



Idyll Fears

Stephanie Gayle

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Two weeks before Christmas, Police Chief Thomas Lynch faces a crisis when Cody Forrand, a six-year-old with a life-threatening medical condition, goes missing during a blizzard. Lynch's suspicions about who abducted Cody are met with scorn by his detectives, some of whom can't handle the fact that's he's gay. When half the station calls in sick with flu, Lynch seeks outside help. It arrives in the shape of an FBI agent for whom Lynch feels an immediate attraction.

To complicate matters, local crime is on the rise and Lynch finds himself the target of prank calls and hate speech that he worries is the work of a colleague. Time is ticking away, Lynch is struggling to discover who is behind Idyll's crime spree, and he's beginning to doubt that Cody will ever be found ...

Idyll Fears Details

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Author : Stephanie Gayle

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From Reader Review Idyll Fears for online ebook

Sam (Clues and Reviews) says

I read so many novels, a majority of them being police procedurals, and I find that many of them feel the same. Same old jaded detectives, same old love interests. Which is why I was so pleased when I read *Idyll Fears*, the second novel in the Detective Lynch series. What a breath of fresh air Thomas Lynch is. An openly gay police chief is not something I am used of seeing in a police procedural novel and I was so pleased to be able to read a story that featured a character like Lynch!

Although this book is the second in a series featuring this dynamic detective, I had no issues reading this one as a standalone and found that Gayle did a phenomenal job at making sure enough of Lynch's character was brought into the plot for those joining in.

This story follows the race to find a missing six-year-old boy who wanders out into a snowstorm. With a rare genetic disorder that makes it so he cannot feel pain, there is a serious race against time to find the boy before it is too late. I was pretty much captivated right away by Gayle's prose and found it easy to settle into the story.

I did find that there were a lot of secondary characters (mostly others on the police force and members of Idyll) that I found very confusing. I'm not sure if that was because I wasn't introduced to them in the first book or just because there were so many; I did find that a little bit distracting but it didn't really take away from the general plot.

Overall, I think this series seems to be worth looking into. I'll likely go back and read the first!

Jennifer S. Brown says

So I confess that even though this is the second book in the series, it's the first one I read, and it absolutely works as a standalone novel. The mystery is so interesting--young boy with a rare condition (he can't feel pain) goes missing. The protagonist, a gay police chief in a small town in the 1990s, has to not only find the boy but battle the growing harassment and hate crimes against gays in his town. I loved Chief Lynch and the story kept me guessing right up until the end. I'll definitely be reading the others in this series.

Ami says

3.75 stars rounded up

Two weeks before Christmas 1997 and crime is rising in sleepy town Idyll, Connecticut. First, six-year-old Cody Forrand is missing. Cody suffers from a rare nervous system disorder; he cannot feel pain which means he cannot feel the cold like everyone else, which means it's urgent for him to be found quickly. In other news,

there is a break-in on the town's candy store motivated by anti-gay hate speech, as well as prank calls and vandalism with homophobic slurs targeted on Idyll's own gay chief of police, Thomas Lynch. It doesn't help that most of Idyll's detectives seem to catch a bad case of cold...

I read the first book, *Idyll Threats*, back in June and I really liked it. I thought it was a good start of a series. Plus, at the end of the first book, Thomas comes out to his detectives -- and to that extent, the town. So I was intrigued to read further how Thomas' life after that announcement.

I definitely loved this book better than the first one. Thomas Lynch as a character grew on me -- on the first book, I was quite annoyed with how he dealt with his possible involvement with the crime. In here, at times I thought Thomas to be a little patronizing towards his detectives. Fact, I was very happy when he was scolded by his secretary Mrs. Dunsmore *laugh*.

But at other times I knew that Thomas wanted to do his best for this town he had settled in or the cases that came to the department. Thomas may not be perfect, he can be prickly especially when people poke on him (either regarding his sexuality or his professional decisions), but that's what makes his character feels quite well-balanced for me.

I loved ALL the mystery here -- and I loved the procedural investigation that happened for all the cases. It felt realistic -- nobody felt like they got the answer out of nowhere; there was frustration when the detectives received wrong tips or witnesses that didn't provide anything helpful.

At one point, the FBI entered the scene because the missing child became a kidnapping of a minor, and even this felt like it should. When I arrived at the revelation and motivation behind the the missing child it kind of broke my heart. That means Gayle was successfully made me *care* for the case and everybody involved.

