



The Hunting Grounds

Katee Robert

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For two FBI agents with a past, love becomes a matter of life and death in the new *Hidden Sins* novel from *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author Katee Robert.

Maggie Gaines used to be an FBI agent—top of her class and one of the bright, up-and-coming stars—until she spectacularly fell apart during her first high-profile case. That was eight years ago. Now she’s a ranger at Glacier National Park, and she’s found some measure of peace. But when the body of a murdered woman is discovered, she must finally put the past behind her and work with the one man she thought she’d never see again.

For months, Vic Sutherland has been hunting a killer who’s been targeting unsuspecting hikers in national parks—and now the predator has come to Glacier. Vic knows the case will bring him face-to-face with his former partner, yet nothing can prepare him for seeing Maggie again after all these years, or for the memories of passion it stirs in both of them.

As the investigation brings them closer together—and closer to the killer—Maggie and Vic fear they have only each other to trust. But even that might not be enough to make it out of Glacier alive.

The Hunting Grounds Details

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Author : Katee Robert

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From Reader Review *The Hunting Grounds* for online ebook

Courtney says

3.5 Stars

I really enjoyed the first book in this series so it was a no brainer to read this one. Both books can be read as standalones as there is very little that interconnects the two.

Let me start off by telling you that if you are hoping for a romantic suspense, don't expect much romance in this book. This is definitely more suspense with a tad of romance added in. Her first book was very much the same way, so I was not shocked to find the same with this one. However, I still enjoyed the overall plot.

As you know for the blurb, Maggie is now a park ranger. Vic is still in the BAU and is currently tracking a murder who's victims are hikers. After a lone hiker is found strung up in Maggie's park, Vic is called in because it fits the description of his killer. Maggie and Vic have a past, but this part of the story, the romance, is definitely a second thought as it is not well plotted out and honestly, I could care less. LOL

We meet a group of young hikers, who you know will be on the radar for the killer. This is where Katee excels in this story. She does a great job of building the suspense and tension; she leaves us little bread crumbs, and has us guessing who the killer could possibly be. I may have figured out who it was, but it was still enticing to read. While I enjoyed how Katee plotted things out, I did wish she delved into more about the killer and the why's behind it.

Overall, it was ok read for me. I felt that the romance portion fell completely flat and this book should just be considered suspense not romantic suspense. There were some things that were left unknown between the secondary characters and they seemed to be an important part of the book, so I expected more there too. As I said, if you are hoping for a romantic suspense, don't expect much romance in this one. There's a ton of suspense with a splash of romance added in. But again, I still enjoyed the plot enough to give the book 3.5 stars.

Christie«SHBBlogger» says

[Yes (hide spoiler)]

Elaine says

Revenge is a dish best served cold . . .

Wow, Katee Roberts has written an unforgettable serial murder mystery, filled with suspense and liberally sprinkled with romance to make this another superb read from this highly talented author. This is definitely one of those select few books where I suggest you forget reading any reviews and go straight to read the book, it is brilliant IMHO!

Maggie Gaines was top of her class whilst training to become an FBI agent but the horrendous first case had her leaving the job. Now she's working as a ranger in the Glacier National Park when the body of a woman is discovered in the Park . . . a woman who has been murdered, then treated like she's just a piece of meat. After this horrific discovery Vic Sutherland is brought in to investigate. It turns out this is the third such killing, each in a different National Park, apparently by the same perpetrator. Maggie was Vic's partner during her time in the FBI and she was very attracted to him, but he was married then. Now he's divorced and the attraction between them is mutual but there's a serial murderer to apprehend before he can find more victims . . . can they survive the deadly archer? With danger in the wilderness, it isn't only the bears they need to avoid!

This is another superb, action packed suspense thriller that has so many twists, it is a real roller coaster ride! I thoroughly enjoyed it from start to finish and have no hesitation in highly recommending it – definitely one of my favourite reads this year and one I hope you don't miss out on reading! If you do read it, hope you enjoy it as much as I did – definitely a 5* read for me!

