



The Snow Girls

Chris Mooney

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A gripping new thriller from the bestselling Chris Mooney - perfect for readers of Karen Rose, MJ Arlidge or Lisa Gardner

'One of the best thriller writers working today' Lee Child

It's been eleven years since Claire Flynn disappeared - abducted without trace from a snowy hillside, leaving her parents heartbroken.

Investigator Darby McCormick remembers the case. She knows there's only ever been one suspect, Father Richard Byrne, linked inconclusively to two similar disappearances.

Finally, terminally ill, Byrne is willing to talk. But he'll only talk to Darby.

She's expecting a confession - but what she hears is far more disturbing.

And it soon becomes clear that someone is willing to kill to keep this cold case on ice...

The Snow Girls Details

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Author : Chris Mooney

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From Reader Review The Snow Girls for online ebook

Emma says

Back when Darby McCormick was just starting out, little Claire Flynn disappeared from Belham one a snowy night. 11 years later and the prime suspect, Father Richard Byrne, is dying. To everyone's surprise, he's saying he finally wants to talk... but only to Darby.

For her, going back home isn't going to be easy, especially when her career has involved publicising and then putting away criminals who were supposedly on the right side of the law: the police. Breaking the silence around Blue Line corruption has her being called 'Rat' and worse. Amidst a very hostile environment, she is forced to use her own initiative rather than relying on traditional resources to investigate a crime to which everyone already seems to have the answer. But are things as obvious as they seem?

What Chris Mooney excels at here is getting inside the mind of not just Darby, but also her first love Micky, the father of the missing girl. His tortured existence is gut wrenching, not only struggling with the loss of his child, but the breakdown of his marriage, alcoholism, and the return of a father who used to be a mob hit man. His anger and despair have pushed him to depths he never before imagined, including putting the man he considers to be responsible for the crime in hospital. Now Byrne seems to be taunting him, forcing him ever closer to the prison place ready and waiting if he slips up.

If it were just the murder mystery alone, it still would have been a good book, but what makes it stand out is the ways in which perceptions, or ideas understood certainties, are shown to determine every aspect of not just a criminal case, but a whole life. Secrets play their own role, but so do truths, especially when the foundations of each become blurred and perhaps revealed to be just plain false. It all adds up to a thrilling manipulation, but also acts as a showcase for the irrationality and stubbornness of human behaviour when we decide we KNOW what's right and just. The realism is further enhanced by the author's unwillingness to portray anything or anyone in black and white. Father Byrne is identified not only as the potential murderer but as a defrocked Catholic priest outed as a paedophile, but he's admitted nothing. While he's been convicted in public opinion, the law needs more, and they just don't have the evidence. He's definitely playing some kind of game and is a nasty piece of work to boot, but does that mean he did it? Evil, maybe. Guilty....?? In the same vein, Micky is a grieving father, but his aggression and aggressive self pity doesn't always hold water. He's not always the likeable person his role seemingly necessitates. The author refuses to allow him a place on any kind of pedestal, him or any of the other characters Darby meets, presenting a picture of complex, messy humanity that clouds every aspect of the case and allows for a cleverly layered story in which the path to finding out what happened to Claire is hindered at every turn. As readers we come in with our own expectations and prejudices, our own 'truths' factoring into how we see and feel about each character before we even get to know them, maybe even holding on to those opinions and emotional responses well past when the evidence points us to something different. In showing us how blinkered each of these characters are, Mooney only underscores how little we all see. It's oh so well done.

This is easily his best work to date, clever and darkly mesmerising. Even if you haven't read anything by the author before, put this on your TBR because as much as it forms part of a long running series, it works just as well as an intro to Darby's world or standalone. Not only that, it's the kind of gripping thriller that will steal hours of your day as you try to work out just what happened. Highly recommended.

ARC via Netgalley

Tasha and Megan Mahoney says

I do enjoy a really well written gripping thriller and was delighted to find that this was one.

This is Part of a series, however I read this as a standalone and found that it didn't stop me being able to follow and enjoy the story. However, this is was such a good book that I would like to read the rest of the series.

