



Death Game

Cheryl Swanson

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There's a fine line between games and reality and most of the time it is only the most disturbed people who cross that line—although they occasionally take the innocent with them. That's what Cooper O'Brien discovers when she watches a video tape that shows her brother, Jimmie, killing another boy. She and her boss, attorney Rick Capra, view the footage on a surveillance tape from a client's yacht. Although the face of the shooter is not immediately recognizable, the tee-shirt the boy is wearing is distinct. Cooper saw that shirt just this morning when she took Jimmie to school.

Cooper is pulled into this sharp, fast-paced mystery to prove that her brother couldn't have pulled that trigger, but she is quickly caught up in a tide of intrigue that threatens to derail everything she has considered normal most of her life.

In this debut novel, the author weaves an intricate story with fine characterization and plenty of surprises. The pace is relentless and the language vivid. Early on, the reader is graced with this description of a troubled teenager: "Happiness rarely appeared on his face, and when it did it looked like a guest who had shown up at the wrong party—out of place and uncomfortable. It would hang around for a few moments then flee."

Cooper has been responsible for her teenage brother since their parents died, and she is often at a loss as how to deal with his grief. This topic is handled with realism and emotional depth in the hands of an author who has known her share of pain.

Swanson holds a degree in education and biology from Arizona State University and has worked in the medical imaging field. She founded IntelliSys, a company that worked on pilot projects in imaging and robotic surgery with various medical colleges. She has written three nonfiction books, but her true love is fiction. Like her protagonist, Swanson has learned that life is not a game.

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