

FOR REASONS UNKNOWN by Michael Wood

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My latest book recommendation is '*For Reasons Unknown*' by Michael Wood. It is the first book in the DCI Matilda Darke crime series.

THE PLOTLINE

DCI Matilda Darke has just returned to work after suffering an emotional breakdown, following the tragic results of her last kidnapping case, and the death of her husband James. Unsure whether Matilda is quite ready to return to duty, Assistant Chief Constable, Valerie Masterson, decides to give her a cold case to solve, which she hopes will help ease Matilda back into work.

The 20-year-old case involved the brutal murder of Stefan and Miranda Harkness, who were killed in front of their youngest son, 11-year-old Jonathan. Their killer had never been identified and their eldest son, Matthew, had gone missing. Now 31, Jonathan is a recluse, but he is also the one person who could help Matilda with her investigation. Sadly, haunted by the events of that night, Jonathan is reluctant to mentally go there, but Matilda hopes that, with gentle handling, she can get him to talk to her about that night.

In her absence, Acting DCI Ben Hales has been leading her murder team. However, now that Matilda is back, his position is tenuous. Not surprisingly, he is therefore not exactly pleased to see her, and when a dead body is discovered, he hopes that by solving the case quickly he can prove he is a better bet for the job. Unfortunately, his hopes are dashed when the dead body proves to be connected to Matilda's case, and she claims the body as part of her investigation. Angry and feeling side-lined, things go from bad to worse as Ben decides to do everything possible to destroy Matilda's credibility and secure his own future.

MY REVIEW

'*For Reasons Unknown*' is a gripping start to Michael Wood's DCI Matilda Darke crime series. Although I am not usually drawn to series, preferring stand-alone novels, I might well make an exception in this case.

The story introduces the character of Matilda as a high-ranking detective who, through no fault of her own, is trying to fight her way back from the depths of depression to reclaim her standing as a well-respected murder investigator who gets results. Set against a murder mystery, the storyline not only follows Matilda on her road to recovery, but also follows the actions of two other characters, both of whom have their own battles to fight: one is struggling to come to terms with a traumatic childhood event, while the other is battling to preserve his future prospects, by any means possible.

As the ‘no holds barred’ rivalry between Ben and Matilda intensifies, so does the gripping tension, which is carried throughout the novel until the truth is revealed in a final showdown.

THE AUTHOR

Michael Wood is the author of the bestselling crime fiction series featuring DCI Matilda Darke and the new psychological thriller series featuring Dr Olivia Winter. As of 2024 there are 12 books in the Matilda Darke series and one Olivia Winter, with more planned for next year. He is also the author of three standalone psychological thrillers: ‘*The Seventh Victim*’, ‘*Vengeance Is Mine*’ and ‘*Chapter One*’ (currently an Audible Original). He is constantly scribbling away and has many other projects up the sleeves of his duffel coat. When he’s not writing, he is usually moaning about having little sleep and talking about his favourite biscuit on social media. Look him up on: Facebook (MichaelWoodBooks), Twitter (@MichaelHWood) and Instagram (MichaelWoodBooks).

‘*For Reasons Unknown*’ is published by HarperCollins and is available in eBook, paperback, and audio formats from Amazon, as well as paperback from Waterstones and Foyles.