



Late Rain

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Desire, need, and ambition fuel Corrine Tedros, a Lady Macbeth wannabe who arranges the murder of her father-in-law, a soft-drink mogul. It's witnessed by a man in the late stages of Alzheimer's; he provides scattershot details, but cannot accurately communicate what he saw.

Dark and beautiful, this novel explores the fear that drives how far people are willing to go to find what they want, and the steps they'll take to get it.

Lynn Kostoff is a professor of English at Francis Marion University in Florence, South Carolina. He's previously written *A Choice of Nightmares* and *The Long Fall*.

Late Rain Details

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Author : Lynn Kostoff

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Elizabeth says

Exactly the type of murder mystery I'm getting a little sick of. None of the characters are sympathetic or overly interesting. The situations that make them act the way they act seem trite. Wouldn't go out of my way to find more books by this author. If desperate at an airport, might buy one.

Carol says

Interesting crime story

A good story, I liked how it was written. You know the crime then read about how it gets solved. Towards the end, too many unresolved items. It just seemed to run out of steam, I did not like how the story ended.

Sally Beaudean says

Interesting, if not completely satisfying

How do I explain the perplexing nature of this novel? Where it moves slowly it seems to be intentionally so. The language seems to parallel the thought processes of the characters, all of whom are deeply flawed, so much so that the criminal aspects of the plot and the resolution of the mystery are of little significance. I was most taken in by the minor character Jack Carson who is suffering with Alzheimer's -- the author's depiction of Jack's struggle is quite powerful. Late Rain is certainly unique in both content and construct.

Anne says

I got the book because of decent reviews on Kindle and the fact that it was free.

Unlike many reviews I have seen, I didn't think the writing was great. I thought that it was overly flowery and dramatic, almost to the point of distraction - the kind of language where you read the first couple sentences of a paragraph, then kind of skip down a couple paragraphs because you just don't care about the language, you want to know what is happening in the plot line.

I thought that the plot was fine. There were a couple twists at the end that I hadn't necessarily expected. I actually thought that the end was pretty good, which is why I gave it two stars instead of one (I almost didn't finish it because I thought the first half/three-quarters was so bad).

All in all, I think there are better books of this type out there, and wouldn't recommend anyone pay for this. But if you're interested in free Kindle books...

Cindy Meilink says

Throw together a beautiful woman with a lot of secrets and a new husband, the murder of her husband's wealthy uncle, and a policeman trying to escape his past and discover a future; mix in some great writing by Lynn Kostoff, and you have a winner in Late Rain.

The well developed characters and storyline make this an intriguing book. Murders mount up, but will the guilty pay for the crimes in the end?

Good story, and a very quick read.

Rory Costello says

I was drawn to this novel because I thought the premise with how the crime was witnessed was remarkably clever. I found the work overall solid and satisfying -- it's moody and effective. Kostoff managed something quite difficult in making me somehow feel sympathy for Corrine. The downright oddness of Croy was another element that entertained me. I would read more of Kostoff.

Dana King says

Kostoff expertly handles a multi-POV story with well-developed characters and a sense of place, all while propelling the story and its sub-plots with perfect pacing. There's a coincidence here, too, that I may have missed the explanation for, but, it's a piddly bit that does not weaken the resolution. Late Rain is professional crime fiction suitable to be broken down by authors who want to know how to keep multiple balls in the air, and make the reader think it's easy.

Melissa says

This was free on the kindle and now I know why. Interesting concept and a lot of potential, but it fell flat. There were too many characters and some of them, including some major characters, were completely unnecessary. Same thing for some plot lines.

This book desperately needed an editor; there were many run on sentences. I normally wouldn't care because I'm guilty of run-ons, but one was about a page and a half long, another was four pages long! (Four pages on the kindle is slightly less than a paperback, but still)!

Derrick says

I enjoyed this book immensely and found it hard to put down. The characters are truly memorable and the story was engaging. I have read Mr. Kostoff's previous books and while they were good, they pale in

comparison to the greatness found between the covers of this book. It may have taken the author years to publish this third book, but it seems he spent the time crafting a book that is bound to be mentioned in most Best of 2010 lists. I hope he is working on a new novel, as I for one, will certainly be looking forward to it.

Simon says

It's hard to review Late Rain by Lynn Kostoff. On Amazon and various other online review sites, I've read a lot of praises for both the author and the book. Yet upon completion, I'm left wondering if something is horribly wrong with me because I did not find the book that compelling. I decided to read this book because it made it to the top of the list of free Kindle books. Since it was free and I thought the product description was pretty decent, why not give it a try?

