPS wielding group; it sneaks in to steal their breath one caching adventure at a time.

The best plot twist is the involvement of Bindi, her quirky Australian roommate with a keen sense of smell. Consumed by her own turmoil and adventure, the two girls find themselves intertwined in key moments and the question is posed - are there two mysteries to solve, or a deftly woven plot for the ladies?

As Margarita works to solve the puzzle of death, she finds he is far too close to her life; almost as close as he was many years ago.

The Review:

First to Find was an interesting read for me. I had no idea what geocaching was until I did some research on this outdoorsy event. Geocaching is hunting down hidden objects via clues and GPS. Most participants have both a real name and a "handle" they use online. The title of the novel comes from the idea of the "first person to find" the hidden treasure. At the time of finding, the geocacher unveils the item and signs their name into the log book as the "first to find." I think the title is a solid play on words for finding a hidden item, and finding a dead body. The only catch is, you don't want to be the first one on a murder scene.

Geocaching skills provide the backdrop for the lay detective skills of the protagonist, Margarita Williams. She is accustomed to utilizing keen puzzle solving skills to find the geocaches and puts these to good use in searching for her friend's killer.

The plot is solid with enough suspense to keep forward momentum, but not enough to keep a reader at a run. It is more like a light jog. Unfortunately, I never felt truly connected to the story or the characters. I thought that the first death was too quick and I didn't know enough about the dead body to truly be involved in solving his mysterious departure from the living world.

The protagonist felt a bit flat to me, but I found the details of her sidekick character Bindi much more well-drawn and lifelike. I wanted to like Margarita, but I found myself annoyed with her from time to time.

Overall, I'd give this read 3 out of 5 stars. While a person unfamiliar with geocaching can still easily follow the plot, I find using such a particular "sport" limits the audience. Without knowledge of the skills required to participate in such an adventure, the reader is sometimes at a loss for just how Margarita was able to "figure that out."

The book is complete at 216 pages and published by Red Adept Publishing. An advanced copy was provided to me in exchange for an honest and professional review.

The Author:

Morgan C. Talbot is an outdoorsy kind of gal. She has a dual degree in both English and Jujitsu. She enjoys hiking and camping, as well as, writing and geocaching. She reads to her children and enjoys nature photography. She resides in Eastern Washington with her family.

First to Find is book one in the Caching Out series. If you enjoy an outdoorsy adventure, be on the look out for book two.

Lisen Minetti says

The story opens in the wee hours of the morning with Margarita, a woman in her 30s with a passion for geocaching. She has been receiving mysterious emails leading her to believe that someone has hidden a special cache in her honor - and she is determined to be the first one to claim it. However she gets more than she bargained for when she arrives at the cache and finds a dead body.

Unfortunately, for me, the story went downhill from there. As I read through the first chapters I realized that I had been assuming the dead body was a victim of foul play, however the characters didn't discover thus until nearly a quarter of the way through the book.

I found that the characters in general were very confusing and aside from the main character and her roommate, I had a very difficult time telling the rest of them apart. This was partly because the author switched between using their real names and their geocaching handles, and partly because I didn't really feel like any of the characters had anything that set them apart from the others. In fact when people kept dying, I had a very hard time remembering what role the victims played earlier in the story and when the killer is finally revealed, I had no real idea of who he was in relation to the rest of the story.

Further, the author introduces various smaller subplots and intricacies to the book that are left unexplored and unexplained - which I think could have added more intrigue to the book. She introduces mysterious neighbors who are more than they seem, a shifty restaurant owner, a missing love interest, a stolen statue and a smell that can't be placed and then never - in my opinion - satisfies the reader on any of those points. Of course, the missing love interest story happened in the past - but I feel like if you are going to introduce it, it should have some current relevance to current happenings other than the explanation of why you are shy with a man.

The writing (including grammar and spelling) itself was not bad - though I did find myself unfamiliar with a lot of the language that was used throughout which made it slightly hard to follow. However I don't think the writing itself detracted from the story, I just think the story could have been organized better and the writing stronger to make the whole better.

This is book one in a series, but I won't be picking up any other books by this author in the future.

