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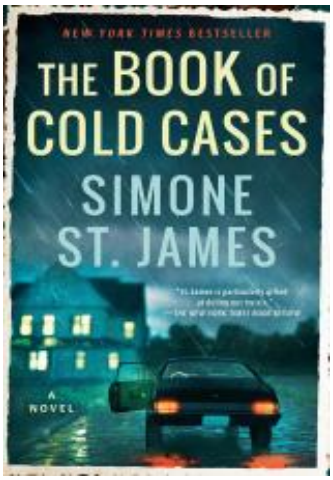
The Book of Cold Cases

by Simone St. James



About the Book

A true crime blogger gets more than she bargained for while interviewing the woman acquitted of two cold case slayings in this chilling new novel from the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE SUN DOWN MOTEL.

In 1977, Claire Lake, Oregon, was shaken by the Lady Killer Murders: Two men, seemingly randomly, were murdered with the same gun, with strange notes left behind. Beth Greer was the perfect suspect --- a rich, eccentric 23-year-old woman, seen fleeing one of the crimes. But she was acquitted, and she retreated to the isolation of her mansion.

Oregon, 2017. Shea Collins is a receptionist, but by night, she runs a true crime website, the Book of Cold Cases --- a passion fueled by the attempted abduction she escaped as a child. When she meets Beth by chance, Shea asks her for an interview. To Shea?s surprise, Beth says yes.

They meet regularly at Beth?s mansion, though Shea is never comfortable there. Items move when she?s not looking, and she could swear she?s seen a girl outside the window. The allure of learning the truth about the case from the smart, charming Beth is too much to resist, but even as they grow closer, Shea senses something isn?t right. Is she making friends with a manipulative murderer, or are there other dangers lurking in the darkness of the Greer house?

Discussion Guide

1. There are multiple instances where Beth?s looks are used against her during the investigation and media coverage of the Lady Killer murders. What do you think the author is trying to say about a woman?s looks and how they relate to victimhood?

2. Think about how the Greer mansion is described in the novel. What do you think the mansion?s construction symbolizes?

3. The novel explores the case of a female serial killer. Why do you think the author chose to write about a serial killer who is a woman?

4. Why do you think Beth and Detective Black believe Shea is the only one who can solve this case? Do you think there are similarities between Beth and Shea that influence them? What are your thoughts on the parallels between Beth and Shea?

5. How do you think Shea?s time with Beth and diving deeper into the Lady Killer case helped her in her own life? Why do you think this is?

6. Discuss the note *Am I bitter or am I sweet? Ladies can be either.* This comes up various times in the novel. How do you interpret this phrase, and how do you think it influences the characters and their actions?

7. The novel shows the relationships between Beth and her family and Shea and her family. How would you compare these relationships? How do you think they have shaped Beth and Shea either positively or negatively, if at all?

8. Do you think that Beth Greer is a murderer? What is influencing your opinion?

9. Think about the ghosts in the novel. What do you think motivates them to stay around? Do you think they are or were evil?

10. Thinking of your answer to the previous question, what is your interpretation of the ending?

11. Beth and Shea both face struggles in taking control of their own lives. Even though their circumstances are different, what do you think the author is trying to tell us about female autonomy with these two characters?

Author Bio

Simone St. James is the *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning author of A BOX FULL OF DARKNESS, MURDER ROAD, THE BOOK OF COLD CASES, THE SUN DOWN MOTEL, THE BROKEN GIRLS, LOST AMONG THE LIVING and THE HAUNTING OF MADDY CLARE. She wrote her first ghost story, about a haunted library, when she was in high school, and spent 20 years behind the scenes in the television business before leaving to write full-time.

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