



All the Hidden Truths (Three Rivers)

Claire Askew

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Raw, powerful, compassionate and deeply moving, with page-turning tension to the end. A stunning debut. - Karen Robinson, *Sunday Times Crime Club*

This is a fact: Ryan Summers walked into Three Rivers College and killed thirteen women, then himself.

But no one can say why.

The question is one that cries out to be answered - by Ryan's mother, Moira; by Ishbel, the mother of Abigail, the first victim; and by DI Helen Birch, put in charge of the case on her first day at her new job. But as the tabloids and the media swarm, as the families' secrets come out, as the world searches for someone to blame... the truth seems to vanish.

A stunningly moving novel from an exciting new voice in crime, ALL THE HIDDEN TRUTHS will cause you to question your assumptions about the people you love, and reconsider how the world reacts to tragedy.

All the Hidden Truths (Three Rivers) Details

Date : Published August 9th 2018 by Hodder & Stoughton (first published August 2018)

ISBN :

Author : Claire Askew

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Thriller, Adult Fiction

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From Reader Review All the Hidden Truths (Three Rivers) for online ebook

Alexis says

This book follows the story of a school shooting. It focuses on three female protagonists: the mother of a victim, the mother of the shooter and the police officer in charge of the investigation.

To begin with the pace is quite racy, and it's exciting. Tensions are very high, as they obviously would be during a catastrophic event like this. However, this doesn't last and mostly it is very slow and drawn out.

Basically the book follows the journeys of the three women from the time of the shooting onwards. They go through the process of grieving and dealing with what has happened. All their thoughts and feelings about their loved ones and the events are laid out in painful detail.

All in all it's an interesting read, and very emotional. It does make you think from different perspectives about how people are affected by this kind of tragedy. I liked the fact that all the main characters were female, middle-aged and completely unapologetic about themselves. It made a nice change that the book was mainly female-oriented. This is something I am seeing more and more, and I hope an even balance of gender in fiction appears in the end.

I wasn't completely enamoured with the book. It was very slow and, to be honest, not that interesting. It was, however, very well written and this kept me reading until the end.

Joanne Robertson says

All The Hidden Truths is a beautifully written and thought provoking novel that delivered a punch to my emotions. It felt so relevant to the problems we face in our society nowadays plus the current feel to the narrative felt shockingly realistic from the very beginning.

The novel is told from the viewpoints of three different women. There is Moira who's son Ryan goes to college one morning and shoots dead thirteen women before killing himself. Then we meet Ishbel who's daughter Abigail is the first girl that Ryan kills. Finally there is DI Helen Birch who is in charge of the investigation but has some secrets of her own hidden in her past.

The women are perfectly crafted by Claire Askew who seems to have an in depth understanding of the emotional nature of this crime and how it would affect those touched by it. You would expect your sympathies to lie mainly with the victims and their families but I found myself getting angry with the way that Moira was being treated by those around her. As the mother of the perpetrator, does that automatically make her guilty of a crime? By giving birth to this "monster" is it right to blame her? I've always got terribly worked up when the media turn on the relatives of those who commit such offences. When their family say that they had no idea of what was going on in their child's head, it seems unbelievable doesn't it? But then the nature versus nurture debate is raised with the question being asked, was their motivation somehow ingrained by the way in which they were raised by their parents? I've always felt it unfair to blame the parents as once your child is no longer attached to you by their umbilical cord then, although you can try your best as a parent, you will never know what your child is truly thinking. You do your best to raise a

decent human being but sometimes there are other environmental factors involved which could be the spark that lights those flames of evil.

Its worth noting that when I first read the blurb of *All The Hidden Truths*, I expected the setting to be based in the USA! After all isn't that where we expect these sort of mass college shootings? So to find out that it's set in the city of Edinburgh gave me an unexpected thrill of intrigue as it's a city I know well and probably the last place I would expect to see as a location for this type of crime. My favourite Scottish city is beautifully described here, the authors love for it shining through her prose as she brought landmarks and much loved locations to life.

