



## Stonefly

*Scott J. Holliday*

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Jacob Duke has come back to Braketon—a sleepy, backwoods town bordering Dover, the mental institution where he spent his formative years. Jacob's intention is to enjoy Braketon's woods and water for the first time as a free man, but he soon discovers that Dover isn't through with him yet. Driven by a curse that compels him to grant any wish he hears, Jacob is drawn back into his disturbing former life by a young boy's desire to see his own father dead.

Complicating things are Lori Nelson, Jacob's friend-with-benefits who continues to put new boyfriends in his path, and Motown, Jacob's friend from his years at Dover, who carries a secret that rocks Jacob's foundation and makes him question his own morality.

Stonefly is a suspense thriller that rockets to a surprising, but satisfying end. Stay tuned for the second book in the series, entitled Broken Horizon.

## **Stonefly Details**

Date : Published March 28th 2013 by Haley Road Publishing

ISBN : 9780988555433

Author : Scott J. Holliday

Format : Paperback 327 pages

Genre : Fiction, Fantasy, Mystery, Paranormal

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## From Reader Review **Stonefly** for online ebook

### **Fi says**

I wasn't quite sure what to expect with *Stonefly* and to be honest I thought it really wasn't going to be my cup of tea. How wrong I was! I was hooked within the first couple of pages and didn't put it down until I was finished.

*Stonefly* is the story of Jacob, a seemingly normal young man until you he has some sort of curse that compels him to grant people's wishes but this isn't necessarily a good thing. If he fails to do this within six days the person who made the wish will die. Jacob develops his talent in a mental institution at the tender age of twelve after one of his classmates makes a wish about another student and commits murder. Returning to the town where the institution is located he soon becomes embroiled in another murderous wish, only this time the intended victim is somebody close to his heart.

This was such a surprising read for me, one which I completely loved and am now waiting impatiently to hear about the sequel as it's the first book in a series! Hillary's writing was superb, his characters were completely believable and well fleshed out. Jacob was fabulous, anyone who can destroy their own eardrums in order not to hear any more wishes is obviously in need of help. I loved his mother too, an executive with a high powered job she would do anything for her son including covering up the fact that his father was in fact a genie!

The story moved seamlessly between past and present as we learn more about Jacob's 'curse', his friends in the institution - especially Motown and his pregnant teenage girlfriend who both enter Jacob's life again in unexpected ways years later. I can't wait to find out more about Jacob, his father who made a brief appearance in *Stonefly* and about Lori, who is quite possibly the love of Jacob's life but we don't know if she feels the same way.

If you're looking for something a little bit different, that holds your attention from the first to the last page and is beautifully & provocatively written then you can't go far wrong with *Stonefly*.

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### **Autumn Is Azathoth says**

Review of *Stonefly* by Scott Holliday (Jacob Duke #1)

5 stars

An amazingly powerful and emotionally impacting novel, "Stonefly" deserves more than 5 stars; 36 would be nice. I am so thankful that this is the first in a series, and I can only "wish" (intentional reference) that #2 would be available tomorrow. I virtually read this in one sitting, over the course of several hours, and again, the world around me dropped away as the novel totally absorbed me into its milieu. Jacob is a protagonist unlike any I have ever encountered. His "curse" is seemingly Supernatural in nature, although he insists it was a genetic legacy from his unknown father (remember classical Greek mythology, in which Zeus and other gods temporarily transformed into humans and animals to mate with desired human females—so I guess it would be possible for someone practically a demigod to also take human form, and produce a child). If Jacob hears anyone "wishing," he is bound to that wish, and must grant it within six days, or the wisher dies. At age ten, he does so to save a girl in his fifth grade class; and the next seven years, until his

eighteenth birthday, are spent in Dover, a psychiatric institution in mid-Michigan. On his eighteenth birthday Jacob is released, but he is different; he has been deaf since age seventeen. From this point he tries to live a “normal” as possible life, a small business owner, with a female friend (not a relationship-friend), and occasional contact with his career-driven mother and the police captain who loves her in vain. But of course, when one possesses a “gift” or more properly a “curse” like this, “normal” is a thing found only in stories.