However, I can't say that I regret reading this book. See, I did something I rarely do with books - I read the Author's Note. Generally I skip this part, or any forward or introduction, preferring to just jump into the book. However for whatever reason, this time I didn't. And through the Author's Note I could see how much Ms. Talbot loves what she wrote about - geocaching. Which for those of you who are unaware there is a website where you register (you can download their app for \$9.99) and then you can search for geocaches anywhere in the world by following GPS coordinates. It's a modern day treasure hunt or scavenger hunt.

Anyway, as I said, Ms. Talbot's love for geocaching shone through in the Author's Note - enough to pique my interest and take a look at the geocaching webpage. I liked the idea, especially for an afternoon with my kids. After noticing there were at least ten geocaches within a few miles of our house, I plopped down the \$10 for the app and off we went. The hardest part was coming up with a user name. I was upset that ThoseMeddlingKids was taken.

Even though I didn't care for the book, the hobby Ms. Talbot so loves provided the kids and I an afternoon of fun. Out of the eight geocaches we went looking for, we found five - two we gave up on (my oldest had gone home, and without her we were sunk) and one site was so littered with old alcohol bottles I vetoed it on site.

However we really enjoyed ourselves. It gave us a fun and inexpensive way to spend a blustery October afternoon and today we will actually make an adventure out of it. My twelve year old gets some practice in navigation while I am driving and the kids and I get to discover some neat places we would have never known existed.

And that is priceless.

Mimi says

I have been an avid geocacher for almost 10 years, so this is a review coming from someone who knows...I really enjoyed it and as a Geocacher, I give this a 5-star review!

I won't go into a whole description of Geocaching for Muggles who Read ;) - if you want to learn more about it, visit www.geocaching.com. ...but I thought it was really cool how the author combined her own passion for Geocaching into a well-written geo-sleuthing tale. This is definitely an engrossing read, with two very colorful main characters, Margarita and Bindi, that incorporates and gives a suspenseful twist to FTFs, puzzle caches, travel bugs, and Geocaching events and geo-camaraderie!

Just to show the authenticity of the Geocaching aspect of this story, I was talking to my husband (who is the other half of my caching team, M&M Melted) about fictional Geocachers, caches & geo-events, assuming he knew I was talking about this piece of fiction. Well, I guess I should have clarified that since, apparently, he cannot read my mind :D , because he was really getting confused, trying to figure out who and what I was talking about. I guess it just sounded like any normal geocachey conversation that we so often have, with all its fun and drama! Ha ha!

Diana (Offbeat Vagabond) says

Original post here: <http://offbeatvagabond.blogspot.com/2012/11/first-to-find-blog-tour-indie-book.html>

Geocaching? What the hell is geocaching? That was the first question that popped in my head when I started this. But man, I am glad I found out about it. It is such an interesting hobby. It is actually a treasure hunt. People use cell phones/GPS to locate hidden containers that are called geocaches. First To Find (aka FTF-a term of when you are the first to find a cache) is about a woman named Margarita who is a geocacher (is that what they are called, I have no idea). One night she gets the coordinates to a cache from an anonymous member and stumbles on the body of a fellow friend. Margarita and others don't believe it is the accident some claim it to be. So it is up to Margarita and her best friend to find out who and what killed their friend.

I had a blast with this book. It was such a fun read. This is a murder mystery I know I will be reading again. Margarita was a great lead character. She was a very clever woman. She knows how to create puzzles for the caches and she reads in between the lines. My favorite character though was Bindi. Bindi is Margarita's close friend and roommate. She has a condition (I say superpower). Her nose is extremely sensitive to smells, she can only handle so much and she knows people by their scents. But Bindi's sense of humor nearly killed me in this book. You never know what she will say next. If she were real, I would instantly become friends with her. Her and Margarita were quite the duo in this book. Very memorable characters.

The story was a lot of fun to read. I was invested very quickly. By the end of the first chapter, I was at the edge of my seat. Graham's murder reveals so much about those around town. Everyone and no one had a reason to kill a sweet and nerdy 60-something year old man. I love that we also have a mystery about the missing statue. I love how Talbot adds in that plotline to the murder. I am so good at pinpointing who the bad guy is way before they are revealed. This book had me stumped.

