



Red Mist

Patricia Cornwell

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With high-tension suspense and cutting-edge technology, Patricia Cornwell—the world's #1 bestselling crime writer—once again proves her exceptional ability to entertain and enthrall in this remarkable novel featuring chief medical examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta.

On her quest to find out exactly what happened to her former deputy chief, Jack Fielding, murdered six months before, Scarpetta drives to the Georgia Prison for Women to meet a convicted sex offender and the mother of a vicious and diabolically brilliant killer. Against the advice of her FBI criminal intelligence agent husband, Benton Wesley, Scarpetta is determined to hear this woman out.

Scarpetta has both personal and professional reasons to learn more about a string of grisly killings: the murder of a Savannah family years earlier, a young woman on death row, and then other inexplicable deaths that begin to occur at a breathtaking pace. Driven by inner forces, Scarpetta discovers connections that compel her to conclude that what she thought ended with Fielding's death and an attempt on her own life is only the beginning of something far more destructive: a terrifying terrain of conspiracy and potential terrorism on an international scale.

And she is the only one who can stop it.

Red Mist Details

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Author : Patricia Cornwell

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From Reader Review Red Mist for online ebook

Anna McMullen says

This book confused me. Where are the strong, self-possessed women characters? Why does it feel like the author is bored with what she's created? If this was a first reading of Cornwell's work I wouldn't be coming back.

Tracie says

Patricia Cornwall is back on her game with Red Mist. She seemed to have backed away from the very thing that made her books so interesting, forensic pathology, to delve into relationship issues. Kay Scarpetta is an excellent pathologist, but she doesn't always do as well in her personal life as she does in her professional life and I felt many of the recent books built around Scarpetta were lacking. Red Mist takes Kay back to the things she does best: finding clues in bodies, solving mysteries, drinking whiskey and cooking. All the old gang is back including Marino, Benton, and Lucy, but only Marino and Kay play major roles here. I'm glad to have Cornwell back on my reading list.

Charity Marie says

I have been a longtime fan of Patricia Cornwell's work, particularly her heroine Kay Scarpetta. The series depicted her as a strong, capable, confident, and committed to a work few people would be willing to do. Her commitment was admirable. However, in this book, this characterization has begun to unravel at the seams.

For some reason I cannot quite understand, Cornwell has changed Scarpetta from a focused scientist to a self-absorbed, unconfident, vindictive and paranoid character who is extremely difficult to enjoy. Even worse, Lucy's character has become a rogue "hacker" who does whatever she wants, whenever she wants, regardless of the law or who it might hurt. Marino has been reduced into a self-doubting former cop experiencing a mid-life crisis. Benton, when he appears is simply a prop for Scarpetta which Cornwell uses liberally to wax poetic about various topics to the reader.

The antagonists in the books are barely seen or considered. Usually you have a clear dislike for the bad guys but in this novel the bad guys are so convoluted it's hard to know which ones to hate so you end up simply feeling sorry for Scarpetta.

That being said, there are some redeeming qualities for the book. If you are a big fan of the characters you'll likely be satisfied by the story. There is some intrigue and suspense as Scarpetta works to solve three murders.

Not a significant amount of forensic science in this book but a heavier dose of mystery and detective work. The science seems forced and throws around industry terms and new technology without any substance behind it.

All in all, I have given this a generous three stars mainly because die hard fan will enjoy this addition to the series, it was entertaining on a basic level, and I don't regret reading it. I was disappointed that the story wasn't better but it was mildly satisfying.

Susan Crowe says

I have so much time invested in this series, I can't quit now. But they seem to be getting worse the farther along I get. I don't have the heart to give any of them less than 3*s but this one was more along the lines of 2*s. Lucy becomes more and more irritating and I expect Kay to snap any minute. Please, please, please, let The Bone Bed be better. I've switched to the audio books because if I tried to read them, I'd probably never finish them. I love you Kay Scarpetta and friends, or I definitely wouldn't be doing this.

