



Dead Famous

Carol O'Connell

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Jurors on a controversial trial are being killed off one by one, and only Detective Kathleen Mallory can figure out why. But the FBI has told her to lay off and leave it to the Feds. That's never stopped Mallory before.

Dead Famous Details

Date : Published September 7th 2004 by G.P. Putnam's Sons (first published September 1st 2003)

ISBN : 9780425197974

Author : Carol O'Connell

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review Dead Famous for online ebook

Audrey says

It's a problem for authors when they write really phenomenal books: sometimes, other books they write are simply good, and that can feel disappointing.

This is a decent installation of the Mallory series, which is good, but it's just not as good as others in the series, such as *The Chalk Girl* or *Shell Game*. The central mystery is good and chewy and makes you think about free speech, the FCC and social media. It has a fascinating and complex heroine.

And it also features a wounded and lovelorn Riker, which I'm not a fan of, and there's far too little Mallory. Everyone shows up like clockwork, which is nice, but... not great. But the other thing about authors who write really phenomenal books is that even good keeps you reading.

LJ says

DEAD FAMOUS – Good+

Carol O'Connell – 7th Mallory

This story involves a seemingly unstoppable serial killer; a beautiful hunchback with tragedy in her past; a radio shock-jock who helps the killer find his victims; an extremely mean house cat; a gloomy veteran cop drinking himself into oblivion; and NYPD detective Kathy Mallory.

This is a tough book for me to rate. Mallory is a fascinating character and we learn even more about her past. But this is not at all the usual mystery. Mallory is almost a secondary player to other strange and, in their own ways, haunted characters. My reaction reminds me a bit of the way I felt about Leane's "Shelter Island," in that I'm not certain I can say I loved the story, but I absolutely love her writing.

Jeremy Hornik says

These Mallory books are like opera plots: gloriously overcomplicated and wildly unrealistic, with an overheated emotional core. Really trashy and intense. This one is all grief, PTSD, and loss.

I'm a fan.

Annie says

A most excellent 5 star read! this one was fantastic, although Kathy needs to be a pinch more human

Tracey says

Reading this series in only slightly interrupted sequence is strange, because it becomes very clear that while they *are* a series, the books are largely isolated from each other: what happens in one does not necessarily affect what happens in the next. A cat which figures prominently in *The Man Who Cast Two Shadows* and seems to have been adopted by Mallory is gone without trace or mention in the next book. Another case of unrequited love (besides Charles's, that is), disappears below the surface. A major fire in one book has little impact on the next, or those after. Long story short, the relationships – and, in fact, the characters' ages, as far as I can tell – remain static. Which detracts from an otherwise powerful and affecting book in *Dead Famous*.

Carol O'Connell is a past mistress of (to use a poker metaphor in keeping with the Tuesday games of Kathy's fan club) keeping her cards close to the vest, of anteing up in small increments until suddenly a stunning hand is revealed and she scoops up the pot. My brother plays cards like this: in a game (not poker) in which you're supposed to go down as quickly as possible with three of a kind, he likes to hang on to all of his cards, maintaining his poker face, risk getting caught with a handful of high-value cards, and go down all at once with a fan of matched cards, and one in the middle, and he's out before the rest of us know what hit us. This is so far the best example of O'Connell's poker face. There was a trial, we know – a murder trial with unshakeable evidence against the defendant. There was a Not Guilty verdict which shocked the nation. And now the jurors are being hunted and killed, one by one. Who was on the jury, who the defendant was, what the mystery is that Johanna Apollo carries around with her, and why – if there is a sane reason – the British-born shock jock Ian Zachary is playing the games he is playing with the remaining jurors' lives - - these are all questions left unanswered far past the point of ordinary plot suspense. I think with a great many writers that fact would have resulted in a wall-banger – there's a fine, fine line between suspense and frustration – but Carol O'Connell can pull it off. Her writing is compelling, and the need to know outweighs the less pleasant aspects of the wait.

Is the payoff worth it in the end? Yes and no. The ending is, really, the only one feasible within the Mallory universe, and there is an *oomph* to it that is gratifying. But personal matters for several characters do not work out as might be hoped ... and part of the sadness that accompanies this for a long-term reader is the probability that – just as the rookie cop from the last book (whom I hoped would be a new recurring character) disappeared, and the cat "Nose" before him – nothing that happens in these pages will carry over into the books that follow.