This book is just full of memorable characters and memorable scenes. First To Find is not your typical mystery read which made me love it more. Even if geocaching is brand new to you (like it is to me), you will love this story. And anyone who is a Doctor Who fan definitely deserves my stamp of approval (loved the jagrafess bit). This book just had all the right elements for me. It was exciting, suspenseful and funny. I can't wait for more. Highly recommended.

Joan says

I wanted to love this book, but unfortunately I can't say I did. Geocaching seems like a perfect setting for a murder mystery - you have puzzles, remote locations, hidden treasures in the woods, and characters who may be a little out of the ordinary. This book had all of those in plenty. I did enjoy the story and most of the characters, at least enough to check into future books in this series. There were a few things that annoyed me though. People were briefly introduced and seemed to be only minor characters in the story, but then appeared later as major characters, and it was hard to remember who they were or what was significant about them or how they connected with the rest of the story. Also there were constant references to events in the main characters' past, but without much clarity about what those events were or why they were still having such a powerful effect in their lives. And the whole thing with Death (with a capital "D") personified as some sort of personal nemesis became old very quickly. Also I felt that the whole situation with the sculpture and with the mysterious neighbors was never made really clear. In spite of those issues, I did enjoy the story and the main characters, and would read another book by this author. Perhaps these issues that bothered me will

be made clearer in future books and were left unresolved in order to keep that door open.

Pereza says

First we meet Margarita. She is a veteran geocacher. Her roommate, Bindi, is from Australia, recently dumped by her fiancé. Life seems to be going fine until murders and a theft occur. Margarita becomes entwined into investigations of fellow geocachers that end up dead. She is determined to find out the mystery behind why these are occurring.

Bindi has a mystery of her own when a local statue is stolen from a public park and she sets out to figure out who took it. Both cases come together when Margarita finally figures out who the geocacher murderer is and the suspect, corners Bindi inside their home looking for a TB, or Travel Bug.

I loved the characters throughout this book. Each person had a unique role and a few led you to believe that he/she could be the suspect. The plot was well planned out and flowed beautifully from start to finish.

Al says

For those not familiar with the term, geocaching is a kind of treasure hunt where participants start with clues, which are used to get the longitude and latitude of the location of a “cache.” The geocacher then finds the physical cache using these coordinates and a portable GPS. It is kind of like a treasure hunt and appeals to those who like puzzles as well as outdoor activities.

First to Find (a term for the first person to find a new cache) is a murder mystery that revolves around a group of geocachers. When one of them is killed under mysterious circumstances the protagonist, Margarita, starts gathering and putting together clues (not unlike her approach to creating and solving geocache puzzles) in an attempt to discover who is behind the killing. It’s a story sure to appeal to geocachers, but for anyone not familiar with this activity, it’s still a fun book. I’ve never geocached, although I was vaguely aware of what it was and how it worked, and found that aspect of it interesting. This also took the story outside of a typical mystery for me, making it less predictable. Even if you’ve never heard of geocaching before, if you’re into solving puzzles (which is almost surely the case for any mystery lover), then First to Find won’t disappoint.

**Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog. May have received a free review copy. **

Barb says

I received this book as part of the early reviewers program. It was an enjoyable read. The story and characters were interesting and so was the geocaching theme. I am looking forward to more books in this series.

A Voracious Reader (a.k.a. Carol) says

*Book source ~ Many thanks to Red Adept for providing a review copy in exchange for an honest review.

Margarita Williams lives in Silver Creek, Oregon, works at the local hospital, is an avid geocacher and puzzle enthusiast. She's just picked up a new Aussie roommate who was dumped by her fiancé upon landing in America and she has rented the other half of her duplex to some weird, but quiet neighbors. Life is fairly normal until one early morning when she runs out to find a new cache and while she does find it, she also finds a fellow cacher on the ground with a head wound. When he dies at the hospital later and sets off a string of weird events and cacher deaths, Margarita can't help her curiosity and pits her sleuthing skills against the, to her mind, incompetent Acting Chief of Police in the hopes of nabbing the killer before more of her friends cache, er, cash it in at his hands.