I requested and was lucky enough to be given a copy of this book via NetGalley and this is my honest opinion after choosing to read it – I just couldn't wait to do so!

Kate's Corner says

4 all about the plot stars.

I enjoyed the first book of the series, they are loosely interconnected with one another therefore the book can be read as standalone.

I'm indifferent about Maggie and Vic, the main characters in the book but as I mentioned I loved the plot. The way the tone for the book is set leaves you on the edge of your seat while reading. I felt as if the book came to life and I was part of the scary arsed plot. It all felt so realistic, the ruggedness of the wild that was created. The fear and the panic of the characters and the frustration of the main characters nearly brushing elbows with the unsub.

The book is brutal and gritty in places which adds more intensity to the book. I'm usually quite good at guessing who the culprit in the book is but here I had no clue which made it all the more better IMO.

What I would have liked to have known is a more in-depth explanation to why the unsub did it. All the couple declared their undying love the ending felt abrupt. With what happened to Madison and Ethan wasn't cleared up either.

Unfortunately, what galled me was Maggie's TSTL moments and the chip on her shoulder.

I look forward to the next in the series.

Cindy ~ SnS Reviews says

Glacier National Park has always had animal predators living in its forest but now it has a human one. A particularly cunning one with a gruesome MO for their kills..

Maggie Gaines is the park ranger called to the scene of a murdered woman strung up in the forest of the park. The gruesomeness of the scene is not something she'd ever thought she'd see as park ranger. Eight years ago she walked away from her job with the FBI BSU unit due to not being able to handle the things she saw on the job and here she is again staring at the depravity of a killers hand. If that wasn't bad enough the FBI agent sent to take over the case is her ex partner she hasn't seen since she walked away from the FBI.

Vic Sutherland is the only character (other than his boss) that's from the first book. He was Eden Collins partner and since she took a new job at the end of that book he has a new partner now. He had already been investigating two murders in other national parks, and when a third happens in Glacier National Park the FBI knows they have a serial killer on their hands. He knows when he is sent there that he is going to have to face his past – which is his ex partner Maggie.

Along with trying to find the killer, 5 hikers go missing. Is this tied to the previous killings, are these 5 in danger from the killer?

This was an engaging suspense that kept me riveted till the end..

Caz says

I've given this a B- at AAR, so that's 3.5 stars rounded up.

I enjoyed Katee Robert's first foray into romantic suspense, *The Devil's Daughter* earlier this year, even though I felt that the balance between the two elements wasn't quite right and that the suspense plot worked better than the romance. I'm afraid I have similar reservations about **The Hunting Grounds**, which, while it is well-written and has an intriguing plot about a serial killer who is hunting and murdering his victims in national parks, suffers from somewhat uneven pacing and a lack of strong chemistry between the leads.

Seven years earlier, Maggie Gaines was a rookie with the FBI Behavioural Analysis Unit partnered with Vic Sutherland, one of the unit's most experienced and successful agents. Her first case proved to be an incredibly tough one – involving a child killer – and after a year of working on it, it broke her and she left the Bureau, burned out and feeling like a failure. At her lowest ebb, she reached out to her partner for comfort – which turned into a passionate kiss, even though she knew Vic was married and off limits.

Maggie now works as a Park Ranger at Glacier National Park in Montana. She's good at her job and is happy with her quiet life and small circle of friends; she's not an especially social person and likes it that way. But when she is called to the scene of a gruesome murder within Glacier, she finds herself thrust headlong back into the world she thought she had left behind seven years ago.

Vic Sutherland has been working the case of a killer who has so far murdered two victims in two different national parks. The MO in each case is the same – and is the same as the newly found victim in Montana,

making three killings in nine months. The FBI has a serial killer on its hands and the lack of time between the last murder and this latest one indicates that he's escalating and that there is likely to be another one soon. Vic arrives at Glacier and meets with the medical examiner, who confirms to him that the latest victim was hunted and 'field dressed' in the same gruesome way as the others. His next step is to interview the rangers who found the body – one of whom is Maggie Gaines, who, he feels sure, isn't going to be all that pleased to see him.

