



Big Woods

May Cobb

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It's 1989 in the sleepy town of Longview, Texas, when ten-year-old Lucy disappears. Her parents, the police, and the community all brace for the worst, assuming her body will soon be found in Big Woods. Just like the other unsolved kidnappings.

But then Lucy's fourteen-year-old sister, Leah, starts having dreams about Lucy—dreams that reveal startling clues as to what happened. Leah begins her own investigation, and soon she meets a reclusive widow who may hold the key to finding Lucy . . . if only she can find the courage to come forward.

Delving into the paranoia surrounding satanic cults in the 1980s, Big Woods is an emotionally wrought, propulsive thriller about the enormity of grief, the magical bond between sisters, and a small town's dark secrets.

Big Woods Details

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Author : May Cobb

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From Reader Review Big Woods for online ebook

Michelle says

Have you ever been nostalgic for the 80's? Then do I have a book for you! Being that I did in fact grow up in the 80's this book brought back a lot of memories for me and I enjoyed every minute of this!

Summer, 1989, East Texas.

Lucy and Leah are sisters. Lucy is 10 to Leah's 14 but the age difference meant very little to them. They were incredibly close and loving to one another. One day as Lucy is walking to the bus stop she disappears without a trace.

Clearly the family is devastated. No one has any clues and the time just keeps ticking away as days turn to weeks and weeks turn to months.

A few years prior to Lucy's disappearance several other children had gone missing only to have their remains found in Big Woods. A Satan worshiping cult was blamed though no arrests were ever made because no evidence was ever found.

We have chapters that alternate between Leah and Sylvia a 75 year old woman. At first I was baffled as to what Sylvia had to do with the story but it soon becomes clear that she knows what is happening and what happened to Lucy.

Leah begins having dreams in which she thinks Lucy is sending her messages that she is still alive and giving her clues to her whereabouts but obviously no one will believe her. This prompts Leah to do her own investigation of Lucy's disappearance and Big Woods itself.

Sylvia also goes to the authorities but they don't believe this silly old lady with her crazy tale. She even contacts Lucy's mom but Roz (Lucy's mom) doesn't want to hear it. She is trying to slowly accept the fact that she has lost her precious daughter forever.

This family, wow, I really cared about them. I could feel their grief. Such a sweet and caring family (a very nice break from unlikable characters!) that I just wanted to hug them all and assure them that everything will be alright.

So what did happen to Lucy? You'll have to read it to find out!

I thought this was superb storytelling. An easy 5 stars from me!

Thank you to NetGalley & Midnight Ink for providing me with a digital ARC in exchange for my honest review.

(Bern) Mom to 2 Posh Lil Divas says

Take a trip back to the 80's & see if you can solve the mystery of the missing children in Big Woods.

It's 1989 and ten year old Lucy disappears from small town Texas. The story is told in alternating POVs between Leah (big sister, age 14) and Sylvie a nurse who seems to know something about the missing children.

The book starts off BIG with Lucy's disappearance and an eerie line about ***"who will save the children"***. Her disappearance is tinged with talk of satanic rituals and other bodies recovered in Big Woods. The police have no clues and search of the woods only turns up Lucy's coin purse. The book quickly turns into more of a slow burn read as the weeks tick by. It kept me turning the pages because I needed to know what happened to Lucy and how Sylvie was connected to it all.

One of the things I really enjoyed was the connection between the two sisters. It was obvious that they had a powerfully strong bond. Leah refused to give up on finding Lucy, even when the adults around her seem to accept that she was most likely dead and would never be found, including her parents. The sisters' bond/connection was so strong that Leah was having visions/dreams that she felt certain were communications from Lucy trying to aid her in finding and saving her. The adults in her life worried about her visions but she carried on (getting into a few hair raising situations), filled with hope that she would uncover what happened to Lucy.

I connected with Leah the most. Her emotions, pain and struggle were well crafted. Sylvie was also a dynamic character. As her story unfolds and we see the twists & turns her life has taken her part in the story begins to make sense. I couldn't help wanting to shout at someone to just listen to her!

Unfortunately, I wasn't a big fan of how things simply tied up neatly at the end. There were so many different elements brought up in the book - satanic rituals & devil worshippers, black roses being delivered at the high school, the church communities in an uproar, psychics, corrupt law enforcement officials, etc and those things were simply swept to the wayside and never mentioned again. I enjoyed how Cobb tied in all these aspects which were relevant in the 80s but it felt unfinished to me.

Overall, I definitely enjoyed Big Woods and in some ways it was a great read. Yet, in others it was a bit lacking for me. This is May Cobb's debut and as such I can see lots of potential but I also feel like she might have tried to do too much at once here so there were parts that were left undeveloped in my opinion. It was a good read, just not one that I think will remain vividly with me over time.

