



Formula of Deception

Carrie Stuart Parks

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When her twin sister was murdered, Murphy Anderson changed her name and appearance and moved to Kodiak to avoid the press and publicity. But when local authorities discover she's an artist and request her help in drawing a dying man's memories, she unintentionally ends up in the limelight again—and may be back in the killer's crosshairs.

The memory that Murphy was asked to draw was from an Alaskan hunter who discovered five bodies on remote Ruuwaq Island ten years ago, but has only shared the information with the police now that he's dying of cancer. When they go to the island to investigate, no skeletons remain but there is evidence that the bodies may have been deliberately destroyed. But the big discovery is of a World War II Quonset hut.

As one by one the people who were at the hut die, Murphy knows there is something much deeper at stake. What happened there during WWII? And who is willing to kill to keep those secrets buried?

Formula of Deception Details

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Author : Carrie Stuart Parks

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From Reader Review Formula of Deception for online ebook

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Formula of Deception is a book that hooked me from the start. I love how the present crime story has a connection to WW2. Also, the setting Kodiak, Alaska really worked great for me. I love stories set in remote towns or islands. And, a crime novel set in Alaska worked well with me since I don't read many books set in that state.

I was engrossed with the story. I found Murphy Anderson to be an interesting character. She's a person I felt I connected with. Her losses in life really moved me. I liked the characters she met in the book and Carrie Stuart Parks managed to add some really nice surprising twists to the story. All and all is this a great book and I hope this is the first book in a series!

I have previously read Portrait of Vengeance by Carrie Stuart Parks that I enjoyed and I'm glad to say that this one was just as good as Portrait of Vengeance (from the Gwen Marcey series) and that I definitely want to read more books by her.

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!

Amy says

Formula of Deception is an engaging, entertaining book full of surprises and suspense. The entire time I read the book I did not want to put the book down. There are many twists and turns to the plot and several things occurred that surprised me (I did not see it coming). The main character of this book is Murphy Anderson, who is an artist working with the local police. As I read about Murphy's character and as things were revealed about her, I liked her character more and more. I enjoyed some of the secondary characters as well. Their stories were interesting and engaging. This suspenseful book was fantastic and I highly recommend the book! You will not be disappointed. I have read some of her other books and liked them, but this one is written so well!!!

***I was given a free electronic copy of this book from the publisher for an honest review. This is my honest opinion. Even though I received this copy free, I have purchased her books before.

The Lit Bitch says

3.5 stars

The setting and description of this book sounded original and different which was why I decided to review this one. I loved that this book was set in Alaska and had this obscure WWII reference.

It seemed like an untapped resource and caught my eye as soon as I read the description. All I kept thinking was what in the world is a WWII Quonset hut? I felt like I needed to read this book just to find that out!

While the WWII aspect of this book drew me in, it isn't fully the focus of the story which was actually fine by me. It's the catalyst for the narrative and the driving secret but the focus is more on why are people dying now. I liked how this story merged the two stories together and also incorporated Murphy's sister's murder.

It all came full circle nicely.

I did learn a lot about WWII and how Alaska was effected during that time. It's a region that is often forgotten and left out of more popular WWII stories so I loved how the author capitalized on that and took the opportunity to educate readers on this interesting period in history.

For me Murphy was just ok as the main character. I didn't love her in the way that I had hoped and I am just not sure why but for some reason I just felt like I lacked a connection with her. I liked her job (forensic artist) but that was about it. She just wasn't for me. The story itself was suspenseful and there were a lot of things going on that had to come together.

While the author did a good job at wrapping things up, I personally felt like there were a few too many things happening in the story that at times it became distracting. I mean there is a serial killer, the Nazis, biological weapons....there is just a lot happening in the plot and while she did a decent job weaving everything together, as a reader I sometimes got overwhelmed.

This is a new author to me, though she has written a number of other books and series, this one is a stand alone. I was happy to read this as fall kicked off because the setting really got me in the mood for fall. Also her experience with writing is evident in this book. She clearly knows how to spin a tale and write mysteries. She knows just how to hook her audience in and keep them reading. Practice makes perfect and Stuart Parks did a standout job hooking me into the book. However, I just couldn't connect with the main character and because of that I had to go with a 3.5 star review. The book itself was compelling and interesting with a steady flow of clues to keep me reading, but without a connection to Murphy, I just didn't enjoy the book to the degree that I had hoped. That's not to say it was 'bad', in fact I thought it was good just not a 5 star for me.