Maggie is surprised to see Vic after all this time – and equally surprised to discover he's been divorced for five years – and it doesn't take her long to figure out that his presence signifies that they are dealing with more than a 'simple' case of murder. Plus, seeing him again is unsettling; they haven't had any contact since she left the Bureau, but even so, she has never forgotten their ill-judged kiss and having him around stirs up feelings she'd thought long buried. She's curt and off-hand with him to begin with, but they soon find their way back to something resembling their old working relationship, bouncing ideas and theories off each other and generally working as a good team.

Their focus quickly turns to a group of five twenty-something hikers who had arrived at the park earlier in the day with plans for a ten day hike. When one of the group is found dead, her body horribly mutilated by a bear, it seems that Maggie and Vic's suspicions that the earlier killings were a 'trial run' for a concerted attack on that particular group of friends were well founded. While they try to find the killer and work out why those people are being targeted, a search and rescue operation gets underway to try to find the rest of the group and get them to safety before the killer can strike again.

I did enjoy the book, but it has quite a few flaws that have prevented me from rating it more highly. I like second chance romances as a rule, and in a story such as this one where there is a split focus, incorporating a relationship between people who already know each other can be an advantage because less time is needed to set it up. On the plus side, Vic and Maggie act like sensible adults; they don't have time to engage in silly misunderstandings or mind games -they fancy each other, they're single adults and they don't waste time acting on their mutual attraction. But they haven't seen or otherwise communicated with each other in seven years, and while we're told the mutual attraction they experienced back then has never gone away, the on-the-page chemistry between them wasn't strong enough for me to buy that they'd be talking about a long-term relationship within two or three days of reconnecting. The book ends abruptly, with hasty ILYs and with the suggestion of an HFN, which brings the deficiencies in the romance into even sharper focus.

The suspense plot is well executed and although it moves fairly slowly, that gives the author time to build a sense of menace, allowing readers to wonder who will be the next victim as we, along with Maggie and Vic, try to see the pattern and work out the killer's motive. I didn't mind the slower pace, but some of the PoV switches – from Maggie and Vic to the hikers and then to the odd flashback which tells us more about why they're such a dysfunctional group of friends – interrupt the flow of the narrative, which I found frustrating on more than one occasion. I couldn't help thinking that maybe the flashback parts would have worked better in a prologue.

I'm the first person to admit that I'm not that great at working out whodunit, so I was surprised by the final reveal of the killer's identity, and I also enjoyed Ms. Robert's vivid descriptions of the wonderful scenery and the sheer majesty of the surroundings in which most of the book is set, which put the reader right in the middle of what sounds like one of the most beautiful places on the planet.

The Hunting Grounds is the second book in the Hidden Sins series but as it's only loosely linked to the first – Vic appeared briefly in *The Devil's Daughter* as Eden Collins' FBI partner – it can easily be read as a standalone. I'm giving it a qualified recommendation because the suspense angle is well done and held my

attention sufficiently that I was eager to find out what was going on, but the romance takes a back seat, so if you prefer your romantic suspense to have a better balance between those two elements, you might want to adjust your expectations if you're planning on picking this one up.

Dísir says

I've been intrigued by Katee Robert's move into the more hardcore romantic suspense/thriller-type reads. Since 'The Devil's Daughter' didn't seem to be a bad debut, 'The Hunting Grounds' looked even more enticing because of a serial killer hunting in national parks and how that brings a second-chance romance into play.

