



Invisible

Lorena McCourtney

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She's not your average crime fighter!

Ivy Malone has a curiosity that sometimes gets her into trouble, and it's only aggravated by her discovery that she can easily escape the public eye. So when vandals romp through the local cemetery, she takes advantage of her newfound anonymity and its unforeseen advantages as she launches her own unofficial investigation.

Despite her oddball humor and unconventional snooping, Ivy soon becomes discouraged by her failure to turn up any solid clues. And after Ivy witnesses something ominous and unexplained, she can't resist putting her investigative powers to work again. Even the authorities' attempts to keep Ivy out of danger and her nosy neighbor's match-making schemes can't slow her down. But will the determination that fuels this persistent, quirky sleuth threaten her very safety?

Invisible Details

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Author : Lorena McCourtney

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Genre : Mystery, Christian Fiction, Fiction, Cozy Mystery

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From Reader Review Invisible for online ebook

Laurie • The Baking Bookworm says

Genre: Mystery/Suspense

Series: 1st book in the Ivy Malone series

Series Order:

1. Invisible (2004)
2. In Plain Sight (2005)
3. On The Run (2006)
4. Stranded (2006)

First Line: "The sign arched over the gravel driveway proclaimed Country Peace in rusty wrought iron."

Synopsis: Ivy Malone isn't your typical mystery solver. She's a retired librarian enjoying a quiet life although with her curiosity and spunk she finds herself in the middle of trouble. She has learned that as a LOL (Little Old Lady) she is often not seen by others and dismissed as old and unimportant ... so she uses that to her advantage. When a cemetery is vandalized Ivy decides to use her 'invisibility' to hide out and find out who the thugs are. Suddenly, armed only with her faith and spunky attitude Ivy finds herself in the middle of a murder of one of her neighbours.

My Thoughts: While I liked this book I don't plan to read more in this series and I'll tell all y'all why. I think the main reason is that there's not a lot of energy in the book. The main reason for this is that half way through the book the mystery takes a back seat to Ivy's Christian faith.

Personally and as a Christian myself, I have no issue with Ivy's faith being part of the storyline but it kind of surprised me because there was no mention of this being a Christian book in the book write-up. I've never read a Christian mystery before and I'm always open to reading new genres so I dove into this book. I respect and like the fact that Ivy's faith is important to her and greatly influences how she solves the mystery. I just wish the momentum of the mystery was upheld as well as the religious aspect. Her faith is mentioned in the first half of the book and is shown to be an important part of Ivy's character. But it isn't until the second half of the book that the author, I think, focuses too much on Ivy's faith even when it doesn't pertain to the mystery at all. The religion becomes the focus and the mystery is only secondary.

One issue I had with this book was that I found the 'invisibility' issue a little odd. I understand that some seniors may feel invisible to others and not taken seriously, respected etc ... but I felt like this author took it a little too far. For the first half of the book Ivy was a funny, spunky senior but when she started thinking she was actually invisible it went from spunky to odd pretty quickly. Plus, some of her actions didn't fit with how I view seniors (which may be a negative about me). I just cannot picture my Nana or Grandma jumping junkyard fences or hanging out in cemeteries on their own in the middle of the night. Just a little too unbelievable.

One of the main things that I did enjoy about this book is Ivy. I pictured Ivy as a "Betty White-type" character --- spunky & quirky, with a good sense of humour. Wonderful, I love Betty White! The other secondary characters were ok but fairly one-dimensional and cliched. Sadly, as I mentioned above, the mystery was just mediocre and I never felt like I was on the edge of my seat at any point in this book.

That being said, if you're the kind of person who hates reading profanity or gratuitous sex scenes, like a quirky character in a very light read, then this is a book for you.

My Rating: 2.5/5 stars

Erin says

This book is cute, but SO heavy-handed on the religious talk. I wouldn't mind it if it had something to do with the story, but it doesn't. It almost feels like propaganda disguised as a mystery novel. The main character is very cute, and while the book is a nice light read, just be warned that if you're not big into copious amounts of out of place Christian jabber, to include judgement and guilt, then this might not be the book for you.