Chris Wolak says

Red Mist is another strong entry in the Scarpetta Series. In some ways I liked it more than last year's Port Mortuary because the action is more consistent throughout. In Port Mortuary there was a lot of Scarpetta sitting around thinking and being paranoid. In Red Mist Scarpetta is on the move in Savannah, Georgia. She's not on her own turf, doesn't have the trappings of her power base, and isn't in charge. She's also gone to Georgia against the advice of her FBI profiler husband, Benton, and others. So there's much more action. However, Scarpetta being who she is, there's still a lot of paranoia. From the get-go nothing is going right for Scarpetta. The car she rented wasn't available and she finds herself driving a smelly old van to the Georgia Prison for Women where she's to meet with one of the inmates.

The issue of manipulation is set up early in this novel. When we first see the warden she's re-shelving a book about manipulation, Kathleen, the prisoner Scarpetta visits, is a compulsive manipulator, and Jamie Berger's manipulation of other people's egos for her own purposes is duly noted. In contrast, Scarpetta is blunt and honest, but the manipulation, both subtle and blatant, converges to put her pre-disposition to paranoia into overdrive.

Red Mist starts on June 30th and ends on July 4th. Scarpetta is going to visit Kathleen, the mother of Dawn Kincaid. Dawn is the woman who tried to kill Scarpetta in Port Mortuary. Kathleen is the woman who sexually abused Cornwell's long-time employee Jack Fielding when he was underage. Dawn Kincaid, we learned in Port Mortuary, is actually the child of Kathleen and Jack.

Scarpetta's meeting with the warden is weird, the meeting with Kathleen is weird, and then Scarpetta unexpectedly meets with Jamie Berger. Berger, Cornwell fans know, is a high powered New York City DA and Scarpetta's niece Lucy's former lover. Marino is in the picture, of course, and eventually Benton and Lucy join the fray as well.

People start dying. A major character among them. An old case is re-opened and Scarpetta finds herself embroiled in a mess created by several other women. There's some good "old fashioned" forensic investigative work in this novel. The final scene at the house I thought was a little too quick and neat, but otherwise this was a satisfying read.

As usual Cornwell slips in some helpful medical/health advice. Did you know that menthol in throat

lozenges actually causes temporary loss of vocal cord functioning? You're better off finding some slippery elm throat lozenges which are all natural and have no menthol.

I know a few people who were fans of Cornwell's earlier novels that stopped reading the series. They've asked me if I think the series has gone down hill. I do think that Cornwell went through a bit of a slump of some kind, but the last three books seem to be getting the series back on track. For some readers I've wondered if they just got tired of Scarpetta because she's a strong, but deeply flawed character and Cornwell seems to be trying to explore those flaws. Or did Cornwell's move away from first person narration distance early readers? (Note: She is back to first person narration.) I stopped reading the series for a few years but then went back to it because I enjoy the characters even if I don't always like what Cornwell does with them. I took a break from the series because I got dismayed by the cruelty, inhumanity, and terror Cornwell was exploring through the perspective of the serial killers and their victims. Now, however, she's back to focusing on Scarpetta's perspective and I much prefer that. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for Scarpetta and her crew.

Cornwell revamped her website to coincide with the release of Red Mist: <http://www.patriciacornwell.com/>

Disclosure: I read a pre-publication edition of Red Mist that I requested from the publisher.

Teresa Crawford says

I've been a big fan of Patricia Cornwells from the beginning and I usually find her books quite easy to read since I really like the characters and the story seem to flow easily.

Unfortunately I felt that this book made myself ask over and over again "do people really ramble on to themselves like Scarpetta did in this book"? I've always thought that Marino was the most realistic character in the Scarpetta series, and I felt as if his character was pushed aside somewhat in this book and left some unanswered questions.

Now with all the negatives out of the way, I do have to say I liked the storyline and definitely the unexpected ending, most will never see that coming!

Carol says

Second Read: Dr. Kay Scarpetta opens, she is driving through Savannah's low country, on her way to the Georgia Prison for Women. She has agreed to meet with an inmate there, a convicted sex offender and the mother of a diabolically brilliant killer. Against the advice of her FBI criminal intelligence agent husband, Benton Wesley, Scarpetta is determined to hear this woman out, and to continue on her quest to find out exactly what happened to her former deputy chief Jack Fielding, murdered six months before.

