

The Suffering of Strangers by Caro Ramsay

4 stars

Baby trafficking.

DI Costello is hoping for an early night. Time to have a meal, wash her hair and try to restore her damaged ego after the pounding she had received in the recent court case which eventually found Bernadette Kissel guilty of gross negligence of her baby. As she is about to reach home she receives a call. A mother, Roberta Chisholm, had come out of the off-licence to find that her six-week-old baby boy, Sholto, who she had left in the car for only a few minutes had been stolen and replaced with a Down Syndrome baby.

Costello realises that there is a lot more to this story than a one baby being swapped for another and so the search for Sholto starts and Costello quickly discovers that other babies have been sold. They need to find Sholto before he is sold as well.

I found the storyline excellent and thought-provoking and that alone deserves a full five stars. However, I am still feeling frustrated as I didn't understand who or what or how certain characters seemed to fit into the picture. DCI Colin Anderson was obviously Costello's boss (still is) but why is there animosity between them? Why is Anderson now on Cold Cases? What happened to DS Viktor Mulholland and DC Gordon Wyngate to keep them office bound? Yes, of course, I could read the previous books to find the answers, but surely authors must realise that people might see a book and think it sounds like a perfect read, not knowing that there is a series with history on the protagonists?

I'm not sure how one can overcome these barriers – does the author need to include some kind of explanation into their latest book filling in some details that might help a new reader?

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