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## **Andrea Ika says**

Stonefly

Scott J Holliday

Review: Stonefly

Series: Jakob Duke #1

Author: Scott J. Holliday

No of Pages: 320

Release Date: June 1st 2013 by Haley Road Publishing

Received From: Netgalley

Rating: 5/5

### **Blurb**

Jacob Duke has come back to Braketon--a sleepy, backwoods town bordering Dover, the mental institution where he spent his formative years. Jacob's intention is to enjoy Braketon's woods and water for the first time as a free man, but he soon discovers that Dover isn't through with him yet. Driven by a curse that compels him to grant any wish he hears, Jacob is drawn back into his disturbing former life by a young boy's desire to see his own father dead. Complicating things is the irresistible and erratic Lori Nelson, who continues to put new boyfriends in Jacob's path, along with Motown, Jacob's friend from his years at Dover, who carries a secret that rocks Jacob's foundation and makes him question his own morality.

### **My opinion**

The plot sped along and kept me guessing. You found out about his curse and that he's a genie pretty early on, but the rules surrounding this curse you learn as JD learns. A little at a time throughout the book. And what JD goes through and what he does, to others and to himself, sounds appalling but then you get the back story and each time I had an Aha moment. The story starts out simply enough with a surprising wish and you wonder how the author is going to handle the situation. It definitely did not lead to where I expected but was refreshing in its conclusion. This book helped get me out of a long reading slump where I wasn't finishing books

It is one of Best books I've read in a long time. Top writing skills; best plot; most winning characters. Really remarkably good read. I seldom find a book as perfect as this one.

It will appeal to men; to women; to teens who want a murder / mystery / suspense / romance / paranormal (just enough, not too whacky).

Can't wait to read the rest in the series

I highly recommend this book. This was such an enjoyable book.

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### **Jennifer McLean says**

This was a wonderfully unique book and so worth the time to read it. I'll start with a synopsis then give my reasons why you as the reader should invest some time in this book.

Jacob Duke has a compulsion to grant wishes. When he is ten a schoolmate wishes her tormentor dead and Jake is compelled to grant her wish. This act sends Jake to a mental institution in Braketon. We fast forward to ten years later and Jake has come back to Braketon to do some lazy fly fishing, he wants some alone time. He had promised himself while in the institution that someday he would enjoy beautiful Braketon summer days from outside the institution's walls. On his mini vacation from his tattoo shop, Jake doesn't intend on meeting a young boy named Frankie. Frankie makes a terrible wish. "I wish someone would kill my dad." Now Jake has six days to change Frankie's mind or fulfill his wish.

Some books build up a huge head of steam very quickly and the reader feels like they're rushing headlong into a spectacularly overwhelming ending. Other books are a slow build of tension that keeps the reader reading steadily well into the night not because of the adrenaline rush but because they just have to know what happens to the characters. Scott Holliday's "Stonefly" is an exquisitely written book that follows the latter form of tension. Its tension is not the breathless kind but is still incredibly effective in compelling the reader to keep reading. We want to know what compels Jake to grant wishes, we want to know if Jake can rescue Frankie from his horribly abusive father and we want to see a happily ever after for Jake at the end.

Even by the first chapter I was trepidatious on wishing for that happily ever after for Jake but I knew I'd love this book. Sometimes just the sheer poetic beauty of the writer's style tells you you're gonna love this read. That's what this book was like for me, a five star slow boiling need to see what was gonna happen in Jake's unusual world. Go get this book, you'd be missing something awesome if you skip it.

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### **Eileen says**

#### **Review**

\*\*\*\*.5 Rating 4.5

The description appealed to my reader's instincts, Stonefly the bait and I was caught hook, line and sinker. I usually don't read novels under 250 pages but this one captured the whole plot in 152 pages and it didn't sell itself short.

The author of Stonefly, Scott J Holliday been a writer for some years but only recently has he been published. Stonefly is the first of a series involving the character of Jacob Duke; a complex, unusual young man, born with a curse. He hasn't known his Father and his Mother neglects to give substance to the man who impregnated her. A strong willed career woman she is a powerful force in her son's life.

Lori Nelson comes into Jacob's life as a frightened, beaten young female, who with Jacob's help, finds herself becoming stronger and more confident although she has a tendency to choose inadequate boyfriends or "assholes" as they morph from lovers to exes. Jacob loves Lori but never seems to find the right time to make his feelings known.

Motown, a young adult patient at Dover is either crazy or too in tune with his demons to want to survive. Holliday's depiction of the inmates of Dover, the mental institution, gives depth and a different insight into

the mental conditions suffered.

