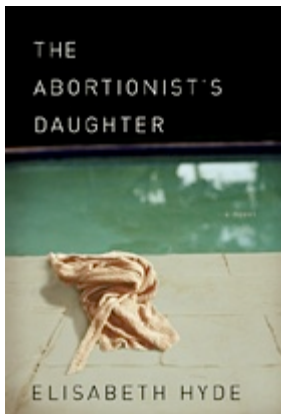


## Review



### Author Bibliography

#### **Books by Elisabeth Hyde**

THE ABORTIONIST'S DAUGHTER



## THE ABORTIONIST'S DAUGHTER

**Elisabeth Hyde**

Alfred A. Knopf

Mystery

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With a title like THE ABORTIONIST'S DAUGHTER, Elisabeth Hyde's latest novel is bound to touch upon the controversial. In fact, Hyde is no stranger to tackling heavy subjects. In her last book, the crossover CRAZY AS CHOCOLATE, she wrote about the suicide of a mentally ill 41-year-old mother and the damaging effect it had on her husband and young daughters. Not exactly light reading.

True-to-form and with the same audacity she exhibited in her prior work, Hyde addresses all sides of the abortion issue head-on while still managing to create a palpable, non-preachy book for her readers. A gripping thriller that will entice even those not particularly fond of the suspense genre, THE ABORTIONIST'S DAUGHTER delivers a rare but successful breed of multi-faceted morality and adrenalin-infused action that purely satisfies.

Dr. Diana Duprey is one tough cookie. She is the director of the Center for Reproductive Choice in a small town near Denver, Colorado, and refuses to dole out excuses to anyone about the job she does, despite the fact that she has a 19-year-old, sexually active daughter; a son (deceased) with Down syndrome; and a husband who spent the last 20 years working as a prosecuting attorney in the District Attorney's office. She plans to keep performing abortions for women in need, regardless of the incessant protests outside her clinic and the barrage of threats from members of the right-to-life activist group, the Lifeblood Coalition --- until her body is found floating in the pool outside

her home, two weeks before Christmas.

Enter 26-year-old Huck and his partner, 36-year-old Ernie --- two detectives assigned to the Duprey case, and the first to show up at the scene of the crime aside from Frank, Diana's husband. Frank is apparently the last person who saw Diana alive (or so Huck and Ernie assume) and is suspiciously at the house when the cops arrive to assess the damage. Broken shards of glass are found scattered near the ficus tree, the kitchen is in disarray, and there is a horrific bruise the size of a grapefruit on Diana's neck. The prognosis doesn't look good for Frank, who was also overheard fighting with his wife earlier that evening, right around the time she was killed.

To make matters more complicated, Diana's daughter, Megan, also had a fight with her mother at lunch over a spring-break trip to Mexico, and Megan's ex-boyfriend, Bill, had become a serious threat to both her and Megan's well-being. Apparently, he just couldn't get over the break-up a year ago, and his nagging phone calls and unannounced house visits were becoming a maybe-it's-time-to-get-that-restraining-order problem. Reverend Stephen O'Connell, the founder of the Lifeblood Coalition, had more than one reason to want Dr. Duprey dead, including the fact that she refused to prevent his son's 15-year-old girlfriend, Rose, from having an abortion, on the grounds that she believed it was the girl's decision in the long run. She also wouldn't advise Rose to terminate the pregnancy as Rose's parents had hoped, because of the very same principles. This, of course, made Rose's parents extremely angry --- especially after their daughter almost killed herself while trying to scrape the fetus out with a bike pump and chopsticks. But angry enough to kill?

As December rolls into January and January into February, Huck and Ernie sift through the facts and weigh their options. Huck gets a little too close to Megan for his own good, Frank grows more and more depressed, and Bill continues to act the role of eager apprentice --- handing off clues to the detectives as if his contributions could somehow crack the case and bring Megan back to him. Three-quarters of the way through the book, the case still hasn't been solved and readers might find themselves staying up way past their bedtime in order to solve this exhilarating whodunit.

Warning: when the murderer's identity is finally revealed, some suspense/thriller buffs might feel let down by the seeming simplicity of the solution. There isn't much of a showdown, nor are you utterly shocked by the outcome. Nonetheless, the instant-replay of events that transpired during the hours immediately prior to Dr. Duprey's death is immensely satisfying and readers surely will let out a collective sigh of relief following the book's conclusion.

--- Reviewed by Alexis Burling

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