My first experience with Morgan C. Talbot's writing and I'm off and running at the first page. The story flows by so quickly that before I knew it I was done and clamoring for more. While I had a basic understanding of geocaching before reading this book, the details provided in this twisty mystery are fascinating especially since they are provided via wonderful writing. The characters are detailed, fully dimensional and so interesting that they feel as if I can call them up and see if they're up for some cache hunting. Until I remember they aren't real. Kinda depressing, really. All of the twists and turns and the plethora of suspects kept me guessing until the end where Margarita and Bindi, the Super Sleuthing Duo, brought it all together. With humor, great characters, a twisty mystery, secrets and a hint of romance in the air there's much to love in this beginning of a very promising series. All-in-all an excellent humorous mystery suitable for whiling away the hours.

John Sexton says

Not a bad murder mystery based around geocaching.

Kelly Jahn says

I love geocaching. That's why I picked this book up in the first place. But it turned out to be the geocaching aspects of the book that I disliked the most. It is written in a style that doesn't seem to adequately explain what geocaching is or what the terms mean. Some of the terminology and habits that come as part of the geocaching "lifestyle" aren't familiar to those who don't participate in the game.

The level of suspense and the plot were interesting, which was why I read through to the end. However, I won't be picking up another book in this series. Sorry folks!

Julie G says

While vaguely familiar with geocaching, I've never actually participated. The idea of using GPS to track down a 'hidden treasure' or cache, sounds like a tremendous amount of fun. And wrapping an entire novel

around it was enough to have me jumping at the chance to read it.

Before going any further, I should mention that the book takes its title from the top line of each cache logbook: FTF, First to Find. It's the honor bestowed upon the (obviously) first person to find a newly released cache. Many cachers are rabid to sign that first line.

Now, where was I? Oh, yes. I definitely got my fill; not of geocaching, per se. There is just enough to keep the story interesting and educate this reader. It was more the repetitive use of the phrase that got to me. By the third chapter, or so, I'd reached saturation level.

Eventually, the repetition tapered off and I could focus on everything - and everyone - else.

Which leads me to one of the best things about F1rst to Find - the characters. Each person has a unique 'voice', little behaviors or personal quirks, that quickly set them apart. They don't all sound the same and not everyone is what they seem.

Although Margarita is the main protagonist, Bindi quickly became a favorite. Her Aussie sensibilities and bizarre olfactory issues make her a stand-out character - in every sense of the word. The scene at the Silver Stein with Alec was absolutely hysterical, if a tad disgusting.

I do have to mention: I found it a bit implausible that, even in a small town, the authorities would allow Margarita to play detective. Then again, she does know all the players and the acting-chief isn't acting very ... chiefly.

Despite a (for me) bumpy start, F1rst to Find was a truly fun read. And while I usually figure out whodunit, Ms. Talbot kept me guessing until the very end. An ending that was, by the way, just perfect.

I'm definitely looking forward to Death Will Attend, the next book in the series.

~*~*~

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a complimentary electronic copy of this book from the publisher [...]. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own.

Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says

Where to start with this review..... Well most of you who know me know I love to read and I don't stick to one genre. I love to skip around and when I had the opportunity to read this book I was excited! As I started reading the book I realized that I had no clue what the heck was going on and I had no clue what a geocacher is so I decided I had to look it up. I did and what I found is a geocacher is someone who hunts down hidden objects. It is a game and you log on with the username you chose and then you get clues as to where to find the things and once you find them you come back and document that you found it.

Okay so that part covered check but there was so much I did not understand and I could not follow it. I read it all to the end though because there was a murder mystery in it and I needed to know who did it and why. But for the life of me I just could not get into this book. With that being said is the book bad HELL NO it is a

boook that is just not for me. I read it and enjoyed some of it but for the most part I was lost because I was out of my reading element.

This book is for people who love things like geocaching and video games. You can really get into hunting down what you need. So I am not rating this book because to me it would not be fair to the author. She did an excellent job writing the book and hooking people in. Like I said this book is for those who love this stuff and know about it and can appreciate the story line.

Happy Reading!

Laura Phillips says

My rating is actually an 4-1/2 stars, but I like to think positive and so it gets a 5 star rating for me.

Being a somewhat geocacher for almost 5 years I enjoyed reading this book and am looking forward to more books in this series.

Jeanie says

Well-researched cozy mystery that introduces you to a band of geocaching mystery buffs who have their own mystery to solve. This is a fun read, with a flair of the eccentric, the baffling, and the tangents. Bindi & Margarita wade their way through fun, danger and bepuzzlement to a solution to several things at the end of this book.