Holliday draws you in, introducing young Michael, the abused child beaten by Darnell Collins; a nasty bully who lashes out at anyone in his way. Not someone you would want to meet at night or indeed the day either. With the use of the past entwining with the present, Holliday answers the questions. Without spoiling the story, I went from grimacing over the physical cause of Jacob's deafness to understanding the reason why. I thoroughly enjoyed Scott's style of telling the story from Jacob's point of view, of going through his fears, his anger and his amusing anecdotes. Yes, there was the mention of "genies or djinns" but to let this mislead you to dismiss the book before you turned the pages would be to do the Author a great injustice and you would miss out on a very different kind of a fast paced thriller with a very unexpected end.

I can't wait for Broken Horizon and what I'm sure will be more fantastic books in the series.

I was given a copy of Stonefly by NetGalley, thank you.

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### **Zoe Brooks says**

This is a lovely short novel. Written in the first person, it gives the central character a strong individual voice. The reader gets inside his head from the outset: "Hey there," I said, pantomining a wave. Idiot. Why not how howdy partner while we're at it."

Jacob speaks of his "curse" with a matter-of-factness that means that we don't question it. At first. But Jacob has a history, which comes out during the course of the book. Not only is there the period of the mental institution, but also the action that put him there. This unfolding of Jacob's past helps make this more than a simple modern fantasy story.

His mother told him that she believed his father was a genie or djinn and Jacob believes that he has inherited the djinn's curse of being obliged to grant wishes, but without a genie's magic to fulfill the wish. Hence when the boy wishes his own father dead, Jacob is faced with a dilemma, for as he explains: Make a wish of a djinn and he's bound to grant it. If he cannot grant it - or if he chooses not to grant it - within six days, you will die.

Jacob discovers that the boy's father is abusive towards his son and wife, the local bully, in fact: This guy was comic-book evil. But Jacob cannot risk his newly gained freedom by killing the man. But he must succeed or the boy will drop dead. That moral dilemma is the major plot driver for me. Without spoiling the book for you, let us just say that the plot twists nicely towards the end.

Towards the end of the book I started to debate whether the magic was real or not. It is accepted by the main character, as well as by his mother, Lori and Motown. But it could just be coincidence or something to do with Jacob's mental condition. It doesn't matter. The ambiguity of magic realism is what appeals to me. It's up to you to decide.

The book was given to me by the book's publicist in return for a fair review.

This review first appeared on the magic realism books blog <http://magic-realism-books.blogspot.com>

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## **Alex McGilvery says**

Stonefly  
Scott J. Holliday  
Haley Road Publishing

Stonefly is not the book I expected when I started reading it. It is a far superior story to the one I expected. It was the whole wish granting thing that pushed my expectations in a different direction. I expected a story about a person who had the power to make wishes happen. Instead the story is about Jacob Duke, who has the responsibility to grant wishes, but no special power to do so.

He has returned to the landscape that he saw out the windows of Dover, an institute for the dangerously insane. He spent years there as a result of granting his first wish. All Jacob wants to do is flyfish, but he meets Frankie - a ten year old who wishes someone would kill his dad. Jacob checks out the man and if there was anyone who needed killing it was Darren Collins, but Jacob isn't happy with the idea, but there are consequences for not granting a wish and they are unthinkable.

Part of what surprised me about the book is the depth of the characters that Holliday uses to populate his book. Even the characters with bit parts get careful attention so that we feel we know them. Jacob is both matter of fact and tortured by his curse. He is aware of the ethical problems with the wishes, but he is also very much aware that we humans can't stop wishing. ??I would strongly recommend this book for anybody who enjoys a good roller coaster of a ride. I will be looking forward to the next book in the Jacob Duke series.

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## **Stefanie says**

Do you want more reviews like this? Check out my blog about books

How I loved this book! This was definitely like a breath of fresh air, one that was long overdue as well! From the moment I started reading this book I was completely hooked. I really liked the idea on which this story was based, I mean: a real life Genie/jinn. That's definitely a topic I've never read about before. Things that I really enjoyed about this book were the characters, the storyline, the writing, the fact that it will continue in a second book, actually just about everything. I don't have a doubt in my mind about reading the next book in the series when it comes out.

Jacob isn't the most average of people, but you soon start understanding why. He has a very difficult life and has had an even worse youth. In my opinion his character really just worked for me. What was written about him in the present concurred with the things in his past, at least that's how I perceived it. Just like Jacob, Lori was a complex yet still likeable character. What I also really liked was how the characters interacted with each other. These conversations and meet-ups felt very realistic.

