



Come Dark

Steven F. Havill

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Posadas County, New Mexico, is in the news. NightZone, a mammoth astronomy theme park, is bringing in jobs, media, and such new infrastructure as a slick narrow-gauge railway to transport tourists from the village of Posadas to the tramway running up the mesa to the project's site. And the Posadas High School girls' volleyball team is on a hot winning streak, exciting everyone. But more news, not good, breaks. Volleyball Coach Clint Scott has been found gunned-down in the girls' shower room, the victim of four bullets, one fired nearly point blank into his heart. Dead for hours, killed soon after the end of last night's game. And, last night, a homegrown Banksy had tagged both one of the railway cars and a section of NightZone's giant radio telescope dish. Then, apparently, this young artist began work on a section of wall outside the girls' locker room at the high school--a project that was clearly--dramatically--interrupted. With morning come two strange incidents. Stacie Willis Stewart, a former Posadas volleyball star, locks up her baby and Jack Russell terrier in her Volvo, walks away to local superstore The Spree--and disappears. A former teacher spots the child and dog before the heat can kill them. Deputy Tom Pasquale, in The Spree's parking lot where he's spotted a suspicious Illinois plate on a Ford Fusion, watched it all. He then leads a fruitless search for her inside the store. No luck--but he does score a man with an Elvis haircut and his wife when they return to the Ford with stories that don't add up. The lead on the murder is Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman, who's still able to call on the retired former sheriff, Bill Gastner--a good thing, for she is surprised by the arrival of her piano-prodigy son, Francisco, age 15, in a sleek Corvette driven some one thousand unchaperoned miles by an eighteen-year-old beauty, a cellist. Their goal: to join the one hundredth birthday celebration for Estelle's mother.

Come Dark Details

Date : Published April 5th 2016 by Poisoned Pen Press

ISBN : 9781464205255

Author : Steven F. Havill

Format : Hardcover 308 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Westerns

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From Reader Review Come Dark for online ebook

Linda says

Lovely how the author can make so many separate actions all come together in a completed story by the end. Fun, too, that he waves his red herrings in the reader's face after the culprit is caught. Neener neener.

Steve Payne says

I thought this was one of the weaker ones in the series. They could have done more with Estelle's oldest son driving home in a vette with an "older" woman. Instead it pretty much is formula police procedural neatly tied up in the last 2 chapters.

Geanie White says

I would like to read the earlier books I have just discovered this author by listening to the first book in the series. I will try to locate the rest of the series so that the story can be filled in.

Bonnie Banks says

Another perfect slice of Posadas pie

I love this series. I've read every book following Bill Gastner from undersheriff, to mentoring Estelle Reyez-Guzman, to beloved Padrino of her family when she becomes undersheriff. All the while, he is there, watching, advising, protecting his beloved Posadas County. This latest installment continues the tradition with good old fashioned detective work alongside the futuristic NightZone telescope.

Charlotte Anderson says

I received an advanced copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. As the story begins there are a few things that take place in Pasada County, New Mexico. The main one is about the Pasada High Schools Volleyball teams winning, then bad news follows. The Volleyball Coach, Clint Scott, is gunned-down in the girls shower room. The story continues on with a few more characters and strange things taking place in Pasada County. Don not let the arrival of a few more characters turn you off as you read you will understand. The story makes you think and try to put the pieces together. I gave this book 4 stars.

Carl says

I've been a fan of Havill's Posadas County mysteries since they were the Bill Gastner mysteries and they're always a good read. Come Dark started out fabulous, one of the best I've read, but I was disappointed by the ending. After taking the vast majority of the book to set up two mysteries, slowly and carefully intertwining them both, the novel wrapped them both up in three contrived chapters. It's still a good read but the ending kept it from being great.

I like mysteries where the detectives solve the mysteries and catch the perpetrators. In this one, the people are caught not by the striving and skill of the detectives, but basically by happenstance. There was no reveal, just a way too tidy summing up the criminals. It was too neat, too quick, and too easy.