I adored this book. It had an almost poetic feel to the narrative that mesmerised me so I became completely and emotionally involved with the storyline. Claire Askew managed to maintain a high level of tension throughout as the plot headed towards its heart wrenching denouement. It was a moving but ultimately life affirming ending to what was a challenging and compelling read. These characters had become my friends/neighbours/work colleagues by the end as I had become so entwined in their day to day lives that I felt I really knew them.

This is a stunning debut novel that I can highly recommend. The community spirit explored within its pages is one that I hope is continued in future books by this author.

Lou says

'All the Hidden Truths' is Claire Askew's debut novel, inspired by real-life events happening throughout America, and is both highly compelling and utterly heartbreaking. It was the winner of the 2016 Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize, and longlisted for the 2014 Peggy Chapman-Andrews (Bridport) Novel Award under the working title, 'Three Rivers'.

The book opens the day before a mass shooting takes place at an Edinburgh, UK, college campus in which thirteen women are killed before shooter Ryan Summers turns the gun on himself. The question everyone wants answered is why? In the aftermath of the tragic incident a variety of perspectives come to the fore, in a multi-narrative approach. These include Helen Birch a newly-promoted Detective Inspector, Ishbel Hodgekiss the mother of Abigail the first girl to be shot, and the mother of the gunman, Moira Summers, and follows each of their thoughts, feelings and difficulties that emerge as a result of the murders.

Although this appears a brutal story on the face of it and is most certainly a powerful one, Askew manages to make it compassionate and moving too. She bravely adds that all of the dead are victims including the killer, as well as all of their families. She also weaves into the story the impact of the media and the increasing helplessness felt by all affected as they desperately search for the reason behind the slaughter. Towards the back end of the book secrets start to be revealed and we are told the motivations behind the event. As the reasons are exposed some press for retribution and others for reconciliation.

Of all of the thrillers I have consumed this year so far this was the one that had the greatest impact on me. The events are unfortunately very believable especially in the times in which we now live and this has to be one of the most accomplished and remarkable debuts I've read in a long time. Truly thought-provoking, I have no doubt that this will be a bestseller. A well deserved five-stars.

Many thanks to Hodder & Stoughton for an ARC. I was not required to post a review and all thoughts and

opinions expressed are my own.

Pauline says

All the Hidden Truths by Claire Askew was a very disturbing and emotional story of a shooting at a college in Scotland. Twenty year old Ryan walked into his college and shot dead thirteen female students and then himself. The community are devastated and angry and the anger turns on Ryan's mother whom the police say is innocent. This is a heartbreaking story that will stay with me for a long time.

I would like to thank NetGalley and Hodder & Stoughton for my e-copy in exchange for an honest review.

Jacob Collins says

All the Hidden Truths by Claire Askew is a powerful psychological drama and it focuses on a very topical subject which has sadly been in the news very recently. We meet three characters in this book: Moira Summers, Ishbel Hodgekiss and DI Helen Birch and the novel is told from their perspectives. The three women whose voices we hear from are very different and until the events that take place at the start of this novel occur, they have never come across each other. But beyond the pages, the lives of two of the women will be linked forever and they are all scarred by tragedy.

No one knows why Ryan Summers took it upon himself to enter the Three Rivers college campus and murder thirteen young women and then turn the gun on himself before the police had a chance to apprehend him. What could drive someone to commit such an abhorrent act? DI Helen Birch has recently been promoted and she is handed the complex case. She knows that the weeks ahead aren't going to be easy for her community, especially for the families of the victims, and the angry public, who desperately need answers.

The characterisation in this book is superb; the author takes us to some very dark places in the minds of some of the individuals in this book which made it a compelling page-turner. It is very much a whydunnit as the police and families of the victims try to work out what caused Ryan to murder so many of his fellow pupils. Claire Askew explores some interesting themes, including the dangers of social media and freedom of the press. It also examines the public's perception of tragedy and what happens when people willingly express their feelings and opinions online. One journalist in particular really got under my skin, his character brought to mind the Leveson enquiry which took place in the UK several years ago and it made me angry to think that this is the way how some members of the press behave.

I was interested in the fact that Claire chose to set the novel in Edinburgh as gun crime, particularly on a mass scale is rare, even un-heard of in the UK. Choosing to set her novel here in this country must've required a great deal of research, it would be fascinating to find out more about why she decided to write about this particular crime and how she went about her research.