Yet I wasn't pulled in as I thought I'd be, despite the theories that kept flying and the case of teenagers-turned adults who never quite managed to get their screw-ups resolved. I found that the juggling of two separate groups (loosely put) of characters—the protagonists who are also the romantic pair as well as a group of young adults whose lives are just still unsorted—broke the narrative too often, just as I was about to get into it. Maggie/Vic were more interesting than the potential victims (and perpetrators) and while complicated group dynamics always make for interesting reading, I felt that they were distracting instead, written in a way that drew the story out superfluously as it oddly and awkwardly straddled the New Adult genre at times with teenage-hormone-ridden drama peppering certain scenes.

Flashbacks tended to interrupt Maggie/Vic's progress with the case, and it was difficult to try to get back on board after those, let alone feel any heat or chemistry between 2 people who actually have so much history together. There were tender moments between them, which I liked and that both Maggie and Vic pretty much 'adulted' through it all. With the focus on the suspense and the serial killing however, the developing romance wasn't a drawn out one, just that Maggie/Vic played no games (perhaps because of the lack of time) and that everything happened fairly quickly in the span of a few days.

I'll readily admit that authors can and do a difficult time getting that tricky mix of romance and suspense down, especially with readers who often prefer one over another. Having a healthy and equal mix of both is what I prefer though and 'The Hunting Grounds' doesn't quite fulfil that. Coupled with an abrupt end—credits roll as people are bruised and recovering in hospital along with unexpected declarations of love thrown in—the story seemed to have ended on an unfinished note that left me wondering if I'd actually missed several pages.

*ARC by Netgalley
(always grateful, mind)

Giedre says

An OK read that had the potential to be quite good, but veered towards predictable instead.

Shawna says

3 stars - Romantic Suspense

RachelW (BamaGal) says

[It was obvious they were bei

Jo says

Another very suspenseful book by this author. The plot with a killer hunting hikers in national parks was VERY gripping and quite disturbing at times because when I say hunting I mean HUNTING, stringing up the prey and sometimes field dressing them O-O. And the really great thing about this book was that I thought I knew who the killer was, but I was so very wrong which was just excellent.

The romance on the other hand was lacking. Not many authors manage to get the balance right between the suspense and the romance and this series is definitely heavier on the suspense and much lighter on the romance, so much that I never really felt the connection between the main characters who shared a history. I also didn't really like Vic's attitude towards Maggie at times and therefore I never really cared about what happened between them. But despite that I still enjoyed the plot so much that it never really bothered me.

If you're looking for a gripping suspense with a twisty plot that will make you think you know who the killer is but in the end you'll be completely wrong, then this is the book for you. A must read for all suspense lovers.

Timitra says

The Hunting Grounds was an edge of the seat read that not only kept my attention but also kept me guessing. I loved how it was crafted. My only complaint was I felt the romance aspect of it needed to be a bit more pronounced.

I definitely recommend this book to those who love Romantic Suspense.

ARC provided by publisher through Net Galley in exchange for a honest review

Ayekah says

This book takes off like a streak of lightning. We meet Vic and Maggie again but under much different circumstances. Maggie a park ranger in Glacier National Park, loves her job and the park. It's what she needed after leaving the BAU/FBI feeling like she couldn't handle the stress. Or Vic and the one kiss they shared. She's happy and content. She likes the backwoods so she doesn't have to deal with the tourists,

people aren't her thing.

When a body is discovered in the park, shot with a bow and field dressed strung up between two trees, Vic is called in. He's investigated two other similar killings in other parks. This is the first time they've seen each other in 6 years.

The story weaves back and forth between the present with a short narration of the past by one of the younger characters who is among the hunted. Clearly they quickly discover a pattern to the killings and it seems someone is targeting a group of friends who have grown up in the area, hike the park often and want one last get together hiking into the mountains. They have given the rangers their route. Bodies are turning up, some seem unrelated until they get a break, albeit a small one yet Katee puts so many twists and turns into this story, just when you think you know who the killer is... forget it. You haven't got a clue. And neither do the investigators.

This book is edgy, short on romance but worked well in this book and Katee hit her stride in this one.

I liked this much better than book one. This is a page turner and keeps you on edge. Which is apparent that's where the author wants you.

