



Literary Speaking

Invisible By Carla Buckley

Reviewed by Kathy Jacobs, Director, Yankton Community Library

I am always looking for new authors and recently discovered Carla Buckley. Her second book entitled *Invisible* is a captivating read with themes of old family secrets, illness and death, grief, relationships, and environmental crisis.

Set in the small town of Black Bear, Minnesota, this is the story of two sisters who were very close and became even closer after the untimely death of their mother.

Dana is the impulsive sister and Julie, the older and more nurturing. A family secret compels Dana to suddenly flee from home and from Julie, the only family she has. She does not see or speak to Julie for sixteen years. A phone call from Peyton, Julie's teenage daughter and a person Dana has never met, forces Dana to make the decision to return home to see Julie who is gravely ill.

When Dana arrives in Black Bear, she learns she is too late to reunite with Julie as she has died. Instead, Dana must face Julie's husband that she has never liked and their teenage daughter Peyton, who is reeling from her mom's death. But she also must face family friends, her old friends that she hasn't seen in sixteen years, and a community that has changed since she left. Black Bear is not the same place and seems to hold secrets that Dana realizes she must uncover. She soon discovers that the people of Black Bear, even her old friends, will not help her and are hostile to her questions and pleas for help. People of all ages in Black Bear are dying, and

while they see no common denominator in the deaths, Dana is sure one exists.

We soon come to understand that Dana and Peyton are very much alike in that they both keep the world at arm's length. Peyton has one passion, the ocean, and Buckley begins each of Peyton's chapters with a passage about the ocean and how all of its creatures, as different as they are, still inhabit the same space and behave in very human ways. We see that the ocean, like a family, is much more than what is visible. There are all the undercurrents, the dark secrets that lie hidden beneath the surface. Some are washed ashore and reveal themselves. Others never come to light. However, as in a family, the ocean continues to exist while each of its creatures lives through its personal struggles to survive.

Peyton is struggling with her first relationship with a boy. Dana now struggles with a former relationship that she let die when she left Black Bear so suddenly. Both of these relationships are important parts of the book and play out in unexpected ways.

Invisible addresses so many themes, all woven into a complicated pattern that could easily be anyone's life. It is a great read for both adults and young adults and is a great book for a book club. The library has purchased a book bag of this title for book club discussions.

The library also has Carla Buckley's first book *The Things That Keep Us Here* and we will keep her on our radar and continue to purchase books she authors as she has great promise. If you are a fan of Jodi Picoult and Lisa Unger, you will probably also be drawn to Carla Buckley.



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