This was a gripping debut which introduces an exciting new voice in crime fiction. Thank you to the publisher and to Netgalley for providing an advance review copy.

Paula Sealey says

This is a heartbreaking story following the aftermath of a school shooting in Scotland. Moira, the killers mother, not only has to contend with the death of her only child, but the wrath of a grief stricken community. Ashbel is the mother of Abigail whose daughter was killed and is desperately trying to come to terms with her loss and Helen is the Detective Inspector leading the investigation into the tragedy.

The journey is a very emotional one as a picture of events leading up to the murders is revealed through the three women. I highly enjoyed Askew's writing and her character development was excellent, everyone felt so real and the situations they find themselves in believable. A moving read that will stay with you.

*I received a copy of the book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Cathy Ryan says

4.5*

The three main characters are introduced individually, and the story is told from the perspective of each of them. Moira Summers is wandering aimlessly around Edinburgh until, filled with a new purpose she decides it's time to speak to her son. Little did she know she wouldn't be speaking to him again, and her life was about to come crashing down around her.

Ishbel Hodgekiss was waiting for her nineteen year old daughter Abigail after football practice. Only Abigail hadn't been to football practice and the ride home quickly escalated into an argument with Abigail hurling insults at her mother. That's the last exchange they'll ever have. The next day she hears from a colleague at work that Twitter is full of news about a college shooting.

Helen Birch is starting her new job after her promotion to Detective Inspector. On her way to work the dispatcher comes over the police radio with the report of a shooting at a nearby college, although they didn't appear to be taking it seriously.

Helen decides to check it out for herself, taking the risk of incurring the wrath of her new boss. She couldn't believe two units had been sent to a reported shooting unarmed. It wasn't a hoax. Ryan Summers walked into the Tweed campus refectory and began a killing spree, resulting in the deaths of thirteen females, before turning the gun on himself.

This is a very thought provoking, moving and topical story, dealing with the aftermath of a terrible tragedy from the perspectives of the police, the mother of the perpetrator and the mother of one of the victims. We know who did it, but the mystery is what drove Ryan Summers to commit such a horrific crime. Claire Askew weaves together the three differing points of view skilfully and with wonderful characterisations as the story unfolds, revealing how much social media influences the public's assumptions and behaviour. Secrets come to light, and the emotional impact on those affected and what it takes for them to pick up the pieces of their lives and carry on is also shown to great effect. The use of tweets, posts and news articles scattered throughout the narrative are very effective. Phone hacking and intrusive behaviour by the press is also highlighted through the thoroughly despicable reporter, Grant Lockley.

A heartbreaking, disturbing and compelling debut novel. *All The Hidden Truths* addresses the themes of motivational forces, how a thoughtless comment can provoke an act of such enormity, and the different ways people deal with grief, betrayal and guilt.

I chose to read and review *All The Hidden Truths* based on an advance reader copy supplied via NetGalley and the author/publisher.

michelle says

All the Hidden Truths by Claire Askew is a gripping psychological thriller about a college student walking into Three Rivers college and shooting and killing thirteen women and then himself.

The story starts with Moira Summers witnessing the aftermath of an accident with a young guy gets impaled on a construction site. Her mind then wonders to her son Ryan. She wonders what would she do, if something ever happened to him.

DI Birch is on her way to work, when she hears on the radio of a dispatcher asking police to got to Three Rivers College. DI Birch says she is on the way to the scene. They first think it's a hoax of a shooter on the premises, but when DI birch gets to the college. They find out that it is really happening. A college student Ryan Summers has killed thirteen women and then kills himself.

This is an emotional and topical drama of the aftermath of a school shooting. At first, the author does not give everything away first hand. But by bit by bit, you find out what has happened and why. The story is told in several points of view. Firstly, we learn what kind of person Ryan summers was and also his mother and the guilt that she feels of what her son did. And also what lead up to that day and the events. But also, by the press, in particular Grant Lockley, who lie and cheat and force their way into people's lives. There is also D.I. Birch who is doing everything she can to not only find out what happened. But has to deal with Grant Lockley, who she has previously had problem with when she was younger concerning her brother Charlie. So she has personal issues with him.