See my full review here

Matt says

First and foremost, a large thank you to NetGalley, Carrie Stuart Parks, and Thomas Nelson for providing me with a copy of this publication, which allows me to provide you with an unbiased review.

Moving away from her Gwen Marcey series, Carrie Stuart Parks intrigues readers with this standalone novel that is sure to send chills up the spine. Murphy Andersen is hiding in plain sight in rural Alaska, worried that the serial killer likely responsible for her sister's disappearance might soon find her. Creating a backstory so as not to alert anyone, Andersen sells herself as a forensic artist and has been brought in by the Kodiak Police Department to sketch some memories of a dying man. These sketches are to represent five bodies the man found a decade ago on a remote island. When Andersen and a crime technician make their way to the apparent crime scene, weather works against them and they narrowly escape with their lives. Soon thereafter, people with whom Andersen has recently had contact end up murdered and her home is torched. Might this all be coincidental or is there someone trying to send a message? As Andersen remains convinced that she will get to the bottom of her sister's disappearance, she is also working this cold case, where she discovers potential ties to a World War II extremely covert mission. While she is worried that her identity and past may soon be revealed, Andersen cannot be deterred from doing all she can to solve these two Alaskan mysteries. A well-paced thriller that keeps the reader's attention. Recommended for those who enjoy a police procedural with a twist!

I have long enjoyed Parks' forensic artist series, as it tackles crime fighting from a unique perspective and helps educate the reader on some of the major aspects of the author's other career. This move away from the

series allows Parks to expand the foundation of her writing, adding a younger and less jaded protagonist. Murphy Andersen proves to be an interesting character, though the intensity of her backstory is diluted as she tries to help with the cases at hand. Parks has done well to introduce a number of interesting supporting characters, many of whom complement Andersen well, though not as well as some of those Parks has created in her aforementioned series. The plot has some interesting aspects—a serial killer, five mystery bodies, a military mission— but I found the entire experience not to be as intense as I might have liked. I was able to read the book with ease, though found myself lacking a connection to much on the page. It might also be some of the psychological aspects and internal conversations that Andersen seems to have, but I felt it lacked the punch Parks usually brings to her novels. The premise is sound and the historic happenings, be they real or fabricated, offered the reader something interest to ponder as they make their way through this piece.

Kudos, Madam Parks, for a decent addition to your writing repertoire. While not my favourite piece, I can still see some of your high-calibre writing that hooked me a while back.

Like/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

A Book for All Seasons, a different sort of Book Challenge: <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/...>

Joan says

Parks is one of my favorite mystery and suspense authors. That her main character is a forensic artist is a good basis for great plots. Imagine my surprise at a new heroine in this novel. Murphy is not actually a forensic artist although she claims to be one. She is really on Kodiak Island in Alaska to find out what happened to her missing sister who she fears was dating a serial killer.

There were aspects of the plot I really liked and others that left me unsatisfied. I like that Murphy gets to help with the forensic work on a cold case. A fisherman on his death bed reveals he had found several bodies on a small island ten years ago. What Murphy and the state forensic expert find relates to World War II. I learned about the Japanese invading Alaska, trying to distract the Americans from Midway. I also learned about Custer's Cutthroats and their work in thwarting the Japanese army.

The novel also had an intense psychological aspect to it. All is not as it seems nor is everyone who they claim. There were many twists and turns to the plot, many relating to the psychological aspect. At times I felt a little jerked around and definitely deceived. I am just not so sure all of those psychological twists work.

I really like Parks' writing style. She has a way of having tension run continually through the plot. I do recommend this novel to readers who enjoy learning about WW II in Alaska and forensic art while being entertained with a mysterious cold case and a suspenseful current mystery.

I received a complimentary galley of this book from the publisher. My comments are an independent and honest review.

Cheryl says

When I read the summary for this book I was intrigued. I wanted to read this book. The author does a good job with the location setting for this story in the Alaskan wilderness. It really helped to set the right mood for

this book. In regards to the main character, Murphy, she was nice. I found her personable. Yet, I never fully embraced her or the rest of the characters in this story. Thus as I have stated previously, it does not matter how well a story is written if the characters are flat, than, the story will suffer.

This was the case with this book for me. I was reading it. In fact, this was a quick read for me but I found that I was really only going through the motions a lot of the time. Nothing was truly sticking with me and therefore, I found myself struggling to connect to the story. Although, there is something there in this book. If I could have connected with the characters better my feelings towards this book were have been stronger.

Staci says

Formula of Deception is the first book after the Gwen Marcey series. I understand why the author moved in another direction. At the same time, I really loved Gwen and her meddling best friend. Now that I've cleared the air on that...