There were a couple of things that I thought didn't fully answered here ... (view spoiler) but it didn't completely ruined my enjoyment.

I hope this series continues *cross fingers*

The ARC is provided by the publisher via Edelweiss+ for an exchange of fair and honest review. No high rating is required for any ARC received.

Chris Wolak says

Idyll Fears is the second book in the Thomas Lynch series, where the gay Chief of Police must deal with homophobic opposition as well as a frantic search for a missing six-year-old with a rare, life-threatening medical condition.

Thomas Lynch is the Chief of Police in Idyll, a small fictional town in Connecticut. Part of the drama in *Idyll Threats*—the first book in the series—was Lynch being outed as gay. While still a big deal today, back in

1997—when this book is set—it was an even bigger deal for a high-ranking public figure to be gay. Particularly in a small town. It was big news, it was scandalous, and not everyone wanted (or wants) to be a poster child or role model for underrepresented groups.

Chief Lynch is now dealing with the fall out of being outed, and he's not sure if he'll stay in Idyll. The town is still buzzing, and Lynch is still getting to know the town, the men on the police force, and his formidable secretary, Mrs. Dunsmore, an older woman who has been in her position for a long, long time. Anonymous, homophobic phone calls are being made both to his home number and the police station. The calls are logged, complete with the caller's phone number thanks to the new technology of *69, which the callers aren't sophisticated enough to realize is being used. "Homo," "Queer," "We don't want your kind here." Happy Holidays, Chief!

Read more of this review on Criminal Element at <https://www.criminalelement.com/blogs...>

Kelly Ford says

A terrific follow-up to Idyll Threats. Review to come.

Jill Elizabeth says

This second-in-series not only did not disappoint, it surpassed my expectations – which almost never happens... A couple of weeks ago I introduced you to Thomas Lynch, 1990s era Idyll, Connecticut's now openly-gay police chief ("the first in the state!" as the locals proclaim with a mixture of pride and distaste). The first book was really good – I thoroughly enjoyed the establishment of personalities, the teasing out of backstory, and of course the murder at the heart of it all. In this second installment, Gayle has outdone herself though, and the characters really came alive for me. Lynch is a great protagonist, a strong personality fighting against prejudice (internal and external, real and projected) in a way that rings true and feels genuine. He is surrounded by a supporting cast that is a great melange of personalities, secrets, fears, dreams, quirks, and hidden depths.

Then there's the setting, and it's here that I think Gayle does such a great job bringing her books alive. 1998 was not long ago – at least not in my mind – but Lynch's world is in many ways light-years away from modern sensibilities in some regards, and unfortunately all too reminiscent of them in others.

Cell phones are not ubiquitous, nor is online activity. No one has GPS. The Idyll cops still smoke in their office. Crime has a different feel – more personal, less ideological and fanatical. Neighbors not only know one another, they watch each other – and not out of a sense of pure paranoia. Hate and fear and prejudice – of race, of sexuality – feel both subtle and blatant at the same time. It's a world that is just that much removed from our own (twenty years is not even a generation, yet the technological and world shifts since then make it seem light years apart), and I find it (even when dark, depressing, or dreadful) somewhat comforting to fall back into it because it's the world of my early adulthood (I was 25 in 1998) and a world that formed a lot of aspects of my personality.

But characters and setting alone don't make a book – or at least not a series book. There also has to be some action, and this time the action is disturbing because it involves a child. A very sick child. A very sick child who doesn't feel pain. And if those words don't send your mind to some dark places, I don't know what will.

There's kidnapping, arson, hate crime, unexplained death, a surprising amount of flirtation, and a lot of self-discovery going on in this book, and the blend of it all is spot-on perfect. I thoroughly enjoyed watching things unfold. Some of it I saw coming, some I did not – it's a testament to Gayle's storytelling skills that I enjoyed both aspects equally.

I have the third book on my shelf thanks to the publisher, and it's review will be forthcoming as soon as it's available commercially in the U.S. (September 4), so check back in a couple of weeks to see if Gayle can continue her unabashed winning streak – I strongly suspect she shall!

My review copy was generously provided by Seventh Street Books.

Jessica says

Thanks to Prometheus Books for the copy in exchange for my honest review.