This also might have the smallest amount of space given to former series star Bill Gastner. I enjoy Estelle, although her super-talented kids tend to be an annoying subplot, but Gaster is one of the more unusual and fascinating characters in today's mystery world. I just hate seeing him phased out more and more. I want more of him discussing items while eating green chili.

Elizabeth says

Ah, the joys of ebooks. I downloaded the whole series and read them in order. The author does a fine job of fleshing out his characters more with each story. The cases are involving and tricky. I am sad because with the end of this book I have only one more to read. I recommend this series.

Patricia Mccammon says

A really good series dealing with the law enforcement in a small county in New Mexico. Without all the gore and foul language, you can enjoy a good crime story.

Josie H. Krieger says

Great read.

The Posada's series is my favorite read. I have read all the books at least 3 times and still can't stop turning the pages.

Vicki Gooding says

The Posadas Mysteries never fail. Good storyline again. Tad dry in a few places, but the excitement of the story won out.

Cindy McBride says

Interesting plot and characters, with murder and mayhem in every direction. Suspicions run amok and there are plenty of suspects from which to choose; panic and desperation ensue as some characters try to maintain the exposure of damning personal secrets.

I really enjoyed Havill's way with words as well; for the most part, his characters say exactly what you'd expect them to given the circumstances. An author's failure to do this is a sure-fire way to ensure I'll pull the plug on the book and allow my interest to flat-line...

This was my first introduction to Mr. Havill; overall, it's a well-written piece of fiction that has left me searching for more of his books, and keeping my eyes open for others yet to come. Highly recommended!

*** This book was provided to me by the publisher and/or the author as an ARC in return for my honest review. ***

Kevintipple says

As Come Dark: The Posadas County Mysteries by Steven F. Havill opens the massive astronomy theme park known as Nightzone is taking shape atop the mesa approximately 35 miles to the west of Posadas, New Mexico. The dish is up, the technicians are installing everything, and slowly all the details are being handled. Paying visitors are not on the grounds yet, but a media day to publicize the latest progress is just hours away so this little county in the along the Mexican border pretty busy.

Not only is Nightzone coming right along, but the girls soccer team is on one heck of a win streak and has a championship in sight. Media is present to chronicle history as the team seems unbeatable right now. Way more media than normal means there are plenty of outsiders to contemplate the graffiti vandalism adorning one of the narrow gauge railway passenger cars that are to move folks up to the tramway location for the eventual ride to the mesa summit and Nightzone.

Hiding the railcar away from prying eyes will be easy. Undersheriff Estelle Reyes Guzman and the other officers will figure out who did it and why. That case will have to wait as a couple more serious crimes have occurred in quick succession. One of which is the fact that the girls volleyball coach has been found dead on the shower floor in the girls locker room at the High School. Shot four times Coach Clint Scott is definitely dead and has been dead for quite some time it would appear. Though the time of death might be a bit hard to tell since his body was found partially covered by the cascading waters of the cold shower head thanks to the fact that his dead body blocked the shower drain.

A murder, vandalism, a missing mother, and quite a lot more is going on in Come Dark by Steven F. Havill. This is one of those series where the primary and secondary characters actually age and evolve as time passes and the events of previous books impact current events and lives. This series has always been very

good and nothing has changed with the latest installment. Come Dark: The Posadas County Mysteries from its distinctive cover to the last page is a complex police procedural style mystery and one heck of a read.

Come Dark: The Posadas County Mysteries

Steven F. Havill

Link

Poisoned Pen Mystery

<http://www.poisonedpenpress.com>

2016

ISBN# 978-1-4642-0525-5

Hardback (also available in eBook format)

300 Pages

\$26.95

Material supplied by the good folks of the Plano Public Library System.