The story was just grand! It was paced just right, you never put this book down voluntarily. It continuously kept me guessing about what would be happening while marveling at this epic tale. This book just demanded to be read once you had glanced at the first page and it was a wonderful feeling. It has been a longtime since I've read a book that intrigued me this much and it felt great to have this experience. And now onto the next topic: the writing. This beautiful prose just lifted this story to the next level for me. Scott Holliday is a true

master of the written word, the way he can so effortlessly go from present to past and back again or just pulling you along with Jacob on his quest to fulfill this wish. And how he keeps this book pretty lighthearted is another great feat. Many a great writer would struggle with keeping this book away from the deep and dark themes that are buried in between the lines.

“Broken Horizon” is the next book in this series and I’m keeping my eyes peeled for it! And so will you once you pick up this masterwork and give it a read.

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### **Carol says**

When he was ten years old, Jacob Duke was there when another child made a very nasty but heartfelt wish. Over the next several days he tried to control his trembling, tried to understand why he was so hot. He was compelled to grant her wish. As soon as he did, he felt normalcy returning to his mind and body. Oh, he was also put in a very secure facility for the criminally insane. There he made an unlikely friend. Slowly, through trial and error, the two worked out the details of Jacob's curse - this wish granting business. There he discovered if he did not grant an individual's wish in six days, that person would die.

On his eighteenth birthday, Jake's mother had him released at the first possible moment. The drive home brought hard questions and Jake got some hard answers. His mother, deciding she wanted a child, tracked all the details until the time was right. Jacob's father was a gypsy working with a traveling show. He was handsome, his eyes were incredible. Though she never had anything else to do with him, he had left something behind for Jake. Explaining to her son she believed his father was a genie (djinn), she was not surprised at his curse.

When Jake went to Braketown (the town near the institution where he'd spent his formative years) it was to spend the weekend fishing and enjoying the time 'outside the fences'. His first morning down at the stream failing to catch any trout, he met a boy of about ten. After the boy pointed out Jake was using the wrong flies, Jake decided to give the kid a wish. Ready to go find him a bike or something, the child's words sent a deep shiver through Jake. But he had not misheard. The boy's wish to which Jake was now bound was simple. "I wish someone would kill my father".

What an interesting story! The author sets the hook very early in the book, the reader has to keep turning those pages, waiting to discover the next little twist or turn. While there were a few editing oversights, it was not a problem. This is the first in a series I think many will enjoy. Try it. I received the book through Goodreads and liked it so much I just had to share.

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### **Julie says**

I received a free e-copy from the publisher with the intention of writing an honest review.

This book was so good that I didn't stop reading it until I had finished it.

Jacob Duke has spent the six years in a mental institute because he had no control of his curse. He was 10 years old when he killed the local bully because a girl in his class wished that he was dead. Jacob then spent two years being dragged from one psychiatrist to another. It wasn't his fault that he killed the bully but he

couldn't tell them why he did it, he couldn't explain how his blood boiled and his hands trembled and he couldn't stop thinking of ways to kill him.

When he was in the institute he worked out what the rules were regarding his curse and also what the consequences were if he didn't manage to fulfil the wish. Because of this he stole a pencil from the nursing station and poked them into his ears and deafened himself so he would never be able to hear a wish and be forced to grant it.

When he is released on his eighteenth birthday, his mother tells him about his father and gives him a totem that he had left for Jacob. When his mother tells him about his father he is understandably upset, as far as he is concerned he was abandoned. He had no clue who he was but over the years he tracked down details and finally worked out who his father was but he never went to find him.

With the help of his mother he set up a tattoo shop and met Lori who he has been in love with ever since but she doesn't return his feelings.

When he was in the institute he made a promise to himself that when he was released he would return to the area for a vacation and that is where the book starts. He is stood in the river, fly-fishing, when he sees a young boy crying. Without realising it the boy makes a wish for his father to be dead and triggers the curse. Now Jacob has six days to save Frankie's life or get him to change his wish.

The wish sets into motion a series of events that hold the readers interest all the way through the tale and you are definitely left wanting more. Luckily, it would seem that this is the first in a series featuring Jacob Duke, Lori and his dog Russ.

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### **Wendy says**

"Stonfly" is weird & wonderful!!

The refreshingly original plot was well written and it kept me guessing.

Jacob Duke is cursed and has to make your wish come true. If he doesn't you will die. As a young boy he is admitted into a mental institution because of a bad wish that resulted in murder. At 18 he is released, and is now deaf from self-inflicted stab wounds to his ears to try to prevent himself from hearing anymore wishes. However, he can now read lips.