The quest is personal, but it is also professional. As the director of the new Cambridge Forensic Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and with her connection to the Department of Defense, Scarpetta has urgent reasons to learn more about a string of killings that she feels are somehow linked to Fielding's death and an attempt on her own is only the beginning of something far more destructive: a terrifying terrain of conspiracy and potential terrorism on an international scale. And she is the only one who can stop it.

First Read: This was one of the better Scarpetta books because it had a good ending, and it was set largely in the Savannah, Georgia area. All the usual characters are there -- Benton, Lucy, Marino. She was a very good protagonist for this book, and I enjoyed it better than some of the others. A lot of the story is set in a women's prison, so there were disturbing details as that depressing way they live was shown. Also, the legal system has it's flaws.

"Victims have no rights while they're being victimized and few rights during the slow, tedious grind of the criminal justice process. The injuries don't heal but continue to be inflicted by lawyers, by the media, by jurors, by witnesses who testify that someone like me (Scarpetta) had it coming or caused it."

Sherrie says

I've been a Cornwell fan since the beginning. But the last 4 or 5 novels have been headed in a direction that results in this, the weakest effort yet. Somewhere along the line, Cornwell lost a good editor and/or gained a bad one, because what used to be sharp, taut writing now goes on and on and ON. The meeting between Scarpetta and Berger that lays out the plot of the book took over 100 pages. It could have easily been done in 30. Or less. The entire novel is filled with over-long, over-emotional scenes like that, not to mention that the dialogue is hard to even read, much less imagine someone actually speaking it.

Even that would be semi-OK if the characters were drawn better. There was not a single likable character in this entire novel, and that list leads off with Dr. Scarpetta herself. She's always had her flaws, but they made her more real. Now they just make her, frankly, more of a self absorbed bitch.

The story itself was ho-hum, and I had to force myself to finish. There are too many good mystery writers out there for me to waste more time on this series. Unless I get definitive reports that the old Kay Scarpetta has returned, this is goodbye.

Melinda Elizabeth says

I want to love each book that Cornwell puts out. And I notice a trend that she's gone back to the good ol' days of first person storytelling, which can work for or against her, depending on the interest in the novel.

Unfortunately I felt that this one was a little too talky and not enough on the action front to keep readers interested. Secondary characters like Marino, Benton, and Lucy have all taken a back seat to Scarpetta's stream of consciousness monologues, which are lengthy and overdone throughout the book. I just didn't find the plot of this book strong enough to warrant these monologues. I feel a little ripped off as well, that she two-parted the story from the last novel. When it was a little edgy and shocking in that novel, here it begins to be predictable and boring.

You can pretty much anticipate each "twist" as it comes, and to me that tells me that Cornwell got a little lazy with this book, as she usually includes a little bit of an element of surprise with her novels.

I will keep my fingers crossed for the next book, as I'm not prepared to give up on her yet. But if she drags this plot line out for one more book I might have to reconsider.

Michelle says

I gave this two stars which I think is kind of generous, but it's not as awful as the last in the series, Port Mortuary. That was so bad. I keep waiting for two things to happen in this series; for the annoying "friend" Marino to stroke out and for the niece to finally just go over the edge and get into a shootout and die. Since Cornwell has been integrating those two characters more and more into the plotlines the books have gone downhill. They're the least likable characters in the series and yet she keeps pulling them more and more into the books. Lucy was barely in this book, thank goodness, maybe that's why I liked it more than the last. And seriously Ms. Cornwell, please please please please let your people say haven't, no one say's things like "I've not noticed..." "I've not felt...". It's so noticable to me that I lose track of what I'm reading.

Kelly says

I used to really enjoy the Kay Scarpetta series, but books 14 - 16 were so disappointing (and somewhat awful)that I was ready to stop reading them. Because I had invested so much time into the books, I felt I needed to keep reading them. Thankfully, 17 and 18 redeemed themselves for me, so I expected 19 to be satisfying as well. Alas, I'm tired of whiny Lucy who is always going to be a miserably angry person, pathetic Pete Marino who falls for the wrong woman every time because he loves Kay, and meek Benton who is so politically correct that he's incredibly bland. As for Kay, she is so self righteous and pompous that she alienates herself from the reader. She faults others for the same flaws she has.