Chris says

I'm not rating this because I've discovered that I don't really like strong Christian based fiction. Let me clarify, where all the bad guys don't go to Church and all the good guys do, don't like that. That's me, not the writer.

However, HOWEVER, the idea behind this is great. McCourtney can write. It's great that her lead is a mature, older woman. Love the invisiblity idea. Inventive.

Krysti says

It's a "who dunnit" ... with a Christian twist.

I haven't figured out the ending yet, so I guess it's pretty good. If it keeps me guessing, then the author has done a good job so far. :-)

Jerry says

This was a fun little whodunit with a convoluted plot.

Ruth says

With the creation of her super-sleuth Ivy Malone, McCourtney brings new meaning to the acronym LOL. After the death of her best friend, Ivy (aka the Little Old Lady) feels at loose ends. Without her best friend to laugh at life with, Ivy begins to feel ignored and, well, invisible. Then she gets the brilliant idea to use her newfound invisiblity to investigate vandalism at the local cemetery. Only when her neighbor turns up

murdered, the stakes are raised for Ivy's investigations...

I'm kind of a picky mystery reader (okay, make that really picky). Too often attempts to write "cozy" mysteries or to create quirky, memorable sleuths (like Miss Marple or Nero Wolfe) fall terribly flat. Thankfully, McCourtney succeeds in creating an engaging, fun heroine and a whole cast of quirky, memorable characters that makes Invisible quite an enjoyable read. The character of Ivy has quite a bit of depth, and it's an enjoyable read cheering for her as she reassesses her place in the world. A book worth checking out, and I'll definitely be reading the rest of the series at some point.

Jessica says

This is a book that is about a LOL (little old lady) who uses LOL disguises to investigate a murder. Who would ever suspect an old lady? I think that it was a great book considering that I got it for free off of the kindle store.

Cheryl says

This is a new favorite author! I will be reading the entire series and she is a Christian author which makes me feel good about recommending her books. Ivy Malone is a great character and a complete crack up! I laughed out loud on numerous occasions. One of many of the funny lines is when she goes to visit a man in the hospital who is under guard and has to get patted down, "Me, I got patted down! I felt rather flattered that he thought I could have an AK-47 concealed in my pants leg or a bomb strapped to my Wal-Mart bra..." Anyway, plan to read this series! She is right up there with the best elderly sleuths!

Norma Budden says

I picked up this book and didn't want to put it down. Because sleep beckoned, I had no choice - but I picked it up and finished it the following day. I really fell in love with Ivy Malone and her spunk, not to mention courage. After all, who would sit up alone in a graveyard all night - let alone get up and do jumping jacks trying to stay awake? To be honest, she reminds me of the person I would likely be if I didn't have kids depending on me because, like Ivy, I have a mutant curiosity gene for getting answers to my questions; thankfully, murder has never been the subject of the day.

I certainly did empathize with her plight of feeling invisible, though; it's sad when people have the sense that they just blend into the woodwork, that no one notices them.

The story made me laugh out loud sometimes and had me on the edge of my seat at others. At one point, I thought, "This is it; only a miracle will get her out of here." Even so, Ivy surprised me yet again...

This is a story you will definitely want to read and I can't wait to read the sequel.

Chaitra says

It's a hoot when Ivy isn't trying to give random somebodies grief about how they practice faith. It's a funny mystery, and Ivy is suitably self-aware. She's not a super woman and she knows that about herself. There's a rather convoluted plot that ends up in an odd place, but I also mostly liked how it got there.

I don't relate to organized religion, but I've liked faith based books before. But Lorena McCourtney is not Shusaku Endo or Marilynne Robinson and the Christian messages in the book felt misplaced. Ivy is compassionate enough to not judge people based on their actions (i.e., Kendra), but she does judge them based on their church attendance (i.e., Dixon and Mac). And a church itself because it's empowering and is trying to reach younger people with a less fundamental attitude. All this while also doing some serious snooping and contaminating evidence. That's kind of superficial no?