Beside paragraph long sentences (which comes every so often but luckily not close enough together to make me stop reading altogether), the writing was fairly decent. However, I felt deceived. The book summary clearly makes you think that the witness to the murder, who is in the late stages of Alzheimer's, would play an important role in the book. I'm telling you right now that he does not! The author displays Jack Carson as a man whose memories and skill to blend words efficiently together to portray his thoughts either comes and goes. He's far from a nutcase but rather a man trapped and can't even figure out why he's trapped in the first place. I thought the plot summary was interesting because I never read a mystery book that resembles something to Late Rain but was left sorely disappointed for having high hopes. If I were to take Jack Carson out of the equation of being the sole murder "witness", then yes, the author did a splendid job in fleshing him out as a troubled individual. You can actually feel his pains at times.

As a detective novel, Late Rain is pretty much your standard stuff. I'm starting to wonder if all detectives in mystery books have a deceased wife and always hung over with grief. That definitely seems to be the trend with these type of books. Detective Ben Decovic is your protagonist here and well, he's very average. I really don't know how else to describe it. In fact, many of the characters in Late Rain are fairly boring save for a few. Even Paige, the eleven year old, at times seem more interesting than Ben. The person with the most interesting persona is the assassin named Croy Wendall. Although the author does not state specifically what's wrong with him, you as the reader get the idea that a few bolts is loose inside his head. Corrine Tedros was great to read into as well. You definitely felt her grief as the author does an outstanding job telling us of her childhood and what went on there. Characters such as Sonny Gramm, Raychard Balen, and Wayne LaVell were pretty forgettable as soon as the book completed. Balen does have some redeeming qualities in that he's a smooth and witty conservationist and generally one you don't really want to mess with.

In the end, I read Late Rain for what it is: a mystery novel. At certain times throughout the book, I thought the author was brilliant in his writing. There's a late passage towards the end of the book concerning Jack Carson that was superb if only it was not one of those long paragraph-sentences! If you want to read a straight up classic, who-done-it mystery book, don't bother with Late Rain. There's not much of a mystery here.

Mindy says

To me this book was not really worth reading. I think the author did a good job but had quite a few drawn out descriptions of situations that really didn't do much for the story. The story part kept me reading, hoping for and ending but the ending never really came.

Elizabeth A. says

Characters, and issues of character, abound in the latest offering from author Lynn Kostoff, Late Rain. The sleepy, second tier resort town of Magnolia Beach, South Carolina wouldn't seem to be the ideal setting for a drama of Shakespearean proportions, yet that is precisely what Kostoff delivers.

Corrine Tedros, unhappy with her husband's lack of a sense of urgency in persuading his uncle, Stanley, to sell his highly profitable soft drink empire, decides to speed the process along...by hiring a hitman to take Stanley out of the picture.

Unfortunately for her, things don't go quite as planned. First, the hitman strays from the carefully arranged script, leaving Corrine with a shaky alibi during the time of the killing. Second, Jack Carson, an elderly man suffering from Alzheimer's, happens to witness the murder. Third, Officer Ben Decovic, a displaced Ohio homicide detective with something to prove, latches on to the case. With that setup, Late Rain sounds like a straightforward crime story, right? Not so fast.

From the outset it quickly becomes apparent that the cast of Late Rain is a highly complicated bunch, each driven by their unique demons and desires. As the story is told in turns from several different characters' perspectives, the reader is presented with an ever changing picture of the events as they unfold, never quite sure if what's being relayed is the truth or a distorted version of it as seen through the prism of the characters' personal motives.

Corrine, of course, is motivated by her desire to gain control of the company and, later, to get free from the very tangled web she's helped weave. She also has a mysterious past, which is catching up with her at precisely the wrong time. Ben is trying to get his confidence as an investigator back after a killer's random murder spree took the lives of five people, including his wife. In the wake of the tragedy Ben found that he had "lost his eye" for ferreting out criminals. He no longer trusted his instincts, so he resigned his position as a homicide detective in Ohio and moved to Magnolia Beach. His casual encounter with Corrine during the early stages of the investigation reignites those instincts; he just knows something's not right with Corrine, and he's determined to prove it.

And then we have Jack Carson and the hitman, Croy, both also unreliable narrators though for very different reasons. The snippets presented from Jack's point of view, through the haze of his creeping Alzheimer's, are painfully raw in capturing the essence of what it must be like to be caught in the throes of such a cruel disease. Can we really trust what Jack thinks he saw?