Thank you to NetGalley, Midnight Ink and May Cobb for my early copy. All opinions are my own.

Olivia Flagger says

This was an excellent and page turning story! I found myself not wanting to put this one down. The words just flowed effortlessly on the page. I can't wait to read the next one from this author!

Debra says

Its 1989 when ten-year-old, Lucy disappears. She was walking to the bus stop, but she never got on the bus. An investigation follows but as time trickles away, people begin to fear that her body will be found in the Big Woods. Children's bodies/remains have been found in the Big Woods in the past. Will this be Lucy's

fate? Her whole family is devastated, including her older sister, Leah who at fourteen has begun to receive messages from Lucy - on her father's computer and in the form of dreams. Leah believes that Lucy is sending her clues. Leah strongly believes that Lucy is still alive, but no one believes her. Frustrated and believing her sister to be alive, she decides to find Lucy herself.

No one believes Sylvia either. Sylvia is an elderly woman who believes she knows what is happening to the missing children. She has gone to the authorities and they do not believe her either. How frustrating! But how, how does she know?????

This book is told through Leah and Sylvia's POV. Initially, I wondered who Sylvia was and what connection she would have to the missing child. We are given glimpses into Sylvia's life, her heartbreak quest for a child. Her life, her marriage, and slowly a connection is made. She has had a lot happen in her life and she may indeed hold the key to the mystery surrounding Lucy's disappearance.

This book is set in the late 80's and satanic cults/devil worshipers were believed to be responsible for the missing children and their found remains. There are several things that get started but didn't seem to go anywhere and left me feeling underwhelmed. One area that shined was how the Author showed the family grieving and the close bond of the two sisters.

Is Lucy dead? Is Lucy alive? What happened to the other children? Are the dreams real? Will anyone believe her (Leah or Sylvia)? Will it be too late? Was there satanic worship? Did a pedophile take her? Did another child hurt her? If she is alive, where is she?

Overall, an enjoyable read with short chapters which move the story along. This book does have the nostalgic 80's vibe down. I must give props for that. I appreciate how the Author attempted to include several elements from the 80's. I just wanted a little bit extra. I would have loved to have had one additional POV thrown in, perhaps from an unnamed person.

One scene near the ending of the book was powerful. When Sylvia went down the steps to the basement. She wanted to be a Mother so bad and then she heard the word "Mother" *shudders*

Overall, a good debut and a fast read. I enjoyed the pacing and found the writing to be solid. I would read more from this author in the future.

Thank you to Midnight Ink and NetGalley who provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. The thoughts and opinions are my own.

Read more of my reviews at www.openbookpost.com

Amy says

If you're in the mood for a book that sucks you in from the very start then look no further, because Big Woods hooked me after just two pages. A little girl goes missing in the late eighties and being an eighties baby myself I'm always nostalgic for books set then, and throw in a side of satanic cult worshippers and a hint of magical realism and I'm all in!

This alternates between Leah and Sylvia, Lucy is Leah's sister so her connection was obvious but with Sylvia I wasn't quite sure how she would fit in, it definitely kept me guessing. I was very invested in these characters, Leah and her family were good, hardworking and sweet people and Sylvia was the same, it made for a nice change of pace to actually like the characters in a thriller compared to many books that are full of hateful and unsympathetic ones.

The pacing here was fantastic, the chapters are short and sweet, you get straight to the point and just keep going for another chapter and then another and before you know it you're finished! I was so curious about what happened to Lucy, was it the work of a devil worshipping cult? A pedophile? Did she run away? I had many theories and I'm so pleased to say I never quite guessed before the reveal.

I was really impressed that this was Cobb's debut, she has an assured style that I really liked and she crafted a really interesting story that was part mystery/thriller part family drama that worked so well together. I would definitely read another book from her and will be curious to see what she comes up with next.

Big Woods in three words: Quick, Engrossing and Deft.

Chandra Claypool (wherethereadergrows) says

Having lived in Texas during the 80s and remembering the satanic cult phenomena that was happening during that time, this book absolutely intrigued me. This book took me back to my childhood... yes, one where I was fascinated with cults, horror and anything macabre - especially if it was true life. Unfortunately, satanic and other types of cults were rampant during this time.

Cobb, thanks so much for taking me back. I giggled at "rock me on my desk" instead of "Rock me, Amadeus" and at the mentions of Luby's and Steak and Ale. The author did a fantastic job in bringing me back into the South.

