



Dead Body Language

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Thirty-seven year old journalist, Connor Westphal, has relocated from San Francisco to Flat Skunk, a mining-turned-tourist town in the foothills of the Sierras, to start up her own weekly paper. Suddenly, dead bodies begin turning up in the most unusual places, setting Connor on a hunt for a killer. You might say Connor has a sixth sense when it comes to investigating...but she only has four of the usual five senses. Connor Westphal is deaf. But being hearing impaired doesn't stop Connor from pursuing the murderer. Without sound to distract her, she attends to subtleties that others overlook and ultimately unravels the mystery.

Dead Body Language Details

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Author : Penny Warner

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From Reader Review Dead Body Language for online ebook

Linda says

Different with a deaf sleuth, who is a newspaper reporter! More information than I wanted on the preparing a body for burial. Good ending!

Jen says

Fabulous mystery. Lots of red herrings and potential suspects. Will keep you guessing. Warning: whoever converted it to Kindle should be shot. Random font changes from normal to need-a-microscope. The justification occasionally shifts to centered and stays that way. Full chapters are italicized for no reason. If the story weren't so engaging I never would have finished it. Though I still think amazon owes me my money back for the formatting. It was atrocious!

LJ says

DEAD BODY LANGUAGE - NR
Warner, Penny - 1st Connor Westphal

Newly arrived in a mining town in the Sierras to start up her own newspaper, journalist Connor Westphal finds herself investigating when dead bodies begin turning up in strange places.

The protagonist was just too cute to stand and every chapter end is a minor cliffhanger.

Mervi says

Connor Westphal moved recently to a small town called Flat Skunk. Her grandparents had a diner there and she decided to change her life and move there, after their deaths. Connor became deaf when she was four years old and while the world around her, especially the school for hearing which she attended, tried to box her in, she made her own way and became a journalist. Now, she runs the town's weekly newspaper Eureka! She employs the sheriff's young son Miah part-time. Miah learned sign language so he sometimes interpreters for her and also answers the phone and does other errands.

The former mayor's widow Lacy wants Connor to run an ad on the paper about her missing sister. Lacy doesn't want the ad to be traced back to her and acts pretty mysterious otherwise, too. However, the next morning Lacy is found dead on her husband's grave. Also, the local private investigator Boone has gone missing and his supposed half-brother Dan has suddenly appeared. Connor loves mysteries (she writes a murder mystery puzzle for her paper every week) and she starts to investigate.

This is a fast-paced mystery with quite a large, small town cast of characters. It has plenty of turns and twists and kept me guessing almost to the end.

Connor is a very interesting main character. She's learned to lipread but has to, of course, see the lips clearly

to do that. For the most part, she reads lips so accurately that the dialog isn't any different from any other book. No doubt this is a stylistic issue because otherwise readers would have quickly become frustrated with dialog where Connor is guessing half the words and often asking "what did you say". Of course, she can't hear other noises, like the phone ringing. She's very determined and uses underhanded tactics to interview people. She even has printed out fake business cards and easily claims to be an insurance agent, for example. She used to be a journalist in San Francisco. She's on very good terms with the local sheriff and almost-dating the deputy and she isn't shy to pump every bit of info she can from them.

The cast of characters, and therefore the pool of suspects, is quite large so we don't get to know most of them. Dan, the missing investigator's half-brother, is probably the most significant of them. He's handsome and immediately likes Connor. He appears mysteriously right when his brother goes missing and Boone has never mentioned him, so Dan is a suspect, but he also investigates along with Connor.

The only thing which really bothered me was the way Connor treated her dog. She has a husky whom she's taught to answer to signs, but she never takes it with her: it's alone all day and Connor just feeds it. In fact, she treats it like a cat, even though she claims not to like cats. Since she's her own boss, she could have easily taken the dog to work with her.

I enjoyed learning a little about the deaf. Connor has a touchtype phone which she uses to type calls but the other person needs to have one, too, otherwise it doesn't work. People also throw things near her or at her to get her attention which I think is rather rude but she herself confesses that she hasn't thought of a better way.

A quick read and a nice mystery with a lot of twists.