Croy, too, suffers from some mental illness or personality disorder. Though Kostoff never specifies exactly what it is, the way it manifests in his behavior lead me to believe it was Asperger's syndrome, which makes for a very unique perspective during Croy's chapters. So despite having at least four first person perspectives presented, there is arguably not one that the reader can truly trust. Instead, Kostoff challenges the reader to make his own decision as to where the truth lies based on the combination of perspectives and the reader's own judgment about each character's motives and trustworthiness.

You really need to treat yourself to this book. It's one of the most impressive things I've ever read – yes, ever – and I can't for the life of me figure out why Lynn Kostoff isn't a household name. The way he weaves several fascinating subplots in the book together is nothing short of sublime, and his incredibly skilled, nuanced character development lifts *Late Rain* beyond being "just" crime fiction and into the realm of genuine Southern Gothic literature. I sure hope the students at Francis Marion University appreciate that they have a master of the craft teaching them.

Klaudyna Z. says

This one wasn't for me. I felt like all the characters were emotion-less and flat and didn't have a lot of substance. I kind of thought the whole story was pointless and that the ending also fell kind of flat.

I didn't really understand the point of Paige's character and I felt like Jack's story was just kind of left hanging at the end. I also thought that having two characters that weren't all there mentally was a bit much.

Leah St.James says

As a writer, I can imagine the amount of time and effort Mr. Kostoff poured into this novel. That time and energy paid off in terms of the brilliant phrasing and vivid imagery throughout the story (despite some sentences so long they lost me now and then). But where it really fell short for me was the actual story. It depressed me. I can take dark stories as long as there are elements of lightness here or there to break the mood, but I didn't find that in *Late Rain*. I found page after page of sad, self-absorbed or sick characters doing selfish and creepy things. The exception would be the protagonist Ben Decovic. He's an honorable man who tries to do the right thing, but even him I couldn't like too much because he felt too one-dimensional, like I never really got inside his head. Aside from that, it felt at times like I was reading scenes from a play that never actually connected, or worse, were meaningless. Even the last scene, which somehow gives the title to the book, was never really explained. Or perhaps I'm just not intellectual enough to get it. It's apparent to me that Mr. Kostoff is a wonderful writer, so I can't help but think that a different editor would have crafted this into a much better story. I'll definitely check out Mr. Kostoff's other novels.

Jim Thomsen says

Gorgeously written, quietly controlled, coolly brooding and as sneaky as a sucker punch with its surprises, "*Late Rain*" is quite possibly my favorite crime novel published in 2010. And I've read 40 to 50 new releases in 2010.

In a year clogged by self-conscious genre stylists screaming and steaming overheated prose from every paragraph, Lynn Kostoff's third novel is a soft breeze on a warm beach, quite possibly in the slightly seedy South Carolina resort town that offers a backdrop to this drawing tale of greed, murder, manipulation and redemption. The crimes aren't original, but many of the characters are, thanks to sketches of surprising depth seamlessly supplied side-by-side with the action.

There's a beautiful woman who's used to making a living any way she can with her looks, who thinks she's more streetwise than she probably is. There's the contract criminal, an Asperger-ish assassin who doesn't "sex" and deals with stress by concocting convoluted rhymes in his head. There's the patrol cop, a former detective on another force, who constantly gets into political hot water by playing detective on the job.

And my favorite character of all is the cheerfully amoral lawyer of the kind one suspects can be found in any town — an information broker who makes clear that you're expendable even as he's taking your money, and who you know probably won't wind up being any good for you, and who you can't help getting in bed with anyway because you can't think of any other way to go. Raychard Balen is the kind of sharp-eyed sociopath who soothes and unsettles you with every single syllable he speaks.

These characters, and a number of others are wrapped in an intricate but never impossibly complicated web of murder that goes sideways in several different directions, due to the undue diligence and unreliable character of several schemers. Who did what to who is never really a mystery; the delight here is in wondering who will be left standing at the end, and who will ensure that the others will be lying down for good. Or otherwise.

Along the way, Kostoff lets his characters give a number of uncliched, startlingly lucid speeches — internal and otherwise. They're about life's hard truths, and about the hope, foolish and otherwise, that springs eternal in spite of the spite that fills just about every thin-soiled heart in this richly layered tale. That rare quality makes "Late Rain" the rare sort of novel that stands up to repeated readings, and makes you wish that each time you read it were the first time.