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Ron Chicaferro says

If you're familiar with the Posadas County Mystery series you'll find the old gang still present and fighting crime in New Mexico. This book is pretty much all Estelle with some help by Sheriff Bob and good old Gastner. Its a messy murder mystery with an added missing person case - - Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman is a smart cookie and she puts all of her well trained crime- solving brain to work trying to figure the mess out. The writing is first class - its fast moving and the New Mexico locales are well described and play a role in the story. If you haven't tried a Steven Havill book yet, this one is as good a place to start as any.

Ed says

#21 in the Posadas County mystery series. Locating the killer of HS coach Clint Scott is the main thing on Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman's plate at the moment. But in addition to her law enforcement duties, she is faced with the surprise appearance of her 15 year old son, Francisco. Francisco, a piano prodigy, is supposed to be at a conservatory in MO - not driving over a thousand miles in the car of a beautiful 18 year old cellist. Estelle's predecessor as undersheriff, 77 year old, retired Bill Gastner, her sons' godfather is available to help. A fine series entry.

Posadas County mystery - NightZone-a "mammoth astronomy theme park project," complete with a radio telescope array and a hotel atop a mesa-is nearing completion. It's attracting lots of media attention, as is the girls' high school volleyball team, which is on a 65-game winning streak. Meanwhile, undersheriff Estelle

Reyes-Guzman looks into the disappearance of Stacie Stewart, who left her baby and dog in a sweltering car and disappeared; spray-paint vandalism at both NightZone and the high school; and the fatal shooting of girls' volleyball coach Clint Scott in the girls' shower room.

Linda says

As always. Really good.

Mary says

I picked this up mostly for the space theme (or what I thought would be a space theme) and the location. Don't really hear to much about the space park but I love the idea. Also the location as I haven't been to many places in my life and have to experience place vicariously. Could have been a little more of that too. The mystery part was pretty solid and I enjoyed the cop characters. I would pick up more by this author.

Lesla says

Every time I read one of Steven F. Havill's Posadas County mysteries, I urge readers to try one. Come Dark may be my favorite in the series, an excellent example of a small-town sheriff's department working together in a community where they know the people and the usual suspects.

NightZone is the name of the astronomy theme park that has been a dream in several of the books. It's not yet open, but it's attracting attention from the media, bringing in workers and gawkers, adding to the economy in Posadas, New Mexico. The other attraction for the local media is the girls' high school volleyball team with their sixty-fifth consecutive win. But, when a railroad car at NightZone is tagged, and the volleyball coach is shot dead at the school, the sheriff's department can only hope the media doesn't catch wind of the latest problems in Posadas.

With a small department, it takes everyone to deal with the unusual events in one week, including the murder. There's the mother who left her child in a locked car in a parking lot, and disappeared. There's the teenage artist in the hospital with life-threatening injuries after hitting a deer and a pole. People in town, from second graders to the volleyball team, are affected by the coach's death. And, everyone from Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman to Sheriff Robert Torrez to the retired sheriff, Bill Gastner, is pulled in to help with the cases. And, they're a little shorthanded with one staff member out, nine months pregnant, and the office manager home with her baby.

The murder of the coach is a complicated, intriguing case. But, much of the pleasure in this book, and Havill's other mysteries, comes from watching the careful, step-by-step investigation of the case, with every member of the department filling their role. Over the course of the series, Gastner, and then Reyes-Guzman have been featured, but the stories wouldn't be as interesting if we didn't see the changes in the department as it truly became a diverse department reflecting the population in Posadas. And, there's the added pleasure of watching Reyes-Guzman's family grow and change.

Bill Gastner sums up this book, and so many police procedurals. "People make mistakes, you know. It all starts with some little thing, something that by itself seems of little consequence. And then, the big slide down that long, slippery slope. Sometimes we catch 'em before they hit bottom, and sometimes we don't."

If you like police procedurals, you need to read Steven F. Havill. And, *Come Dark* may be my favorite.