The patterns each book follows become glaring after so many back to back. While I do still very much enjoy O'Connell's style and the characters, by this point it's hard not to eyeroll a little at the secrets kept by the characters from the reader, or at Mallory subverting authority again, or gosh there was some past occurrence five or fifteen or twenty years ago from which this story stems. Each book on its own is excellent. Taken sequentially, they lose something. So I guess my conclusion is: read these books, because they're very good – but don't ingest the series in a lump.

Stephanie says

By far my favorite book in the series! The story was fast paced and covered a lot. I liked seeing Riker's recovery. I felt like Kathy was more likable in her way. I really enjoyed that there was no magic involved in this one too!

Ann says

Mallory is as sociopathic as usual... or is she.

spoiler alert

Mallory wavering in her resolve is an unusual sight, Mallory not completely understanding every nuance of Riker is even more unusual. The first third of the books was not as clearly explained as I would have expected and not enough of Charles in the book but this foray into Riker's personality and his recovery from a brutal shooting make this hard to put down. Dr Joanna Appollo -- a hunchback and a psychiatrist for the first time ever gets close to the man inside all of the pain and helps heal him enough to be able to get back to work.

Roman Clodia says

If you want fame, and you want it fast - well, then you've got to kill somebody. That's the American way.

No-one, but no-one has a more twisted, devious mind than O'Connell. In a story where even a cat is psychologically traumatised, the plot is dense and complicated, and characters are flayed.

Here Riker takes centre stage, and his ordeals reveal new facets of the ever-fascinating Mallory. This isn't quite O'Connell at her best - sidelining Mallory ensures that - but yet again she delivers a crime novel that is fresh, baffling, and utterly unique.

Jessica says

I won this book on goodreads. It's been sitting on my shelf so I decided to pull it out and see what it was about. This is my 1st book of the series so I don't know if reading the others prior would have helped or not. I can't decide if I enjoyed it or not, I'm torn. I really dislike Mallory's character but liked Riker and Johanna. There was a lot going on so you had to keep up. I don't think any of the characters in the book were playing with a full deck of cards so it was a bit hard to sympathize with any of them. I liked how we were kept guessing on where the book was going next and not predictable. It definitely wasn't your everything turns out perfect at the end of the book, and was upset with the murder suicide i was a sucker and hoped for a happy ending. Overall I was not bored reading it and thought the detail was there. it was interesting to see how everyone came together at the end as everything was spelled out like QA :)

Stacy says

Enjoyed this book very much. I see that it's part of a series featuring Detective Mallory, a very easy character to dislike. But this one centers more on her partner, Riker & a suspect/victim of an ongoing investigation.

That suspect, Jo, is possibly why I like the book so well, she's interesting & complicated.

I'm also partial to Crazy Bitch.

It seems to me that the book contains such a big story for such a small book of 301 pages.

Characters are colorful, well defined for their own parts in the plot. There are multiple twists in the details & crimes. The police work is mostly in the background with the crimes & flow of the story taking precedent,

making for an easy read. I would read another of the series even though Mallory is key to them because with this one the author impressed me in various ways.

Doren Damico says

What is sooo appealing about O'Connell's novels is the complexity of her characters. This series of books stand alone perfectly, yet delve ever deeper into the characters we love with each successive novel. In this story, O'Connell focuses her lens on Riker, while simultaneously introducing us to a new set of players in a deadly game of assassination. We learn more about Riekr and watch Mallory try to "fix" him after he's been in a life threatening gun battle. We also learn that despite all her amazing gifts, Mallory doesn't know everything! There's a brilliant and unique love story in this tale and I think I swallowed the book in two days. Can't say enough how much I love this writer and her Mallory novels!

Bonnie says

oh, how I love her books.....story, character, heart.....

Michelle Spalding says

I could not get into this book at all

Rosemary says

Binge read this series on my patio with iced tea and/or martinis.

Lindsay (Santafefan) says

O'Connell creates fascinating characters, especially her "heroes" and minor characters. Villains tend to be a bit cartoonish. Johanna is the central character and is someone I'd like to know. Flawed but heroic in her own way. She is full of the heart that Mallory is awkwardly coming to know. Even Bunny, a minor character, stays with me.
