The Boat Man

By Dustin Stevens
A book review by Lani Christianson

"The Boat Man" is a serial killer who has a vendetta against 6 men and is systematically killing them, one by one, in a very gruesome manner. Detective Reed and Billie, a rare, all black Belgian Malinois, are assigned to find the perpetrator and bring him to justice.

Detective Reed's previous partner was killed in action. Rather than be paired up with a rookie that needs training, he takes on Billie, a female Mal that previously served in the Marines. Already I have a problem with this book. My understanding is that male dogs are preferred, since the Brass erroneously believes them to be more aggressive. I also have a problem with the premise that once the dog is retired by the Marines, it would then be sent to be used by a detective with no K9 experience or training.

Billie is left whining in the back of the car way too many times. There doesn't appear to be a bond between the Detective and the dog. Occasionally Reed lets Billie out and gives her the "Search" command. I would expect that a dog used by the Marines might be trained to search for explosives. Not the case here. Detective Reed expects Billie to catch the scent of the perpetrator in one location, and then be able to recognize it if it shows up in another location.

The story line itself is good, but Dustin Stevens is a wordsmith. He seems to enjoy finding new and interesting ways of describing things. It's overdone and there were times I'd read a sentence and have no idea what it meant.

The Boat Man only gets 2 bones from me.