Deb says

I'm glad I didn't pay for this book. It was a free Kindle read. Widow and senior citizen Ivy Malone has just lost her best friend and confidante, and as she goes about her daily life she discovers that to most of the world she's "invisible." Nobody pays attention to LOL's (little old ladies). She decides to use this to advantage however, as she tries to find out who's responsible for the vandalism at a historic cemetery and investigate the mysterious disappearance of a former neighbor. I rather enjoyed Ivy herself, an intrepid and plucky woman. I enjoyed the humor - Ivy spending nights in the cemetery, searching under the bumper of a car for a possible key in a used car lot. But the constant proselytizing for Christianity really interfered with the story. Faith-filled novels don't bother me (think of Father Tim in the Jan Karon series, for example), but out and out evangelizing does. I belong to the "show me, don't tell me" school of writing and real life action. By the end of the book I wondered what the author's true purpose in writing had been - to write a cozy, humorous mystery or to create Christians. Although I really liked the premise of the novel and its main character I was completely turned off by the rest of the package. (And yes, I am actively involved in a church and have been so my entire life.)

Wealhtheow says

Ivy Malone's husband and son are dead, and she herself is in her twilight years, but she's got irrepressible spunk. She spends her days chatting with friends and going to church. It's a low-key, quiet life. But when her mysterious neighbor disappears, Ivy investigates, and turns up murders, conspiracy, and a lot more excitement than she'd planned for.

It's not bad. The mystery itself is pretty obvious: no red herrings or kindly faced villains here. The style is similar to Charlaine Harris's, where every day's events and chores are detailed (which can be either excruciatingly boring or a good way to get a feel for the character) and all the side characters are one-dimensional. It didn't hook me, though.

Plus, there's an unexpected subplot that kept throwing me out of the story. Every.single.time Ivy meets someone, she asks them if they go to church (doesn't even ask if they're Christian or not--just assumes) and then badgers them to go every time she sees them from then on. It's weird, because there really isn't much discussion of faith or actual biblical passages--just a lot of talk about the importance of going to church. And

the dialog is so ham-handed and clunky when the characters are talking about religion that it really feels out of place and artificial, like a poorly done PSA.

Stephanie says

A good old-fashioned mystery with a LOL protagonist, LOL being Little Old Lady. There were a few LOL (laugh out loud) moments, too. The mystery is not too difficult to follow, the crime is gruesome but not described graphically, and there is no cursing or sex. The potential love interests for our LOL, Ivy, are both very "grandpa next-door" kind of guys. There was a little too much religion in this for my tastes but Ivy is a Christian lady who's faith in God guides her through solving this mystery. Not bad, will probably look for the next in the series.

Christina says

I downloaded this for free while sitting in the doctor's office. There are books that transcend their story and make the experience of one (say, a elderly christian woman feeling "invisible") applicable to any reader. Ahem. THIS IS NOT THAT BOOK. Forgive my bluntness, but, for instance, having your protagonist say, "I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was ten years old, and the Lord has been my guide, companion, and comforter ever since," while chatting up the detective helping her out doesn't exactly a. keep you in the thrill of the mystery or b. appeal to an audience outside of the expected one. As I currently work in a convent, one cannot say I am not a friend of elderly christian women, and as I am unabashedly a great fan of Dorothy Gilman's Mrs. Pollifax, one cannot say I am not a voracious reader of elderly women solving murders, but I can say rather confidently that this book is probably appealing to a particular group of people but not very appealing to me. Also it's not that good of a story and the ending was dumb. How do these things get such good reviews? argh.

Krysty Sullivan says

The only mystery here is how this got published. The story was predictable, formulaic, and lacking in depth or style. At the start of the book, the main character, Ivy Malone, an elderly childless widow loses her best friend. Afraid that she may be at risk of losing her faculties (she starts seeing images in her tomatoes)she throws herself into investigating a young neighbor's murder. The course of the investigation is painfully predictable and clues are divulged in a clunky (hit you over the head) style. This book is best described as proselytizing propaganda masquerading as fiction. The main character, like the author, is a devout Christian and many scenes in the book are written specifically to lecture on these beliefs. There is one more mystery though, does Amazon give this away for free to help spread Christianity or just to see how many of us will waste our time?