I had to give this 5 stars simply because it's so well written and the plot line is killer. No pun intended.

Backstory is great, so you really get a feel for what's going on, and the setting... stunning.

Glacier is a favorite place of mine.

arc from NetGalley and publisher in exchange for a fair review (post release date)

Alyssa says

This book is making me shudder a little! Good suspense right here. =)

Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog

The Hunting Grounds by Katee Robert

Book Two of the Hidden Sins series

Publisher: Montlake Romance

Publication Date: July 25, 2017

Rating: 4 stars

Source: eARC from NetGalley

Summary (from Goodreads):

For two FBI agents with a past, love becomes a matter of life and death in the new Hidden Sins novel from New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Katee Robert.

Maggie Gaines used to be an FBI agent—top of her class and one of the bright, up-and-coming stars—until she spectacularly fell apart during her first high-profile case. That was eight years ago. Now she's a ranger at Glacier National Park, and she's found some measure of peace. But when the body of a murdered woman is discovered, she must finally put the past behind her and work with the one man she thought she'd never see again.

For months, Vic Sutherland has been hunting a killer who's been targeting unsuspecting hikers in national parks—and now the predator has come to Glacier. Vic knows the case will bring him face-to-face with his

former partner, yet nothing can prepare him for seeing Maggie again after all these years, or for the memories of passion it stirs in both of them.

As the investigation brings them closer together—and closer to the killer—Maggie and Vic fear they have only each other to trust. But even that might not be enough to make it out of Glacier alive.

What I Liked:

I'd not read too many romantic suspense novels before this year, and it never really seemed like it would be my thing. I get creeped out and freaked out easily, and suspense novels tend to get scary and creepy pretty quickly. But with Katee Robert writing this series, I knew I wasn't going to pass. Yet again, Robert has written an excellent chilling romantic suspense that is just as good as (if not better than) her previous novel, *The Devil's Daughter*.

Vic Sutherland was introduced in *The Devil's Daughter* as a secondary character. In this book, he takes front row and center when he is called to investigate a gruesome murder at Glacier National Park. This happens to be the Park at which his former partner at the FBI works. Maggie Gaines left the FBI less than a year after joining, and she hasn't looked back. Seven years at the Park has made it feel like home. But one murder, and then another, and another, and another, has made the Park feel tainted and unsafe. Vic and Maggie were former partners once, and they'll have to work together to track down the deadly hunter who shows no signs of stopping the killing.

This book has me shuddering a little! I get freaked out fairly easily but still, I have to say that Robert definitely sets the tone of this book. It is chilling and eerie, and I honestly can't say I ever want to go to a National Park to hike. Visit, yes, but not hike. The atmosphere of this book is perfect for a suspense/mystery novel.

It is clear that Robert has done her research! Everything from Glacier National Park geography to a park ranger's duties to the BAU of the FBI... this book may be fiction but Robert made the story incredibly authentic. Her efforts showed and I appreciated how much detail she thought to include.

I don't want to go into too much detail about the murders and the case, but I will say that Robert had me guessing who the unsub was until the very end. This is pretty rare for me - I tend to discern these things somewhat early on - so it goes to show how well Robert set up the case. Every time I thought I knew who it was, Robert threw a curveball in the plot.

That being said, I was completely hooked on this story. I couldn't stop reading and stayed up late in the dark hours of the night, trying to finish this book. That didn't help with me feeling freaked out, by the way. Never read these types of books at night!

I adored the two main characters! Vic seems robotic and calm and collected and never really shows outward emotion, but he is a complicated and tough guy. I like how overprotective he is, and how much of a control freak he is. I understand the type. He and Maggie are good together. Maggie is less controlled and has to reign in her temper at times. She is a little more anxious compared to Vic (well, anyone is, because he sometimes comes across as a block of ice), but I like this about her. They are like foils, opposites, and yet their minds work similarly.