It took me about 30% of the book to get into it. The chapters alternate between Leah and Sylvia slowly building to their intersection. It does run a little slow in some places. This is really more about the bond between Leah and Lucy (her sister who has gone missing) and how Leah and Sylvia are dealing with the missing children and eerie things happening within the town. I would have loved to have had MORE about the cult - what was going on, who was involved and why. I felt this part was lacking in the book... but only because that's a preference I would've preferred. The ending tied up very quickly. With the slow to moderate pace, this seemed a little too fast and neat right at the finish.

A solid debut. Cobb will certainly have more for us in the future and I'm looking forward to see what she comes up with.

Thanks so much to the publisher and author for my copy.

Laura Rash says

This is what I like to call a "no bookmark needed" kinda book! Alternating POV and short chapters have you racing through this at neck break speed to see where this wicked tale is taking you. For a debut, May Cobb

has managed to write a grisly story that you won't be able to put down.

Lisa says

Thank you to Midnight Ink Books for an early e-galley of Big Woods in exchange for an honest review. Lots of amazing creepy atmosphere in Big Woods. Lucy goes missing in the late 1980s and the time period really brought back memories! Lots of concern over satanic clans and the horror of MTV in our homes. I loved all the reminders of the time period. The story moved along at a decent pace with the point of view switching between Lucy's sister Leah and Sylvia, a widow who may have some answers. Publishes July 8, 2018

Cody | cody'sbookshelf says

I did not hate this novel. Really. Despite my low rating, I did enjoy several scenes and felt some moments — especially around the three quarters mark — worked well. But on the whole, *Big Woods* — this author's debut novel — falls flat.

Set in 1989, this is the story of a kidnapping and the cult fear that broke out in the '80s. Told in alternating points of view by two characters, this is just . . . another *Gone Girl*, but not nearly as twisty or fun or original. When will this trend die?

The characters are *huge* nothings — I just finished and am having trouble remembering their names — and I had a world of trouble telling them apart. Still, I wanted to know what happened next and how it would all turn out, hence my not giving this one star. I did find myself caring at certain moments, but those occasions were far too rare.

Thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for the ARC, which was given in exchange for an honest review.

Melanie says

Big Woods is my first book by May Cobb and I definitely would look at future books from the author as I did enjoy her writing style. The book is set in 1989 in a small town called Longview and tells the story of Lucy a girl who is abducted. But there is a lot more than meets the eye to this abduction, for the Big Woods has taken children before. Could Lucy be another one of the missing?

The story Big Woods is told from Leah (Lucy's sister) and Sylvia a lady in her seventies who knows more than she should. I liked Leah enough and could relate to her as I was at similar age in 1989. Much of the pop culture mentioned were things that were of the time and correct (From what I could remember). Especially the music, clothing and even being 14 years old. But Sylvia was my favourite character. I loved the chapters in her voice. How she talked to you in a kind, well mannered way and felt like a friend. I related more to Sylvia than Leah which is strange considered the age gap between us too.

Big Woods is a bit of a slow burner. I felt this way to just over half way through when suddenly a lot more things were given to us and I felt like I wasn't totally in the dark anymore. I do feel the author could have told us some things earlier on. Maybe even given us some history on Big Woods rather than what had

happened there and who the people thought were responsible. I don't want to give any spoilers, but in the 80's even the late ones the 'blame' in this book was relevant to the time period. There was a lot of this happening in the US I remember from when I was younger, not so much in the UK but it fascinated me as a teen - still does if I'm honest. I do feel May has done her homework and with a book set a few decades ago this has to be the case for it to be believable.

The climax towards the end is good, I loved how we had Sylvia's chapter before Leah's it gave it that shock factor which had me excited - I needed to know more. The ending was good, but I felt the police washed over things a little. Or maybe its because we were already told the ending by the other characters? Either way I felt this could have been done different, but what I read was still good. I finished Big Woods feelings satisfied that the ends were all tied up, but also a little deflated as I often get that when I've invested myself in a book and it ends. But still, the ending felt right and I'm glad May wrote the book this way.

To conclude Big Woods was read over 2 sittings and I did not want to put it down. I loved the story, the pace and the mystery. This is a good thriller and I can see many enjoying it. If you are looking for a gore factor this isn't for you. However if you like a good mystery thriller that will draw you in and not let you go till the end, then give Big Woods a try. 4 stars.

Reviewed on [Http://www.readbymel.co.uk](http://www.readbymel.co.uk)

Brandy says

I literally devoured this book - I sat non stop indulging, actually a better word is -binging, force feeding every word - until the end. Five hours later, I'm left full but eerily catatonic from what I read. I kissed both of my daughters - thankful that it was only a story from a book.