I really enjoyed this. I found this realistic, gripping and thought provoking.

Thank you Netgalley and Hodder and Stoughton for a copy of this book.

Laura says

Book reviews on www.snazzybooks.com

All The Hidden Truths is a stunning, emotional read which addresses some very difficult themes with sensitivity and realism. Although classed as a crime novel, this novel feels more like a portrait of the feelings and effects of such a horrible crime - a college shooting - on a community, and the way it's dealt with by police, families of the victim and, most powerfully for me anyway, the family of the killer. There are still elements of your 'typical' crime novel, such as a police investigation and a narrative from the perspective of the detective, but because we know almost right from the start who is to blame, and that person is dead, it's not about who did it but *why* and *what* happens afterwards. Without the 'whodunnit' element that I'm usually so interested in, I wondered if I'd be as engrossed - I definitely was! I raced through this novel and couldn't put it down.

There's so much grief and heartbreak within these pages, and I really felt for the people living through it;

Claire Askew makes you really consider what this situation must be like for *everyone*. Some of the characters are truly horrible people (and it's obvious who falls into this category once you start reading) but, for the most part, the people in this novel feel *real*, each with their own problems and flaws, and it really highlights the way that everyone deals with terrible situations differently. Askew's portrayal of Moira, the mother of the gunman Ryan, was incredibly powerful to read as she battled with her guilt at not having seen it all coming, as was Ishbel's struggles to come to terms with the death of her daughter and the breakdown of her marriage. I also really liked DI Helen Birch, and hope to see more of her in the future - fingers crossed for a second book featuring Helen!

Claire Askew beautifully weaves together various stories and experiences, all around one central storyline - that of the college shooting - and creates a truly heart-breaking, gripping read.

* Many thanks to Hodder & Stoughton for providing a copy of this novel on which I chose to write an honest and unbiased review. *

Paul Bryant says

The utter worthiness of this school shooting novel is very tiring, as are the constant gushings, squalls, fountains, nay, veritable typhoons of human tears on every page. Well, it's a sad subject. I suppose it's the Scottish equivalent of *We Need to Talk About That Psycho Kevin* but written as a sort of crime novel. Given the proliferation of mass shootings I haven't come across that many novels about them, maybe it's too grisly a subject. But there are so many crucial aspects to these crimes. This novel creeps up towards the most crucial and then veers away at the last moment.

Because of the UK's draconian gun control there have been only three mass shootings here : Hungerford, 1987 (16 dead), Dunblane, 1996 (17 dead) and Cumbria 2010 (12 dead). The three perpetrators were crazy loners, not students shooting other students, so the difference between the UK and the USA is enormous. This novel imagines a typical US-style college shooting happening in Edinburgh.

Since these shootings are crimes which solve themselves – it's never a whodunnit situation – the police response is difficult. What is their function? Claire Askew says pretty much all they can do is try to find out why the crime happened. But that ain't easy – we're still waiting for any kind of motive for the worst mass shooting in the USA, for instance, which was Stephen Paddock's killing of 58 people in Las Vegas ten months ago. We'll probably never find out.

This novel starts to develop the possibility that the shooter of 13 women, 20 year old Ryan Summers, conceived a hatred of females because the girls at the college never wanted to go out with him because he was a creepy weirdo, so I thought we were going to get an exploration of the (so-called) incel psychology – that would have been interesting. But Claire Askew wanted to write about the disgraceful nature of tabloid journalism instead – nothing wrong with that, it's also a good subject. And also, she focuses laser-like on the awful BLAME THE MOTHER feelings that swirl around these events, if the shooter happens to be from a broken family and living with his mother. Kind of misogynistic reaction, when you think that none of these school shooters are themselves female. It's like oh no, another male has shot a lot of women – let's find a woman to blame!

Very easy for any novel about school shootings to get overwhelmed by the number of issues involved.

Reviews of this book say stuff like

A chilling, relentless and needle-sharp thriller that will stay with you long after you reach the final page.

Or

A stunning new voice in crime fiction

Well, not really. Not bad though, not bad. I'd say 2.75 stars.

