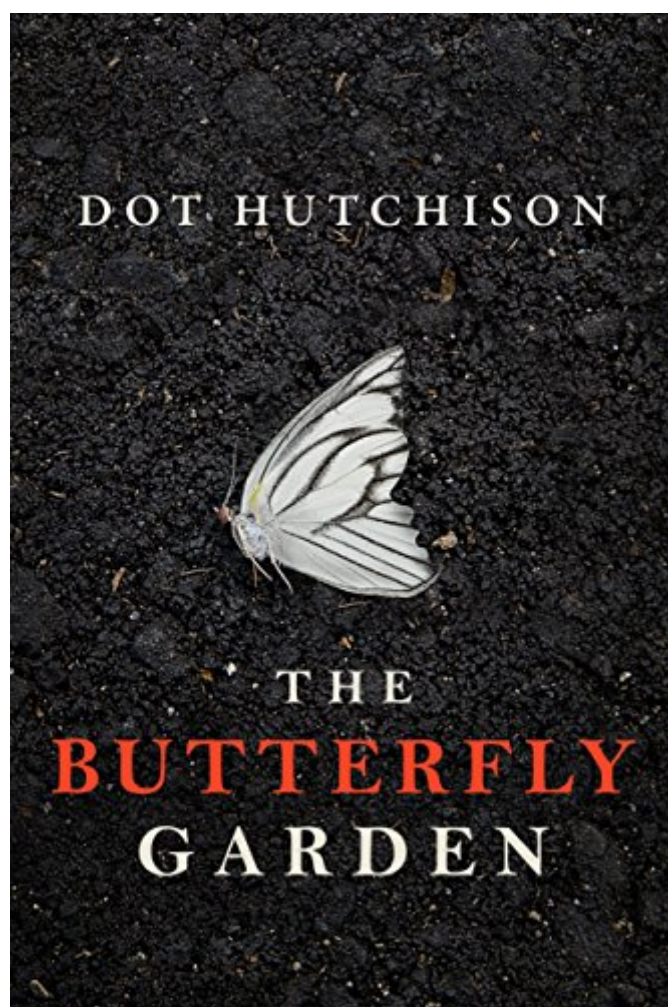


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The Butterfly Garden



Synopsis

Near an isolated mansion lies a beautiful garden. In this garden grow luscious flowers, shady trees, and a collection of precious butterflies— young women who have been kidnapped and intricately tattooed to resemble their namesakes. Overseeing it all is the Gardener, a brutal, twisted man obsessed with capturing and preserving his lovely specimens. When the garden is discovered, a survivor is brought in for questioning. FBI agents Victor Hanoverian and Brandon Eddison are tasked with piecing together one of the most stomach-churning cases of their careers. But the girl, known only as Maya, proves to be a puzzle herself. As her story twists and turns, slowly shedding light on life in the Butterfly Garden, Maya reveals old grudges, new saviors, and horrific tales of a man who'd go to any length to hold beauty captive. But the more she shares, the more the agents have to wonder what she's still hiding.

Book Information

File Size: 3440 KB

Print Length: 288 pages

Publisher: Thomas & Mercer (June 1, 2016)

Publication Date: June 1, 2016

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B016ZNR00Q

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #21 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #1 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Crime Fiction > Kidnapping #1 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Crime > Serial Killers #1 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Crime Fiction > Serial Killers

Customer Reviews

This review does not contain spoilers, however, I do discuss points included in 's summary description; if you consider those spoilers, avoid this review. :) I read this as my Kindle First selection for May. The novel contains violence, profanity, sexual violence against minors, pedophilia, and rape

(both of minors and adults). The majority of this type of content is non-graphic, but it is very prevalent (rape is often referred to, but is rarely shown 'on-screen.')

Given what the story is, none of the content felt gratuitous. but for those who are triggered by it, or prefer stories without it, avoiding this story might be advisable.

'The Butterfly Garden' is told in alternating first and third-person-limited perspectives: the main character relates her story to FBI agents following her rescue from the Garden. I have mixed feelings about this approach. When used by experienced writers (Rothfuss' 'Name of the Wind' is a good example), a nested story can be very effective. Unfortunately, in 'The Butterfly Garden's' case it ruins much of the suspense: the audience knows the protagonist escapes. From 's summary/blurb, we know most of the other details of what she endured during her captivity. There is little left to surprise us. I found the sections containing the protagonist's backstory to be somewhat needless, and a little long in exposition. The writer's style is competent and accessible, making for a quick read. Not too many clunky sentences, although the dialogue (especially at the beginning) isn't natural. I found the first-person much smoother than the third-person; perhaps if the entire novel were told linearly in first-person, I would have enjoyed it more.

The Butterfly Garden tells the horrific tale of the Gardener and his kidnap victims. He collects butterflies, but not just any kind of butterfly; they must be young, beautiful and female. Butterflies like no others, he finds them and allows them to remain in his amazing butterfly garden until they reach the peak of their beauty when he can then preserve them forever. I found this story shocking, and read it with a morbid fascination as Maya tells of her, and the others, frightening and twisted experiences. It is both horrible and yet so terribly sad as Maya reveals what an unfortunate upbringing she suffered and the moment when her parents finally broke the heart of a six year old child. FBI agents Victor Hanoverian and Brandon Eddison are given the responsibility to lead the investigation after the butterfly garden is discovered and some of the victims rescued alive. Maya is obviously a leader to the girls and the two detectives are interviewing Maya to try and unravel the whole terrifying story. But she is proving evasive about her past and they want to know what she is hiding and why. The novel is mainly set in the interview room as Victor and Eddison ask the questions and Maya reveals the details, to them and to us, in her own good time, while frustrating the officers with her clever responses. She comes across as vulnerable, but not shy and the reader can't help but like and feel sorry for her. Her relationship with the gardener and his two very different children has been traumatic and scary, but she has survived and the question remains as to how close to them all did she really become. This is a pretty frightening story of a twisted mind

and his terrifying obsession with collecting butterflies.

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