

“Caught” by Harlan Coben. Penguin Group, 2010. 388 pages

Social worker Dan Mercer is committed and caring, known as a friend to troubled teens. He is well-liked and respected in his community. Until the night he answers a distress call from one of his kids.

Tabloid reporter Wendy Tynes works with the local police on her television show, *Caught in the Act*. Her mission is to reveal hidden predators in her community. When a local social worker takes the bait, she thinks they’ve caught a real monster red-handed. A search of his home uncovers evidence that seems to back up the charges, and Mercer’s reputation is ruined.

No one is more shocked than Wendy when Dan is acquitted on a technicality. Unable to dismiss the damning evidence she has in hand; Wendy continues her investigation and discovers that the facts really don’t add up. She finally agrees to meet with Mercer, to hear his side of the story. The meeting ends abruptly when Mercer is shot and killed.

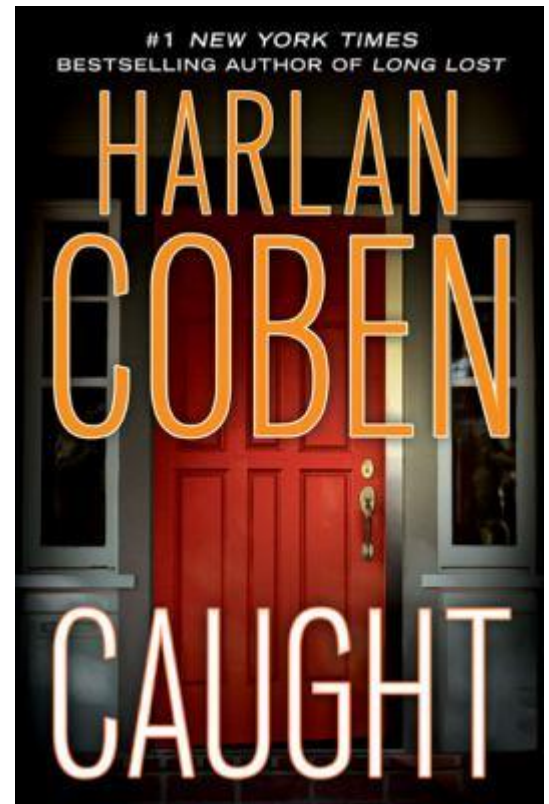
Wendy’s search yields a connection to a small group of prominent men who have been ruined by scandal in the last couple of years. As the big picture begins to come into focus, Wendy finds herself in the killer’s sights. Lives hang in the balance as she searches for the answer.

Seventeen year old Haley McWaid is a good girl – captain of her school’s lacrosse team, academically successful and sweet-natured. When she doesn’t come home one night, her parents immediately alert the police. The community rallies around the family as the search for Haley drags into weeks and months with no new breaks. Then Haley’s cell phone is located in a most unlikely place and the stakes go through the roof.

Best-selling author Harlan Coben has done it again! *Caught* is an intricately woven, suspenseful page turner. The plots twists and turns in completely unexpected directions, keeping readers perched on the edge of their seats.

All too often when I read suspense fiction, I am able to figure out where the story is headed. Coben kept me in the dark almost to the bitter end. His multiple storylines converge and break apart so convincingly, it’s nearly impossible to pick the guilty faces from the cast of characters.

Caught goes a level deeper than many page-turners. Coben’s characters are complex and real, with histories and baggage. Nothing is what it seems at first glance, and no one is entirely guilty...or completely innocent. It’s a fast, gripping read that’s ultimately a story of betrayal, guilt, remorse and forgiveness.



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