Here we are with book 2 in the Thomas Lynch series! *IDYLL FEARS* by Stephanie Gayle continues the story of Police Chief Thomas Lynch in the small town of Idyll, Connecticut. Lynch is faced with a new mystery to solve and a child to save, all while dealing with a crime wave sweeping Idyll.

Just before Christmas, 6 year old Cody Forrand goes missing. Cody has a rare genetic disorder that can be life-threatening as he can't feel pain. In the middle of winter with a snow storm, he could be in grave danger. Lynch has an uphill battle with his fellow investigators as he tries to solve the case. He must call in reinforcements to help, so the FBI now becomes involved in the abduction case.

While this is going on, Idyll is experiencing a crime wave. Lynch finds himself to be the target of prank calls, hate speech, and he suspects it's all started by a coworker. Now he must try to stop the crime wave AND find Cody before it's too late.

Once again, Gayle does a phenomenal job with this police procedural. It's not too heavily focused on the investigation to make it too technical (I know that can lose a lot of people and drag on). We get to learn more about Thomas as a person and the struggles he is now facing. Trying to find Cody is the main focus of this novel, but the subplot of the crime spree doesn't take away too much or feel rushed. A solid continuation of this series and I really hope that she continues with Thomas Lynch!

Overall, I loved the further character development and the investigation kept me flipping the pages. It's refreshing when a series is solid throughout since many can fall flat. If you want a good suspense with a unique main character, then I recommend grabbing book one (*IDYLL THREATS*) and diving into this series.

I give this 4.5/5 stars!

Chandra Claypool (wherethereadergrows) says

Chief Lynch is back and this time he is looking for missing 6-year old, Cody Forrand. In a blizzard no less. Time is key as Cody has a rare disorder called CIPA and can't feel pain, which puts him in harms way at

every turn. Not only does Lynch have to find this boy, he has to do it while dealing with the backlash of coming out to his entire office. Prank calls, vandalism and veiled threats pepper his days and now he's on a mission to find Cody and the vandals.

From book one to book two, we see Lynch grow from depressed new Chief of Idyll to a more determined person in every aspect. Dealing with all the prejudice while still trying to do his job can be a formidable task. I enjoyed seeing him make his way through each predicament in his snarky fashion and felt vindicated when he was. I still think he makes some stupid mistakes, but that seems to be within the realm of his character so I just go with it now. ? Although I do think he still needs to think with the right head in certain given situations. Luckily things start to look up for Lynch in all departments.

Still loving on the humor riddled throughout the book. Another mystery solved and pieced together nicely. Further character development settles you into each person so you want to continue to learn about them in upcoming books in this series. While I did think there were a few things left hanging, it didn't detract from the feel of the book. The ending, like with the first, leaves you with just enough of a dangling carrot but still completing the book as a whole. Fans of police procedurals that re light on the procedure and heavier on the police will love this series.

Sue Em says

Cody Farrand, a small boy with a rare disease has gone missing. Chief Lynch of the Idyll police force needs to find him quickly, before he gets hurt. But, he's just learning who he can trust in force, both for policing skills and for willingness to work for and accept a gay police chief in the late 90s. Throw in hate crimes and the Christmas season and you have enough backstory for a good mystery. But this book isn't just good, it's a twisty story with nuanced characters. HIGHLY recommended!

Emily Ross says

Idyll Fears is a page-turning mystery that I raced to finish even as I never wanted it to end. In this second novel in the Thomas Lynch mystery series, Chief Lynch is wrestling with fallout from coming out as gay at the same time he's investigating the possible kidnapping of Cody Forrand, a young boy with a rare genetic disorder that prevents him from feeling pain. It's just before Christmas, there's a snowstorm, and Cody could easily die from the cold. Tension rises as Lynch and his team encounter many twists and turns in their search for Cody. The police department in the small town of Idyll is stretched thin and it doesn't help that Lynch must also investigate homophobic hate crimes that make him wonder if he can trust everyone in his own department. Lynch navigates all of this with wisdom, honesty, and humor. I loved him in Idyll Threats and now I love this complex, intrepid, and incredibly likable police chief even more.