Murphy Anderson is the main character in Formula of December. She's likable and the facts about her past surface layer by layer. I enjoyed that approach of slowly sharing her story. At the same time, I was confused at some points about what she was remembering.

There were many twists and turns in the story and I definitely didn't figure out the details until they were unveiled.

My gratitude to publisher Thomas Nelson for a complimentary copy of the novel. I was not required to post a review and the opinions expressed are my own.

Jamie says

Oh book reviews – sometimes you're hard to write!

This one wasn't a hit for me. After thinking on this for a while, I figured out what missed the mark: The book had too many lines cast out. There was the personal drama Murphy was going through, the mysterious prologue, the current crimes she was helping to investigate, and more as the truth was ultimately revealed. While there were some intriguing bits, it started to lose its credibility towards the end. I also thought some developments were rushed and that always makes it hard for me to connect with characters.

I admit, I often compared this to Gwen Marcey's stories (the main character in Parks' previous novels), and it didn't match those reading experiences (which is a hard thing to do because I LOVE those novels and Gwen is hilarious).

So, while the history was interesting, this one didn't quite live up to my expectations.

(Thank you to BookLook Bloggers for a copy of the book. All views expressed are my own.)

Rebecca says

"You can't trust him. You can't trust anyone You have a mission."

Memories are a funny thing; some are quite trustworthy, while others may present themselves as a "formula of deception". Murphy Anderson finds herself caught in between, as bewildering flashbacks handicap her ability to recalibrate her life in Kodiak, Alaska following the heinous murder of her twin sister.

Posing as a forensic artist, Murphy is pulled beside the deathbed of another Alaskan who is forcing painful memories to the surface. Capitalizing on her artistic abilities, his trail of sketchy details leads the crime team to the remote Ruuwag Island, where a rather routine search for clues turns into a labyrinth of evidence so volatile that everyone who comes in contact is promptly eliminated.

Deemed a "soul searcher" by the natives, Murphy's unique skill for gathering details has placed her squarely in the crosshairs of those who are carefully guarding their secrets. So many questions. And so few answers. This thrilling novel by Carrie Stuart Parks has more twists and turns than an underground cave, and its readers will be awestruck when they discover how she fits it all together.

Donna (More Than a Review) says

Formula of Deception by Carrie Stuart Parks. This was my first book by Carrie.

The book opens with a scene to capture your attention. Carrie continues to sprinkle in bits and pieces of her history and the mystery to keep you guessing until the end. I did experience a short section that I felt was slow and then it picked right back up and when a bang. I did NOT figure it all out. The author did a great job of surprising me. There is a mystery from the past and the present. Murphy is an artist and she is helping solve a mystery while she is also looking for her sister and her sister's boyfriend.

The author did a great job of intertwining two intense mysteries together. I don't want to ruin any of the surprises so I will keep my review relatively short.

I enjoyed how the woman was trying to warn her off of Jonathan by telling Murphy that he has 4 boys. One of my favorite scenes is when the boys are introduced.

Violence - 3. There are several deaths throughout the book both past and present. None of them are described in graphic detail. There is also someone trying to kill her. And she is trying to find her sister or her sister's body.

Sex - 0

Language

Drinking

I received this book from Netgalley. I was not required to write a positive review.

You can see my full review at More Than a Review dot com where I rate the level of sex, violence, language and drug/alcohol use in books.

Nora St Laurent says

Wow! What an amazing, nail biting story that kept me on the edge of my chair as I walked in the shoes of main character Murphy Anderson; a woman on the run from a serial killer and in a desperate search to locate

her twin sister. She's gone rogue to get the information needed in doing so she uncovers an incredible treasure and mystery from WWII that people would kill to get their hands on.

I enjoyed getting to know Kodiak, Alaska and sketch artist Murphy Anderson. This was an intriguing story I couldn't put down. It reminded me a little of the movie "A Beautiful Mind." As the audience thinks the story is about the war and it turns out to be something completely different.

This a suspenseful action, adventure story that did not get too graphic. I appreciate that. The author includes 8 discussion questions to help get your book club discussion going. This is a fascinating read and one that would work great as a book club pick.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher through BookLookfor Bloggers Site. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising"

Nora St. Laurent

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The Book Club Network blog www.psalms16.blogspot.com

Book Fun Magazine <https://tinyurl.com/y9lwbfers>

SVP Promotion

Karen R says

Wow, heart pounding suspense with a complex plot! A young woman whose goal in coming to Alaska was to solve her sister's disappearance, Murphy Anderson finds herself in deep with no one to trust. Using her artistic skills and fine sense of details, she poses as a forensic artist, and finds herself in more danger than ever.

