

Cold in July *by* Joe R. Lansdale



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Reviews of the [Cold in July](#) *by* Joe R. Lansdale

Oso

I've been reading Joe R. Lansdale for twenty years. Being totally enamored with the Hap and Leonard series (Mucho Mojo being my personal favorite) I was always confident and excited to branch out into Joe's other works of inspiration. Bubba Ho-Tep let me know that Joe could still keep me laughing while gripping the edge of my seat rooting for a legendary hero that I couldn't stand to think wasn't with us anymore - so every time I read the book or watch the movie, I get to suspend that old belief system that Elvis isn't here with us like he used to be... at least until the end of the movie. Cold in July was totally captivating. I read it in eight hours nonstop - okay - there was coffee and a few popcorn snacks. It made me think a lot about getting into farming and caused me to listen to Freddie's Dead several times by Curtis Mayfield.

Cold in July begins a gradual process that resembles a fluid exploration of the reader's mind. Joe Lansdale is a master of this practice. He flows like water, seeking every entry point, until all aspects of your psyche is filled. Cold in July ebbs and then flows - building suspense - until you are just about ready to explode. He continues this intense escalation of pressure - and it all happens again - until he finally and mercifully - howbeit secretly - opens a slight valve and allows a little of that pressure to be released. As a result you find yourself with tears in your eyes or laughing out loud or thinking that maybe you know just what's getting ready to happen and then something happens: a treacherous twist and turn in the road and you've run off into the canal again and your vehicle is sinking and filling with that cold water. And a window suddenly collapses into the vehicle, the water's rushing in and it's up to you to find your way out to the surface. You have to be good at holding your breath. Cold in July is filled with plenty of malevolence more than willing to knock that breath out of you as well as the benevolent spirit of knowing when to let you breathe again.

This book is more than just a story of challenge, fear, awakening, change, scars and healing. It will teach you something about yourself as well as the people around you. Love and forgiveness can run as deep and profound as you're willing to explore. But things are not always as they appear and your principles and beliefs will be tested. Long before you finish Cold in July, you'll be looking much deeper, not only at the world around you but at yourself, too. By the time you finish this novel, you will not be the same.

Roram

When Richard Dane shoots and kills a young burglar in the middle of the night he becomes an immediate hero in his East Texas town, even though all he wants to do is put the experience behind him. Racked with guilt he goes to the burial where the only other person in attendance is Ben Russell, the dead boy's father, just out of prison. As one might expect, Dane's life takes a turn for the worse.

Without spoiling the story, just know there are twists and turns that make 'Cold in July' a worthy read.

But, unlike the film version of the book, which is wonderfully gritty and stripped down to the bare essentials of a dark story that just seems to get darker, the book leans towards humorous banter which diffuses the tension between Dane and Russell, who are otherwise excellent natural enemies.

Readers of crime fiction will not be disappointed with Cold in July, though, with its highly original plot. The action scenes are taut, Richard Dane's guilt is convincing and Russell is a pretty good misunderstood villain.

Anayaron

Waking up in the middle of the night to unfamiliar sounds within ones own house is always eerie, but usually ends up being the result of something harmless. Unfortunately for Richard Dane this isn't the case. The sounds that wake him and his wife in the middle of the night are those of a burglar having just broken in, one who happens to be armed with a handgun. Luckily Richard Dane also has a gun (did I mention the book takes place in Texas?) and is the faster of the two when it comes to pulling the trigger. The result, one less burglar in the world, his last mark upon civilization being the chunks of brain matter that ended up on the wall behind him as the bullet punched through the back of his skull. Oh, and one very pissed off ex-con father who wants revenge. The father's name is Ben Russell and his new goal in life is taking Richard Dane's son away the way Richard Dane took his son, an eye for an eye so to speak (hell, a son for a son -- I'm pretty sure that one was in the Hammurabi Code as well). To Ben Russell it doesn't matter that his son was a lowlife burglar and that Richard Dane's son is an innocent four year old, he will have his vengeance. Richard Dane, however, isn't planning on just sitting back and letting the wishes of the ex-con father play out. No, no, no. He is going to do everything he can to keep his son alive, even if that means having to take a second life. Little do the two fathers realize not everything is as it seems. Forces are at work that neither man knows about, ones that will do everything within their own power to stop the two from uncovering the truth of the dead burglar and Ben Russell's son.

Cold in July was, by far, one of the best books I have read this year. The unexpected twists and turns were amazing, and the dark suspense that began on page one never let up. It is one of those books that you literally can't put down because you just have to know what is going to unfold next, especially once the reality behind the dead burglar starts to take shape. After that there just is no turning back. One discovery leads to another and before you know it the book is racing toward a final confrontation between all the players. Simply put, this was an amazing read, one which I have to recommend to anyone who enjoys suspenseful tales. Like F. Paul Wilson said in his story introduction to "Slasher" in his collection *The Barrens and Others*: "If you've never read *Cold in July*, do so immediately." Seriously, open up another tab on your computer screen, go to the correct page on Amazon, and order a copy. You won't be sorry. Just be ready for your electric bill to be a little higher than normal this time around because you will be reading long into the night. Nothing you can do to change it, but thankfully it most certainly will be money well spent.

bass

I saw the movie-and the book does not disappoint. I have no idea why the movie was not more successful. If you get a chance, read the book first. It is a rare, exceptional true crime book. The movie has good cast & was done as a Indie-Film. I mention this because it is rare when book-movie are of equal quality. This "little" movie proves the exception is possible. Like I said in my title review, this story starts out as a simple breaking & entering, but grows & grows to a lights on thriller. Trust me, read the book & you WILL be looking for the movie. Even now it is gaining cult status.

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