The plot of the book is actually interesting, and the pace is good as well, but the characters have become so deplorably irritating that I have to force myself to read them. This makes me incredibly sad because I used to look forward to reading the new Scarpetta book each year. Why Cornwell has chosen to make these four characters so difficult to connect to and care about is beyond me.

KRM says

I've been reading Patricia Cornwell's Kay Scarpetta books for years. The first 8 or 9 novels in the series are some of the finest forensic crime fiction ever written and many writers before and since have yet to beat the high quality of these books - Cornwell included. The last couple of years her books have gone rapidly downhill in regard to quality.

I very rarely give up on reading a book before the end (I've only done this perhaps 5 times in the past 10 years) but Red Mist is so incredibly boring that I got to the 50% mark and then deleted it from my Kindle in frustration of my wasted time. The content in that 50% (roughly 250 pages) consists of just 2 (yes, you read that correctly) long conversations and not a lot else. As well as treading over the same subject again and again (and again) in these conversations, boring me to tears, the story itself is very uninteresting anyway. Scarpetta is more arrogant and unlikeable than ever (which is saying something!) and her opinions of Marino and Lucy (how could Jamie possibly not love her!?) are sickeningly getting worse in each book.

It's fair to say I didn't like this book. And as a fan of the series generally - especially the earlier books - I am genuinely disappointed with Cornwell and her deteriorating and (now) unlikeable writing style. When her next book comes out I am going to wait to see if it has mainly favourable reviews before I buy it and if it doesn't then Cornwell has lost a longtime fan.

Karen says

It must be difficult to be a successful, established writer. There must be pressure to meet or exceed your previous accomplishments. On the other hand, it may inspire overconfidence. Whatever the case, I say the same thing I said after reading this book's predecessor. This novel could easily have been edited down by about a third of its length, and suffered no loss. I'm very close to not caring whether or not I read her next book.

Denise MacDonald says

Very disappointing. Most of this book was repeating the same things over and over again. Every time a new character entered the story Kay had to go through and revise all her theories again and they were all written out every time. I really don't like how the last few books in this series have been all about people conspiring to murder Kay and her loved ones, even if it is paranoia on her part most of the time. I used to love reading this series, but the last few books have been huge disappointments. This isn't the book that will make readers new to Scarpetta novels loyal fans.

Alex is The Romance Fox says

1,5 stars

I've been reading Patricia Cornwell's Kay Scarpetta Series since the 1st book, Postmortem was published, which was a brilliant start to the series, which continued with some really amazing books, until it reached #10.....from then onwards, something happened to the series. And not a good something. Somewhere along the line, the magic of Kay Scarpetta's world wasn't there for me.

Instead of looking forward to a new arrival, I gave it a miss for a while. But I couldn't give up on KS....hoping that maybe the next one would bring back the magic.

Well, Red Mist, #19 in the series did not ignite the old or new magic!!!

Nothing happens....from the opening where Kay is interviewing a woman who is connected to Kay's former assistant, who had been viciously murdered by his daughter, whose mother was the woman in jail that Kay was visiting....it goes on and on for loads and loads of pages of the conversation between Kay and the prisoner....and never going anywhere.

Kay continues internalizing and internalizing and more internalizing.....giving us information and more information that after a while makes no sense to me.....and leading somewhere I don't know where.

Lucy continues to be weirdi can't get a hook on this character. Do I like her or don't I like her? What is she all about??? Apart from her high IQ, hacking skills, loads of money, her own helicopter, supercars.....

And Marino, Kay's partner who has been with her since the beginning....continues being weird and

weirder.....their interaction is beyond bizarre. Maybe it's something to do with the fact that he's still in love with Kay and she not.....would he be different if the two ever got it together, I wonder.

Benton, Kay's husband. Another character I can't figure out. He's so remote most of the times. I would love to see a bit more romance between him and Kay. But he makes these fleeting appearances here and there.....and then disappears.

I skimmed over a lot of pages and when the true villain and the reason for the crimes are revealed I was somewhat disappointed. I never really understood how the conclusion came about.

I am so sad that the magic of Kay Scarpetta is still missing for me.