This book is a well told tale, intricately spinning together the threads of a cold case, present day murders, and an anti-heroine on the run. Using the interesting history of the Kodiak and Aleutian islands region around WWII, the story has a realistic feel that makes it even more thrilling. Surprising twists develop as she uncovers the truth behind the cold cases and the tension ratchets up. Some side characters add a few lighter moments and some faith too. Loved Vesper and her family, 'Uncle' especially, and Bertie. Highly recommend for suspense fans looking for a great stand alone story with no romance.

(An e-book was provided by the publisher via NetGalley. All opinions are my own.)

Fiction Aficionado says

~3.5 stars~

Whoa! Just give me a minute here while my head stops spinning! This story will certainly keep you on your toes, but I think I lost my balance right at the end as all the revelations and reversals kept piling up—some of which were more believable than others.

But let me start at the beginning. I love Carrie Stuart Parks' characterisation, and this book was no exception. She invests each of her characters, no matter how important, with a unique personality—and in several cases,

a helping of dry humour (always a win for me). I was particularly intrigued by Murphy's character, as it became clear as the story went on that there were some psychological elements in play. I wasn't quite sure how that was going to pan out, but her mental conversations with her dead sister were just one clue that there was something going on.

The plot moved at a crisp pace and provided plenty of danger and suspense (and an increasing body count!), but I found myself sceptical of some of the conclusions Murphy was able to draw at different points in the story. Sometimes they felt just a little too convenient, or as though the evidence she had wasn't strong enough to justify the connections she was making. And by the end, the circumstances she uncovered were almost too convoluted for me to get my head around. I think if I went back and read it again I would probably be able to make better sense of it. In fact, maybe I should have done that at the time. If someone had been telling me the story, I would have made them stop and repeat a number of things just to make sure I had it all straight! But it was one of those stories where the idea of stopping to take stock doesn't occur to you, because you're too busy gorging yourself on all the revelations!

There were two somewhat disappointing elements, however. First, we get teased with the prospect of a romantic interest, but we hardly see him. Yes, I'm pouting. If you're going to dangle that carrot, at least let us grab a few bites. On second thoughts, perhaps that wasn't the best metaphor...

The other thing was the resolution of the plot surrounding the sister's killer. I'm going to have to be REALLY careful not to let spoilers slip here, but it felt a bit far-fetched to me. Or maybe it's more accurate to say I felt a little duped. Maybe a bit of both. That's probably all I can say without revealing too much.

With all that said, the story certainly kept my attention, so if that's what you're after, go for it!

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher. This has not influenced the content of my review, which is my honest and unbiased opinion.

Lisa Johnson says

Title: Formula of Deception

Author: Carrie Stuart Parks

Pages: 320

Year: 2018

Publisher: Thomas Nelson

My rating: 5 out of 5

Stunning! Yes, that is the appropriate way to describe this author's writing of suspense with many twists and turns in the plot. Yet, the ending of this particular story really caught me off guard! A friend of mine has read her earlier works and was telling me time and again how truly amazing the tales were in the novels. I thought I would get to them one day. Well, today is that day!

I was engaged in the story line from the first page and thought for sure I would figure out the mystery and all before the end of the book. However, having never read this author's writing, I was not in any way prepared for just how the book ended! I loved the look backward into the history of what was going to impact the present and the future!

Murphy Anderson is a character who really was complex and seemed desperate throughout the story line. Murphy wasn't who she claimed to be, but she needed the money the forensic artist work brought. What Murphy hadn't counted on was the multiple attempts on the lives of those around her and then narrowing down to her having to face the past again. Yet, it isn't the past we read in the beginning of the book.

Confused yet or intrigued? Either way, readers are going to love sitting down and traveling the labyrinth the

novel has within the covers.

I plan on going back now to read her three other books and can't wait to see what will come next from this woman's pen!

Other reviews can be read at <http://seekingwithallyurheart.blogspot...> Also follow me on Twitter@lcjohnson1988, Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/lisa.johnson...>

Cara Putman says

Formula of Deception is set in Alaska is filled with international intrigue, historical twists, and a broken heroine who is compelling. This novel is perfect for those who love a suspense that will keep you guessing as you turn the pages. I can't tell if it's the first in a series or a stand alone, but I was tugged through the story with a force that kept me wishing for just a few more minutes. It has pacing, a fascinating historical twist set in WWII so you know I loved it, and a heroine I just wanted to protect. A great story.
