

Book Review: Buried Road
By Katie Tallo

Thanks to NetGalley and HarperCollins Publishing for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "Buried Road" has an expected publication date of December 2024.

This review, along with all my regular reviews, can be seen on my book blog Raised on Reading (www.raisedonreading.com).

I knew when I asked to do an advance review of this book that it was the third in the Gus Moret series and I had not read either of the first two, but I decided to take a chance. Sometimes, authors are conscientious enough to bring first-time readers up-to-speed quickly. Thankfully, that was the case here.

The book starts quickly, plot line is clear, and reads as smooth as a stand-alone novel. Bly, Gus's 13-year-old daughter, provides a unique and interesting narrative. We promptly learn that Howard Bayliss, Gus's long-standing boyfriend and father-in-waiting to Bly, disappeared three years ago while doing research on a freelance story. His body was never found. But then Howard's parents place his obituary in the newspaper. It reignites Gus's batteries; angers her that they've given up hope. She and Bly spring into action, returning to the scene of the crime (Picton, Ontario, Canada), determined to get to the bottom of his disappearance.

The narrative pacing is excellent as Gus and Bly begin to peel back the layers of this mystery, aided by the discovery of the camper Howard had been driving, as well as his notebook and cell phone. As you might imagine, the more they uncover, the more feathers they ruffle among the local population. From flat tires to the torching of their car, they've clearly gotten someone's attention.

The stakes are heightened when they realize Howard had stumbled onto more than his original bird migration/wind park controversy. The pieces to an elaborate, international drug operation begin to come together. And when it becomes clear that some of local law enforcement may be involved, they're left with few options to turn to for assistance.

Tallo provides several plot twists of the "I didn't see that coming" variety. But the credibility of the narrative feels too loose as it nears end. Granted, this is a work of fiction, but the narrative still needs to feel believable. Without giving away any spoilers, suffice to say there are a few too many unrealistic developments rounding out the story into an all-too-tidy package.

My rating shows 3 stars because there is no system for half points. But I would give "Buried Road" 3.5 stars.