I can't remember the last time I have sat, entranced, under a deep spell with a read. Big Woods, draws you in at line one with, "Who will save the children?" Any parent out there can validate the chill and wrenching you get in the depths of your belly when you just read that one line.

Big Woods is a dark, sick, twisted tale (not for the weak) it filled my soul with a feeling that can not be put into words. Let's just say this - it left me in much need of a stiff drink. Cheers!

So what's it about? Here is a brief synopsis:

10 year old Lucy goes missing while walking down her road to her bus stop. Lucy is officially missing; devastated, her parents and 14 year old sister begin the tiresome search to find little, Lucy. What unfolds as the story progresses is a dark tale that leaves even a self proclaimed professional reader like myself feeling haunted. 500 stars for this one! It was a raw tale that leaves you breathless! ❤?

Breakaway Reviewers says

A well-written thriller that lacks substance

In the year 1989, ten-year-old Lucy disappears from the town of Longview, Texas. The police and citizens of Longview immediately launch a huge search for her, but as the days go by, and she still isn't found, her

family begin to fear the worst, particularly in light of the several unresolved child kidnappings that have been occurring in the surrounding area over the past few years. However, Leah, Lucy's fourteen-year-old sister, isn't ready to give up and when she starts having strange dreams about Lucy that contain clues to her whereabouts, she is adamant that her sister is still alive. She starts to look for Lucy alone but her investigation leads her to the danger of the Big Woods and may uncover something far more sinister going on in Longview than the residents could have ever imagined.

Big Woods is an engaging and rapid-paced novel with some good twists and turns scattered throughout. The story is well-written and extremely atmospheric, and the author manages to create an unsettling feel from the very beginning that builds the tension as the mystery of Lucy's disappearance gradually unfolds. She also manages to create a very 80s-feel to the book, which I was able to recognise and pick up on despite never having lived in the 80s myself! The story is written from two alternating points of view – Leah and Sylvia, a reclusive widow – and the way that they intertwine and build up to the climax of the story are extremely well done. It is also easy to differentiate between the two separate voices of the characters that the author has created, and as you read you feel that you get to know the two women very well, as they explore their fears and past traumatic experiences.

Unfortunately, once I had finished reading I found this story to be quite unmemorable as thrillers go, with a climax that felt a little anticlimactic compared to what the build-up had me expecting. Aside from Leah and Sylvia, none of the background characters really resonated or seemed that well developed to me, and I never really felt that worried for Lucy as I didn't have a good idea of her character. Similarly, certain aspects of the plot felt a little wishy-washy and poorly explained – for example, the dreams that Leah has been used as a convenient plot device but no reason for them occurring is ever given, which makes some aspects of the story seem lazy. I felt that this could have been the first draft of a novel and may have been really good with a bit of tightening up but unfortunately it never quite reached that level for me.

In conclusion, this was a good debut novel and the author is clearly talented and imaginative, but I feel a little more substance and direction to the story and characters would vastly improve the book.

Daenerys

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review

Carrie says

Ok folks, yes, I've found yet another book to take a trip back into the 80s with Big Woods by May Cobb. As soon as I saw that the story took place in that era I knew I had to read it and I'm glad I did as from the opening pages it really felt like I'd time traveled.

The story began with ten year old Lucy heading off to school when a car seems to begin to follow her. Unfortunately the unthinkable happens and Lucy's family is frantic with worry when she can't be found. The story then begins to switch the point of view between Lucy's older sister Leah as the search begins and then another character, Sylvia, who is in her 70s and works as a nurse.

Leah's point of view shows the frantic search and how her family begins to fracture from the disappearance of her sister. Leah keeps having dreams though of Lucy and she believes that she is still alive, if only anyone would believe her. Sylvia on the other hand doesn't know the family but she has cared for a young girl with a

wild tale of what happened to her in Big Woods but no one will listen to Sylvia when she tries to warn them either.

May Cobb did a wonderful job with this one giving it that perfect vibe of the era, adding in a slight supernatural twist and keeping the pace steady as the point of view went back and forth between the two sides of the story. This one was definitely one that kept my attention and the pages turning waiting to see what the outcome would be.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more review please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.com/>

Tammy says

Big Woods is a darkly creepy gem of a story. Set in 1989, in the midst of the satanic cult paranoia, a young girl, Lucy, disappears. Her older sister is determined to find her. Big Woods is rumored to be the place for satanic rituals and sacrifices. Is Lucy in the Big Woods? Are there secret rituals going on in Big Woods? May Cobb has written a strong debut novel reminiscent of Stephen King with a bit of Blair Witch.

Suzie Flohr says

If you like a thriller that has paranormal aspects then this is the book for you. Its set in the 1980's and changes between the two characters. Kept my attention and I wanted to know more.
