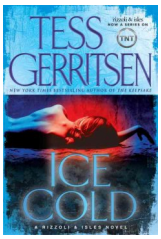
Ice Cold



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Cops and forensic specialists are different from you and me, they've seen too many corpses and have had to reconstruct too many grisly last moments. In this fast paced thriller, Boston detective Jane Rizzolli works on the case of her friend Maura Isle's disappearance. They've worked together for years. Jane's sleuthing skills and Dr. Isle's medical knowledge have led to many mysteries being solved. Because she believes that she lacks the people skills and compassion needed by a doctor in a practice, Maura prefers working with corpses. If you've seen the TV show, yes, it's that same strong-women team from Boston of detective and coroner.

Ice Cold begins with Maura saying good-bye to her long-term boyfriend, Fr. Daniel Brophy. Because he is a Catholic priest, their affair must remain secret. Maura's on her way to a medical conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. While there, she reconnects with a med school friend who invites her out to dinner. Usually, Maura nixes such invitations but she's annoyed at Daniel and unhappy with the amount of time he allows himself to spend with her.

At dinner, Doug invites Maura to go sight-seeing after the conference ends. His 13-year-old daughter will accompany them as will two old friends of his. That weekend the group sets off for a lodge in the mountains and Doug proceeds to get very lost. Meanwhile a blizzard churns up. The SUV slips off the road thirty miles from the last gas station and many mountain miles from their planned destination.

Compounding their troubles, Doug's friend, Arlo, is run over and suffers a severe leg injury. Maura spots a sign for a private road and they end up tramping a long way and hauling their friend to some cabins in a settlement. None of these cabins have electricity or phones. Plus, they all look strangely empty. Very suddenly abandoned. Food has been left on tables and dead pets lie scattered around. Doug and Maura work on Arlo's leg. It doesn't look salvageable. Doug decides to cross-country ski for help but never comes back. After waiting two days, Laura leaves next. Need I say that she doesn't get too far without being bludgeoned on the head?

When she becomes conscious again, she discovers that she's now a prisoner of a very large feral teen who calls himself Rat. He was part of a cult called, Kingdom Come--the same group that owns the village. Their leader Jeremiah Goode encourages multiple wives and accepts absolutely no talking back from his believers. He also ejects teenage boys from the community so they do not compete with him and other older men for young mates.

Rizzoli's on the case but it becomes emotionally difficult when the Wyoming cops inform her that her best friend, Maura, has been found dead.

There's a lot more twists and turns in this thriller. If you want pure escapism in your fiction, this novel is a good place to start. It's got strong female characters and an interesting setting in small-town Wyoming. If you'd prefer to start with the first in the Rizzoli/Isles series, pick up Gerritsen's Rita Award winner, The Surgeon.

Posted by Dory L. on July 10, 2012

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