As in the best noir mysteries setting is extremely important in Idyll Fears. Gayle's vivid evocation of the small town of Idyll comes replete with Christmas cookies, cocoa, caroling, and the sort of small-town banter that is both comforting and unsettling. Idyll is like a glitter-strewn Christmas card that hides darker truths, and Lynch's sardonic, deadpan narration made me feel Raymond Chandler had somehow wandered into Stars Hollow. The ending was surprising and satisfying but I was sorry to have to step out of the snow globe and leave Idyll and Chief Lynch behind. Can't wait for the next book in this wonderful series!

Amazonaute says

This series is about the gay police chief in a small town in 1997. Nice mystery series.

Jessica Woodbury says

I read a lot of literary fiction, some of it difficult, some of it bleak, some of it exhausting. I read enough books that I need variety and my genre of choice is the crime novel. But there's this problem these days, there only seem to be two kinds of crime novels: the literary crime novel and the thriller. (I am not including the cozy because I do not read them.) The literary crime novel is something I enjoy very much, but I am not always in the mood for it. It makes me go slow and sometimes I just want to race through a mystery. The thriller isn't enough, it is mostly made up of plots and characters I've seen many times before, trying to constantly up the ante with plot twists or gore. What I want most from the crime novel is the old school procedural. I want to follow one major mystery from start to finish. Agatha Christie was my introduction to crime novels and she fits more in this category than literary or thriller, she is my old reliable, my gold standard.

All this intro is to say that I'm happy to report that Stephanie Gayle's Thomas Lynch series is the exact kind of book I am so often looking for. I wish there were already 6 of them. In the first book, Lynch moved from big city cop to small town police chief and found himself outed as gay to the entire town, which mattered a lot in the 90's when it's set.

IDYLL FEARS' central mystery is the disappearance of a boy with a genetic disorder that means he can't feel pain, and with him out in a snowstorm in the middle of winter he's in serious danger. There are some B plots, too, and we get to know Lynch better in this book. There's still a few too many police officers for me to keep straight and a few FBI agents thrown into the mix didn't help any, but it's a quibble. I almost always have quibbles with procedurals, that's one of the reasons I know it's good. If I have similar issues with a thriller or literary crime novel I will just roll my eyes because reality feels so far removed.

As the child at the center of this book has a disability, if that can be a hard plot for you you may want to give this one a pass. Nothing is gratuitous, but you may find a disabled child in peril difficult and you may find the attitudes people have about a disabled child and their family frustrating.

Now just find me 10 other series just like this one so I have a regular supply of procedurals and I will be a very happy reader.

Joyfully Jay says

A Joyfully Jay review.

4.5 stars

Here is another great read from the Thomas Lynch series. Like the first book in the series, Idyll Threats, this

book keeps Thomas Lynch as our first-person narrator. I like having such an intimate view into his thought processes. Taken together, there is such a robust depiction of the character Lynch, he's hard not to like...or get mad at when he acts stupid (and he does). It's also impressive how, no matter the trivial nature of some of the scenes, they all work together to reveal a character entirely dedicated to his job.

For example, although there are actually three hate crime-related threads in the book (Lynch's car getting tagged, Lynch getting hate speech phone calls, and an alleged hate crime at the local candy shop owned by a gay couple) and although Lynch is determined to solve each of these crimes, he does so because they're crimes more than he feels affronted at the bigotry of others. In other words, rather than making Lynch play the victim or get outraged at the blatant discrimination, he grits his teeth and gets payback. I, for one, found it very entertaining to see his smug satisfaction at letting the guilty know they've been caught and they're going to be held accountable for their crimes.

Much of the narration revolves around watching Lynch interact with the details, people, and situations of the cases. The action is not strictly contained within the police station, either. We see Lynch out in town organizing search parties for Cody, interviewing witnesses, following up on tips. At each of these changes of scene, Lynch absorbs the details like a sponge. Even when he's in his own home, he's thinking about work and sometimes the most mundane of home-owner tasks can lead him to a fantastic conclusion regarding a case.

Read Camille's review in its entirety here.

Moriartyandherbooks says

4.5 stars!

Good fun to read, character(s) growth and exploration, and a good mystery!

Melissa says

As a mother, I am drawn to missing children stories. Call me crazy, I love to torture myself... This one is unique, since Cody has a genetic disease. He is last seen outside, playing in the snow, but he doesn't feel pain. That's problematic...

I liked this book. I haven't read the first one in the series and still felt bad for Thomas Lynch when he had heated encounters with anti-gay individuals.

I won this book through a Goodreads giveaway in exchange for an honest review.