This was a really nicely paced thriller and the shocks and twists do not just come at the end. There are plenty of gasp worthy moment throughout.

Despite this being a lot longer than my usual reads, it didn't feel tedious as it did not lose momentum throughout. I was engaged all the way through and at no point did it drag.

This would be a great choice for anyone that enjoys a really good thriller and I highly recommend it.

Thank you to Penguin UK - Michael Joseph and NetGalley for gifting me a review copy of The Snow Girls
The gifting of this book did not influence this review.

Gemma says

Thank you so much for the advanced copy of this. I love this series. One of my favourites and this didn't disappoint. In fact I didn't put it down until it was done! Story is about Darby going back to her home town to speak to a catholic priest who is the prime suspect in a young girls disappearance many years ago. Darby is like an old friend and I just feel like I'm right there in the book. Highly recommend this to anyone who likes a mystery.

Joanne Robertson says

Oh what a tangled web Chris Mooney has weaved here in this chilling thriller. Be prepared for a twisty and very clever storyline and probably one of my very favourite Darby McCormick books since The Dead Room. I've read all of this series now but please don't worry if you haven't as The Snow Girls can definitely be read as a standalone.

Chris Mooney has taken the recent allegations against the Catholic Church and built up a plot surrounding the disappearances of three young girls. Father Byrne is on his deathbed and has decided he wants to talk about the crimes he has been a suspect in. The only problem is, he will only speak to Darby McCormick.

Chris Mooney handles a sensitive issue with a huge amount of understanding here. The scandal surrounding the Catholic Church is used to great effect as the backdrop to this cold case. And as the anniversary of Claire Flynn's disappearance approaches, the emotions of all those it has affected are running high. Darby has

personal connections with many of the characters here, all of whom are well written and intriguing, especially Father Byrne who was such a chilling character creation that he made my skin crawl every time he appeared on the page! It's a well known fact that the parents of missing and murdered children struggle to maintain their relationships after such devastating events and that's something that's also explored within the cast of characters assembled here. I found the interactions between Claire's father and Darby to be incredibly compelling and affecting. There was an unexpected poignancy there that cut through the tense action taking place.

I absolutely loved this riveting book and read it in one sitting whilst curled up on the sofa nursing a cold. It's a real page turner from start to finish so definitely recommended by me!

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Michael Joseph - Penguin UK for an advance copy of The Snow Girls, the eighth novel to feature forensics consultant Darby McCormick.

Darby has returned to her hometown of Belham, Massachusetts to consult on the cold case of six year old Claire Flynn who disappeared eleven years previously but the consultation is not what she expects. The only suspect in not just Claire's disappearance but that of two other young girls, Father Richard Byrne, is dying and will only talk to Darby although what he has to say is also not what she expects.

I thoroughly enjoyed The Snow Girls which is a tense, emotional read with some good twists and a very surprising conclusion. I must admit that I had an inkling of where the novel would end up but it didn't spoil my enjoyment of what was for me a one sitting read, I just couldn't put it down. It is a quieter, more reflective novel than some of Darby's outings (she only gets attacked twice!) and this is due to the format where narrative is split between Darby and her old school friend, Claire's father, Mickey. Darby's narrative is all about the investigation whereas Mickey's is all about his struggle in trying to come to terms with the loss of his daughter and his memories of their time together. I found it incredibly moving and realistic - how do you get on with life when you don't know what happened to your child? In the background to Mickey's pain Darby is relentless in her pursuit of information. She doesn't do a lot of forensic examination but relies on interviews and reason. I love the way she keeps going when all around her are looking for an easy life.

The plot may require a certain suspension of disbelief as there are too many people with big secrets but Mr Mooney has a very readable style of writing and sets a good pace so I was too busy going with the flow to really notice while reading.

Darby McCormick is a real kickass protagonist. She is smart enough to have a doctorate in psychology along side her forensic science qualifications but she is also an action woman with excellent self protection skills, never mind being mentally tough and confident. This perfection could make you sick until you realise that she is a loner with nothing meaningful outside her job. She reveals a softer side in this novel, full of empathy, compassion and a certain amount of soul searching.

