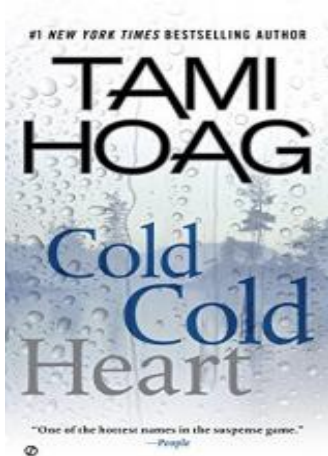


# Cold Cold Heart

by Tami Hoag

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## About the Book

Dana Nolan was a promising young TV reporter until a notorious serial killer tried to add her to his list of victims. Nearly a year has passed since surviving her ordeal, but the physical, emotional and psychological scars run deep. Struggling with the torment of post-traumatic stress syndrome, plagued by flashbacks and nightmares as dark as the heart of a killer, Dana returns to her hometown in an attempt to begin to put her life back together. But home doesn't provide the comfort she expects.

Dana's harrowing story and her return to small town life have rekindled police and media interest in the unsolved case of her childhood best friend, Casey Grant, who disappeared without a trace the summer after their graduation from high school. Terrified of truths long buried, Dana reluctantly begins to look back at her past. Viewed through the dark filter of PTSD, old friends and loved ones become suspects and enemies. Questioning everything she knows, refusing to be defined by the traumas of her past and struggling against excruciating odds, Dana seeks out a truth that may prove too terrible to be believed?

## Discussion Guide

1. The prologue of COLD COLD HEART opens with a chilling scene as Dana is poised to try and fight her captor for her life. Imagine yourself in that situation. Do you think you could summon the courage to do what she did? Do some people have more of a survivor's instinct than others?
2. As the only surviving victim of a serial killer, Dana's scars are both physical and emotional. Consider the differences between the two types of pain. Which would be the worst for you to live with? How would you cope with each?
3. In Chapter 1, Dr. Rutten explains Dana's brain injury to her mother, saying every brain is different but there's one thing he does know to be true in every case: "The person you love will be changed from this, and that will be the hardest

thing of all to accept.? This indeed plays out throughout the novel. Discuss old Dana and new Dana.

4. Dana's mom and stepdad deal with Dana's ordeal and recovery in very different ways. Discuss their coping mechanisms, both healthy and unhealthy. Does one deal better than the other?
5. Tami Hoag never goes into too much detail about what happened to Dana during her captivity. Why do you think that is?
6. When Dana's brain injury results in memory loss she must learn about her best friend's disappearance all over again, essentially reliving it. Can you imagine having to relive a traumatic event all over again and experience it anew?
7. How does Dana's perception of her teenage self differ from how others viewed her at that time? Are you the same person you were in high school? How would someone perceive you differently today from your teenage self?
8. If you were the victim of a horrific crime would you want to remember what happened?
9. Discuss John Villante. Do you find him to be a sympathetic character?
10. What about Tim Carver? Did your opinion of him evolve as the story went on?
11. Discuss post-traumatic stress disorder and the different ways Dana and John both experience it. Do any of the other characters exhibit signs of PTSD?
12. How is the stray dog an important figure in the story? What effect does the dog have on John and his life?
13. What were your thoughts about Dan Hardy when he was first introduced into the story? Did those thoughts evolve?
14. John Villante has a complex relationship and history with his father. Dana has difficulty in her present-day relationship with her stepfather. Discuss the father/child dynamics and how the parents' lives impact their children's lives in this story.
15. Through the tragedy of Dana's experience, she gets an opportunity to reinvent her life. If you could reimagine your life, would you do things differently?

## **Author Bio**

Tami Hoag is the #1 international bestselling author of more than 30 books. There are more than 40 million copies of her books in print in more than 30 languages. Renowned for combining thrilling plots with character-driven suspense, Hoag first hit the *New York Times* bestseller list with *NIGHT SINS*, and each of her books since has been a bestseller. She lives in California.

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