Deb says

met this writer at the Santa Fe mystery conference. Very funny woman...had us all laughing when she was on a panel. This heroine, Connor Westphal, is a journalist and is deaf which adds something different to the story, moved from San Fran to a gold rush town in CA. Her great grandparents owned a diner there during the gold rush so she decided to take it over. She fixed it up to live in...so far it's not a diner. She gets involved in a murder, meets some great characters, I liked the book.

Beth says

This is part of the seven-title Connor Westphal series, which is set in N. California mining country, featuring a deaf reporter who inherited the local newspaper. (For more information: www.pennywarner.com)

Nan says

A little while ago, I got really weary of the lack of deaf representation in the books I read so I decided to actively look for novels with a deaf character or even *gasp!* a deaf protagonist. That's how I came to find the *Connor Westphal* series, a series of cozy mysteries with a plucky deaf heroine.

Now I already knew I'm not the biggest fan of this genre but I was pleasantly surprised with the twists and turns of this particular intrigue and, more pertinently as this is what I was looking for, there were definitely

some relatable deaf moments which were akin to delicious sips of fresh water after a long walk in the desert.

It's not perfect by any means, for instance, Connor's speechreading ability seems downright superhuman at times (though that's fiction for you!) and there's the matter of Casper the service dog who just spends all his time at home... Alone. Why? That was just baffling!

All in all, I enjoyed it and I'll be sure to pick up the second book in the series.

Jennifer says

More like 3.5* I have never read a fiction book where the main character had a disability, but having a deaf main character added a twist to solving the mystery. I took sign language in college and had to try to live as a person with a hearing disability for an assignment, but it was so long ago I forgot how profound that experience was. This book brought that back. It reminded me of how hearing focused our world is, and how challenging it can be for people who can't hear. That being said, I enjoyed this book. When I started reading I thought Connor was a boy; I've never met a female Connor! Once I got that confusion cleared up, I enjoyed the story much more. I was surprised that Mickey was the killer, but his confession... wow! The motive was spectacular. He genuinely thought he was doing the right thing. I thought the grave robbing part of the story was not developed enough or could have been left out all together. Otherwise, this was a great mystery. I will definitely be reading more from this series!

OMalleycat says

Not a *bad* book but I had trouble accepting that Connor Westphall was able to do all she could do in the book. I was particularly troubled that Connor endlessly explains how difficult and inaccurate lipreading is (and I know this to be true), yet she makes her way in the hearing world by relying on lipreading with little error or comment. Not realistic.

Minx -The Genre Minx Book Reviews says

This was actually a really good mystery! I did not suspect the culprit at all. I wasn't crazy about the story itself but how the author writes a mystery was quite impressive but as with any mystery, looking back I am wondering how I missed it, lol.

Norma Huss says

Connor Westphal is a deaf woman who publishes a weekly paper in Flat Skunk, in the foothills of the Sierras. Dead bodies (and amorous men) turn up. Connor can lip read quite well, unless the person turns away, is chewing tobacco, has a bushy mustache, or some other problem. (Sometimes what she thinks she sees is quite impossible, but that adds to the fun). Who should she trust? Who should she fear? And, sometimes, body language is just as loud as the spoken word. Recommended!

Gloria Mccracken says

You would think that a deaf woman might be at a distinct disadvantage when a crime lands in her lap. And in some respects Connor Westphal is. But in other ways her ability to notice things and read people's attitudes serves her in good stead. A fun, competently written mystery with an engaging protagonist. I promptly went in search of the sequels, of which there are several.

Laurian says

I really enjoyed this series and already went out to buy two more.

Lisa Vegan says

This first book in a series is unique in that the main protagonist/sleuth is deaf. I really enjoy mysteries where the main character has something unusual about them, such as Connor's deafness. I always feel as though I learn something and it gives a bit of uniqueness to a mystery. When one reads as many mysteries as I do, the ones that don't have something special about them all end up merging into one another in my mind. I've read the first two in the series and haven't read the others only because there's so much else to read, including other mystery authors I haven't yet read. I do recommend them, even though they're not my very favorites.

Plum-crazy says

Not a bad read on the whole. I guess the fact that Connor is deaf is supposed to give a her uniqueness from the usual amateur sleuth but to be honest, because she speaks normally & can lip read so well, her handicap in some ways seems unnecessary as she comes over "normal" most of the time -I hope that doesn't sound offensive, can't explain it any other way! I'd probably read another in the series should I happen across one but won't bother actively looking for more.