The Snow Girls is a good read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

Lucy Langford says

3.5

With a fast paced ending!

Liz Barnsley says

Read all at once over a couple of train journeys yesterday, difficult to believe this is the only one of this series I've read given the high quality of the storytelling.

Proper review will appear as part of the blog tour.

Elisabeth Soane says

This is the latest instalment of the Darby McCormick series and is just as good as the previous.

Darby is called back to her home town to look at the cold case of six year old Claire Flynn who went missing eleven years ago.

The main suspect was, and still is, Father Richard Byrne. He now wants to speak to Darby as he is dying and back in their home town where Claire went missing. As Darby investigates she reacquaint herself with all those involved including her first love and Claire's father Micky. Micky is struggling with the past and wants answers. Claire's disappearance is also linked to the disappearance of two other young girls who disappeared into the snow.

I read this in one sitting and now want to reread the series. Darby is a troubled investigator but wants the answers to the questions no one else asks.

You can read this without having read the previous but the previous instalments add depth to the characters particularly Darby.

Thanks to Penguin and NetGalley for an ARC in return for an honest review.

#TheSnowGirlsChrisMooney #NetGalley

Paromjit says

This is the latest brilliant addition in the Chris Mooney series featuring forensic psychologist consultant Darby McCormick. Darby returns to run down Belham, the Boston town she grew up in and where her Detective father, Big Red, was murdered, and where she exposed the police corruption that made her a persona non grata, hated by the cops as a rat. Detective Chris Kennedy has hired Darby as a consultant to come back and work on a 11 year old cold case. 6 year old Claire Flynn was taken without trace from a snowy hillside, previously 2 other young girls were taken in a similar manner. They are the snow girls, leaving behind griefstricken and inconsolable parents desperately looking for answers, presuming the worst. There was only ever one prime suspect, Father Richard Byrne, defrocked by the Catholic Church after the Boston abuse scandal, linked to the disappearance of all 3 missing girls, becoming the town pariah ever since.

Byrne is terminally ill with cancer, and will only talk to Darby before he dies, taking with him the knowledge of what happened to the girls. Darby expects a confession, but is confronted by a disgustingly evil and manipulative man with an agenda of his own. Mickey Flynn was Darby's first love and is Claire's father, a man unable to find peace and move on from the disappearance of his beloved daughter, leaving him a broken man whose marriage fell apart, and dependent on alcohol. Driven by his efforts to find out what happened to Claire, he assaulted Father Byrne and will go to prison if he goes anywhere near him. A movingly emotional picture emerges of just how completely Mickey has been reduced to a shell of a man, so traumatised and volatile, bitter that the police have never arrested or questioned Byrne. Darby's investigation has her looking closely at Father Keith Cullen, discovering family secrets and up against a killer determined to ensure that she gets nowhere close to the truth of the snow girls.

Mooney takes the reader on a disturbing and unsettling psychological journey, littered with red herrings, and with an unexpected ending that you will not see coming. His ability to paint a picture of Belham, the characters that reside in it, and the fallout from the Boston abuse scandal and the Catholic Church is phenomenally good. The detailed depiction of the unravelling of Mickey feels so authentic, the pain and despair of never knowing what happened to Claire is slowly but surely destroying him. Darby is confronted by her own personal dilemmas as she learns more about her parents that she never knew, not to mention the secrets and lies that simmer beneath the facades of other people that she uncovers. This is beautifully written and well plotted bleak and atmospheric dark crime fiction that never once fails to engage the reader. Highly recommended. Many thanks to Penguin Michael Joseph for an ARC.

peggy says

It has been a while since I have read this author and boy have I missed him.

I love the Darby McCormick series and I have been with her since the beginning. What can I say about this book. WOW AMAZING FANTASTIC and so many more adjectives. In places in this book I wanted to go and have a bath in bleach. This is writing at its best and OMG !!!! the ending what a twist and I never saw it coming.

This is a real page turner and this author is back with a Bang !!!!!!

Makes me want to search through my library and read from the beginning of this amazing and exhilarating series.

I would like to thank the author Chris Mooney, Penguin U K- Michael Joseph and Net.galley for giving me the opportunity to read this book in return for giving an honest review.