Upon his release, while on vacation, he sees a young boy crying. The boy wishes for his father to be dead and this triggers a series of events that take us through to the end of this story.

Scott J. Holliday creates wonderful characters and I can hardly wait to see where the next "Jacob Duke" book takes us.

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### **Andra Watkins says**

Best book I've read so far this year.....and that's a mouthful coming from me. I am both a writer and a

reader: a tough customer.

*Stonefly* is hard to classify, but that's part of its allure. It turns pages, even though it isn't always suspenseful. Its characters are well developed. The rules of the world - a genie who has to grant wishes or else - are effortlessly explained without bogging down the reader with minutiae.

I devoured this book. It is a pleasant departure from the formulaic stuff that is churned out today. Many thanks to Ionia Martin at Readful Things for turning me on to it.

Here's my wish: I wish you - yes, you - would buy this book. Read this book. Come back and review this book and help a talented, worthy author. I don't know Scott from Adam's house cat, but his writing deserves your time, your money and your recommendation.

Andra Watkins  
Andrawatkins.com

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## Katy says

**Book Info:** Genre: Urban Fantasy Thriller

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: Those who enjoy thrillers and don't mind a mild dose of magic

Trigger Warnings: domestic violence against women and children, kidnapping, murder, killing

**My Thoughts:** Wow, what a super cool story! This combines two of my favorite things, thrillers and urban fantasy, although the urban fantasy bit is fairly low-key. Jacob is a really interesting character, and I'm excited to note that this is the beginning of a series. I will definitely be watching for future books in this series!

Darnell is a pretty nasty character, and I was irritated by Lori's constant string of jerks when Jacob is so devoted to her. I also felt really bad for Motown/Early, whose pain is made obvious throughout the book. The ending was sort of bittersweet.

I'll be interested to see where this goes, especially with Vincent Kali. If you like thrillers and if you like urban fantasy and would love to read a good combination of the two, definitely check out *Stonefly*.

**Disclosure:** I received an e-galley from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

**Synopsis:** Jacob Duke has come back to Braketon—a sleepy, backwoods town bordering Dover, the mental institution where he spent his formative years. Jacob's intention is to enjoy Braketon's woods and water for the first time as a free man, but he soon discovers that Dover isn't through with him yet. Driven by a curse that compels him to grant any wish he hears, Jacob is drawn back into his disturbing former life by a young boy's desire to see his own father dead.

Complicating things are Lori Nelson, Jacob's friend-with-benefits who continues to put new boyfriends in his path, and Motown, Jacob's friend from his years at Dover, who carries a secret that rocks Jacob's foundation and makes him question his own morality.

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### **Dianne says**

I did not see this one coming! Even with its paranormal twist, **Stonefly** is most definitely a suspense/thriller, chilling to the max!! A young man is compelled to act on any wish he hears or the person making the wish will die in seven days! Jacob is driven by a curse put on him by his gypsy father, a man unknown to him, who his highly successful and supportive mother was with only once. As a child, he fulfilled/acted on a wish that haunts him to this day and cost him many years of his life, being institutionalized until he turned eighteen. Free now, he picks up the pieces of his life, adores a girl who stays just out of reach emotionally and tries to unravel the mystery that is his life. All Jacob wants is to be “normal” and live his life, but when he hears a young boy wish his father was dead, no matter what, the outcome is deplorable!

Using flashbacks and richly descriptive passages full of emotion, Scott J. Holliday has created an extremely realistic character full of depth who I instantly felt a connection to, wanting him to find happiness in his life. Book two in this new series is one I look forward to!

An ARC edition was provided by NetGalley and Haley Road Publishing in exchange for an honest review.  
Publication Date: June 1, 2013

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### **Michelle Willms says**

#### **Stonefly by Scott J. Holliday**

Jake found the boy almost immediately on the first day when he was fly fishing in Braketon. The fishing trip was supposed to be a break from his curse; some time alone from people and their almost never-ending wishes. Jake was cursed; if he heard someone make a wish, he had one week to grant that wish or the wisher died. He hoped the kid would have a kid-like wish. Nope. Jake was most definitely cursed. Instead of wishing for a puppy, the kid wished someone would kill his dad.

Scott J. Holliday has one of the most alluring writing styles I've read in quite some time. The descriptions are so accurate the reader can smell the flowers or the blood; can feel the water on the lake and can hope the curse will be lifted. Holliday knows how to pace and plot and develop a character so wonderful readers will be anxiously watching their calendars for their next installment.

This copy was received from NetGalley at no cost in exchange for an honest review from the author.

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