Susan says

I bought the book because of the imposing telescope on the cover and, although astronomy did not figure much in the plot, was pleasantly surprised by a solid procedural in an interesting location. Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman is intelligent, hard-working, and insightful in investigating the murder of a popular high school coach in the shower room. The astronomy theme park is a lovely idea but I was not convinced it could be a money-maker.

Terri Rowe says

I love the Posadas County Series by Steven F. Havill, truly one of my favorites!

I have followed this since the beginning when we were introduced to now retired Sheriff Bill Gastner. He is still as tenacious, gruff, and interesting as ever. He has always been a strong mentor to others in the department and that continues. It has been interesting to see as his character steps back, the continuity of those he mentored now mentoring other new characters as they are introduced. The series has one of the best developed overall cast of characters. Even background characters are multi-dimensional and add depth to each story.

Estelle Reyes-Guzman is one of the best written characters I have ever encountered. It has been enjoyable to watch her grow and develop throughout the series. I love reading about her methods in her work and following along as she works out each problem. Equally interesting is the rich life she leads with her devoted family: her adopted mother now about to turn 100, her doctor husband Francis, her gifted pianist son Francisco-who adds a special twist to this tale, and her inquisitive, charming son Carlos.

From the start there are problems piling up; missing young mother Stacie Stewart, graffiti at the new Night Zone astronomy park and about town, and then the demise of Clint Scott the winning-est coach in school and county history.

Will Estelle and her team be able to solve each of these problems in time for her to be able to actually participate in the celebrations that have been planned to celebrate her mother's centennial?

Breakaway Reviewers says

The 21st in the Posadas County series but my first!

As always it is difficult to read a book that is part of a long lasting and very popular series and be able to get fully involved in the characters when having no previous knowledge. However, I found this book a good read and enjoyed the plot, in particular the way different areas of the town and the characters involved are described and even though this was my first introduction to Posadas I felt as though I got a feel for the area from the very start.

The main storyline centres around the brutal killing of the Posadas High School's Volleyball coach, Clint Scott, he is found in the girl's shower room with four bullets, one fired point blank into his heart. The main detective responsible for solving the case is Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman who enlists the help of retired former sheriff, Bill Gastner, who as I understand it has been a major protagonist in previous books of this series.

I liked the way there are various other strands of events going on in the town, one of the major ones being the building of an astronomy theme park which is creating jobs and media attention to the area. However, the manager is happy to use local talent and Efrin Garcia a talented young artist has been employed to create murals at the new park. However, he also likes displaying his work at various other parts of the town, one of which happens to be a section of the wall outside the girls' locker room but he chooses the wrong night!

In a seemingly unrelated event one of the other detectives in the town, Deputy Thomas Pasquale sees Stacie Stewart, a school friend who he has always had a crush on, despite her being married to the local bank president, Todd Stewart, lock her car and go into the local superstore and then disappear. She has left her baby daughter and her puppy locked inside the car but fortunately a bystander alerts the police and they are rescued but Stacie has not only left the superstore, she has left Posedas. Rumours then begin to connect her to the murder victim who was single and good looking and was understood to be meeting an unknown lady at the High School.

Another amusing part of the story that is totally unrelated to the murder but again keeps us involved with the people in the town is when Estelle's 15-year-old son, Francisco, a talented pianist, turns up in a car driven by a beautiful 18-year-old cellist who it appears is his girlfriend. Estelle's reactions to this add to the atmosphere and I did enjoy the way the author introduces new characters that you can see may become more relevant in a later book.

After all of the enjoyment of the book with its various sub-plots and interesting characters I found the actual solving of the murder and the reasons behind it very disappointing, I certainly did not guess who or why but I felt it was almost a lazy explanation and could have been made so much better. For this reason, the book dropped from 4 to 3 stars for me, I would like to read some of the earlier books in the series but feel that 20 books may be just a few too many!

Dexter

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.