Mary Johnson says

The Snow Girls by Chris Carter

Another great story staring Darby McCormick whose career I have followed for several years.

The main thread connects fiction with the real life horror of paedophile priests that erupted world wide after exposure in Boston. Cleverly intertwining reality with fiction brings the story to life.

A complex plot with endless side and past stories of both Darby and the other cast members it is sometimes hard to keep hold of the separate threads. However, it held my attention sufficiently to finish in one sleepless night. Engaging read.

Zoe Mann says

‘The Snow Girls’ by Chris Mooney is the 8th novel in the Darby McCormick series. Having read Mooney’s previous novel ‘Every Pretty Thing’ which was also a 5 star read I had extremely high expectations for ‘The Snow Girls’.

One of Mooney’s favourite fan letters is from a fan calling him SICK, SICK, SICK and a DISTURBED individual before asking him when his next book will be released. He takes you to places in a novel that you could never imagine in your worst nightmares. Hearing your heart thump in your ears, wanting to hide behind your pillow and leaving you sleeping with the light on. He is one of a few authors that can make me feel well and truly terrified.

‘The Snow Girls’ follows Investigator Darby McCormick who gets a call to return home to help with an 11 year old cold case, involving the disappearance of 6 year old Claire Flynn. The main suspect, Father Richard Byrne is at deaths door and he’s willing to talk, under one circumstance, he talks only to McCormick.

Returning to her childhood home opens up old wounds for McCormick. We start to understand her more by learning about her strict, religious childhood and the rejection she faced from her first love. We also learn that McCormick is not welcome in the town due to many of the locals having secrets that they want to remain hidden.

As the novel unfolds many secrets are revealed resulting in a lot of twists and turns along the way. This is a novel that will have you hooked from the first page and every time you feel you are on the right path another twist will throw you completely off course.

I recommended Mooney’s previous novel ‘Every Pretty Thing’ to all my family and friends who were just as blown away as myself after reading. I would recommend the whole series and ‘The Snow Girls’ to anyone similar to myself who cries out for a thriller to have well rounded yet flawed characters, a plot that has so many intricate pieces to fit together that when they do it is just mind blowing and an author that tells his story so well it leaves you terrified yet unable to put down the book.

Thank you to netgalley and the publisher for a free ARC in return for an honest review.

Jess?? says

The snow girls by Chris Mooney is book 8 in the Darby McCormick series and what another great addition it is.

This series had been a favourite of mine since the beginning and I can never wait until the next book is available.

This one is page flipping, thrilling and gripping and a little more emotional to.

It wasn’t as dark or gritty as the previous books. Darby also wasn’t as badass as normal and I must admit I missed Jackson cooper and their working / friendship and their will they won’t they relationship, I hope there will be more to come from this series and we get to see Jackson again ?

I would recommend this series to anyone who is looking for something different and a little darker.

Lesley says

Chris Mooney never fails to deliver the goods. Every bit as good as every other Darby McCormick book.

Sarah says

I've read nearly all of the books that feature Darby McCormick, though it must be well over a year ago since I read the last one. I felt the author gave enough background so anyone who may not have read any of the other books, could certainly read this as a stand alone.

What I really enjoyed most about this book is Darby investigating a cold case. There is always something that I find fascinating about cold cases and even though technology may have improved over the years, there is always the risk of witnesses dying or their memory not being as good. I also loved Mickey Flynn's character as well as finding out more about his and his families background. It really makes for some intriguing reading and I couldn't tear myself away from the pages.

There are lots of secrets and lies throughout this book which definitely makes for a compelling read. The further into the story I got, the more hooked I became. Towards the end got quite emotional and before I knew it, I was having to grab a tissue to wipe away the tears. It will certainly have you going through a mix of emotions.

The Snow Girls is a chilling yet addictive read that I couldn't get enough of. I loved the build up of tension and really was on tender hooks as to whether Darby was going to solve the case or not. A must read for crime thriller fans.

My thanks to Michael Joseph and NetGalley for an advanced readers copy of this book. All opinions are my own and not biased in anyway.