Susan says

This is the story of a tragedy, seen through the eyes of three women. One day, a young man walks into a college in Edinburgh and kills several people, before killing himself. We see events from the points of view of D.I. Helen Birch, in charge of the case on the first day of her promotion, Moira Summers, the mother of the shooter and Ishbel Hodgekiss, the mother of Abigail, the first victim.

Author, Claire Askew, skilfully weaves these points of view, as the story unfolds. This is not only about the crime, but casts a sharp look at how such events unfold – including the media scrutiny and the, now expected, outcry on social media. Askew, herself, looks at the shades of grey beneath the black and white of events. There are the unearthing of secrets by journalists, the outcry of hate, aimed at Moira, and the reasons behind Ryan Summers actions.

Beautifully written, this would be an excellent choice for a reading group, as it has so much depth and will open all kinds of discussion – from the role of the media, the judgement of social media, to family dynamics and how well you really know those you love. I really found this a moving and touching read and hope to read more by this author, in the future. I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

Christina McDonald says

This captivating crime novel deftly balances that perfect line between moving and gripping, tackling a topical and emotive issue that has been in the headlines a lot lately. A why-dunnit rather than a who-dunnit crime novel, you see the crime and how it happened early on, then the novel explores the reason behind it.

All the Hidden Truths centers on the aftermath of a school shooting in Edinburgh, in which a teenage boy shoots and kills a number of other teenagers. There are three POVs: the mother of the perpetrator, the mother of the first victim, and the detective in charge of the investigation. Each of these characters is thoroughly developed, their motivations and the situations they find themselves in completely believable, with strong female voices that I could truly get behind.

For me a story has to tick three boxes: strong plot, character development and beautiful, lyrical prose. Claire Askew has managed to do all three, plus a fourth - she's written a book that genuinely left me thinking about the themes and issues tackled, and how we as a society deal with the aftermath of these crimes.

An explosive and gorgeous debut. I highly recommend.

Liz Barnsley says

Oh my word this book. Such beautifully poetic writing, such a topical and emotive subject, ripped straight from the headlines and given a human, heartfelt and authentic voice.

A genuinely absorbing and incredibly emotional character drama centering around the aftermath of a college shooting and really getting down to the realities of those left behind, those pulled into it and takes a harsh and edifying look at our press, our social media and our attitude to traumatic events.

I can see why it was hotly contested. This is a truly amazing read. Full review and more on this closer to the August publication.

Highly Recommended.

The Hopeless Romantics Book Blog says

Claire Askew's "All the Hidden Truths" is one of those books that I could see being turned into a BBC drama. It has that feel to it. The story line is very topical and the way it is told (from three points of view) makes it very emotive for a number of reasons. This isn't a story about "what happened" or "when it happened" or even "who done it." "All the Hidden Truths" is about "why" and that is what each of the main characters strives to discover but equally struggles with when certain truths come to light. This isn't an easy book to read but what transpires and the fall out from that is definitely eye opening, thought provoking and more importantly, believable.

When I started reading this book, I initially found it a bit slow. I'd read the synopsis some time ago but had forgotten what it was about to be honest. All I knew was that (at the time) I had wanted to read it as I'd requested it from netgalley. 10% in and I was still wondering where the plot was heading but fear not. The further I progressed, the more everything fell into place. The start was about giving me some background into the three main characters. This background provided building blocks for the main plot of the story and some of the sub plots too. It helped provide meat to the bones of this story (for want of a better phrase) and the more I read, the more I got it.

"All the Hidden Truths" was a story about how three women learn to cope in the aftermath of tragedy. It gives us an insight into the power of social media and the influence it can have both on individuals but also in terms of how stories are manipulated and sensationalised in order to get viewer numbers up. This really was a heart breaking story where no one was a winner and where grief and guilt played such a huge part.

If you loved "13 Reasons Why," then I'd definitely say give this crime drama a go. Like I said, it's not about the who, what or when but more about the why! Although the story did feel a little bit long at times, overall,

it did keep me engaged because I was desperate to know the answer on everyone's lips. "Why did Ryan Summers do what he did?"

"All the Hidden Truths" gets ♥?♥?♥?♥?