This isn't really a second-chance romance since they never dated or had any sort of romantic relationship. However, Maggie had a huge crush on Vic when they were partners. Vic was married at the time, so they

were not going to happen. But fast-forward to the present - Vic has been divorced for five years, and Maggie has never really stopped having feelings for him. Vic knows he wants something with Maggie and he goes after that something. The two of them take a leap and I like where things go. Their romance is sweet and tender, and not too messy, though you'd think it would be a messy romance. I like how open and honest they are with each other.

There is one sex scene and it is adult-rated (though it's not as explicit as scenes in Robert's other books). I like the chemistry between Vic and Maggie and definitely appreciated the presence of the romance.

I was intrigued, hooked, and clueless until the very end! The ending is a big reveal and it should surprise anyone reading this book (in terms of the identity of the unsub). There are so many hints throughout the book but it's easy to look past all of them. Hindsight is 20/20, of course. Robert wraps up almost everything, though she hints at concrete things for Vic and Maggie. I would love to read an epilogue to this story, featuring the pair!

What I Did Not Like:

That last thing I mentioned would probably be the only thing I would note here. I wanted a more concrete ending for Vic and Maggie - yes, they have the whole future ahead of them, but I wanted more specific details! An epilogue to show where they ended up together would be so nice. I adore them as a couple!

Would I Recommend It:

If you like romantic suspense, I highly recommend this novel (and *The Devil's Daughter*). This book is slightly different compared to the first one because the case isn't as personal to either protagonist (Vic or Maggie) as the case was in *The Devil's Daughter*. I found this to be a great thing. Be warned, this is a chilling story (in my opinion)! And it is definitely adult fiction.

Rating:

4 stars. Is there nothing Robert can't write? I love her sexy contemporary romance novels, and her darker contemporary romance novels, and now I find myself enjoying her romantic suspense (a subgenre I never really pictured myself enjoying). I need to try her paranormal romance!

♥Rachel♥ says

3.5 Stars

I've enjoyed hiking, backpacking, and camping over the years, but I must confess on some of those trips I've gotten more than a little spooked at night imagining how easy it would be for a madman/killer to sneak up and take us out. Eeeek! **The Hunting Grounds** seemed to be just the kind of story I've envisioned happening at one time or another, so I knew I had to pick it up. Crazy, right? Well, I'm the kind of girl who loves to tell scary stories by the campfire and freak everyone the heck out. I usually manage to scare myself senseless in the process, so the trip back to my tent to sleep is super fun. So there you have it, I'm a little deranged!

Maggie used to be an FBI agent until a particularly gruesome case caused her to quit eight years ago. These days she's a park ranger at Glacier National Park where the most dangerous situation she faces involves

bears or unprepared hikers. That all changes when she discovers a body of a woman, and must call in the FBI. Work with her old partner, Vic, all the old feelings of attraction between them are brought up to the surface again as she works the case. It's a race against time to find this killer before someone else is murdered.

It seems I read a lot of second chance romances. I guess I just love the thought of a couple getting another shot together after screwing up the first time. This wasn't exactly a second chance romance, more unrequited lust/love situation. Circumstances at the time prevented it from being anything else, but nothing holds Vic and Maggie back now. It was a pleasure watching these two take a chance while trying to stay alive. Life and death situations make it easy to sort out what's important in life, so there's no angst back and forth.

There is a secondary story centering on a group of backpackers. Old high school friends who reunite to hike one of their favorite trails in Glacier. But this isn't one big happy reunion. There's trouble brewing between them; flash backs to the past gradually reveal what led to their current situation. It quickly becomes apparent that their group is in danger.

I had fun with **The Hunting Grounds** even though I suspected the killer's identity early on, I still didn't know for sure, and had doubts on my theory up until the end. It was an all-around solid romantic suspense/mystery that kept me on the edge of my seat wondering if our characters were all going to make it!

A copy was kindly provided by Montlake Romance via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

This review is also posted at The Readers Den.
