



Verses for the Dead

Douglas Preston, Lincoln Child

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FBI special agent Pendergast must confront a strange, otherworldly circumstance - a new partnership.

After an overhaul of leadership at the FBI's New York office, Special Agent A. X. L. Pendergast is forced to accept an unthinkable condition of continued employment--he must work with a partner.

Pendergast and his new teammate, junior FBI agent Coldmoon, are assigned the case of a devious new killer whose killing spree spans the countryside, and whose crimes are distinguished by a mysterious M.O. Letters left at seemingly unrelated gravesites in the city of Miami.

That the connection between these old deaths defies easy explanation is the least of Pendergast's worries. As Aloysius digs deeper, he soon realizes there may be more to the killer--and Pendergast's new partner--than meets the eye.

Verses for the Dead Details

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From Reader Review Verses for the Dead for online ebook

Marialyce says

Eighteen books and still going strong in this series. That's quite something and our authors never seem to run out of things to keep FBI special agent A.X.L. Pendergast busy and on his game.

As a reader of this series, one knows full well that Pendergast is a loner when it comes to solving a case. However, in this book, our intrepid mysterious agent acquires a partner, Coldmoon, and as you can imagine, he is none to happy about that.

The two are assigned to a case where some grisly instances are happening. A part of the human anatomy is found on graves that belonged to suicide victims, buried in Miami, along with notes that quote well known literature, attached to them. Pederast with his sixth sense for the mysterious, the cunning, and the nuances of a case, along with Coldmoon are on the trail of who they believe might be a serial killer.

They travel to various parts of the country where the original suicides have occurred in search for clues, all the time getting to know one another and perhaps fostering a camaraderie. Could it be that Agent Pendergast will be a loner no more?

As the agents find more and more clues, the case seems to become murkier and more sinister then they originally suspected. Will Pendergast and Coldmoon find the killer? Will more women die as our killer needs a part of their anatomy to quell his guilt?

As usual, Preston and Child have created a well done story that takes the reader into the twisted mind and heart of killers. They succeed in making this a tense thriller with twists and turns aplenty. Recommended for those who love Agent Aloysius Pendergast and his seventeen previous adventures.

My reviews can also be seen here: <http://yayareadslotsofbooks.wordpress...>

Stewart Tame says

A serial killer is terrorizing Miami, removing the hearts of his victims and placing them on the graves of suicides. Agent Pendergast is sent to investigate, but will his new supervisor and partner cramp his style?

Also, I'd like to add a single word, which will mean nothing to new readers, but will intrigue the Hell out of longtime fans. This, by itself, won't spoil anything: Smithback.

As with all Preston & Child books, this is a tautly-constructed propulsive thriller of a book. Yes, it's the eighteenth book in a series, but it's still as decent a place to start as any. If you start here, a few details of previous books will be spoiled. But then, just knowing that the series extends to eighteen books and counting means that you won't have to worry about Pendergast's chances of surviving the first book ...

For what it's worth, I read the Barnes & Noble Exclusive Edition of this book, which features an extra chapter. True fans of the series will want to get their hands on this edition, assuming they haven't already. I am unabashedly a fan, and am thus incapable of reviewing these books objectively. Needless to say, highly recommended!

Sandy says

3.5 stars

Linda says

Normally, I would say: "Pendergast, you're after my heart again in this one."

However, there are other hearts involved in Verses for the Dead.....multiple ones.

An elderly woman walks her dog in the wee hours of the morning in Miami. Their destination is the cemetery to visit the grave of her late husband. The heat of the day is already upon them. Little Twinkle breaks loose from the woman's weak grasp of the leash and heads directly for something on a nearby grave. Iris reaches for the item and faints dead away. Precious pup has found a human heart.

Enter FBI Agent Extraordinaire, Aloysius Pendergast. Only this time our guy is not flying solo. There's a new sheriff in town in the likes of Assistant Director in Charge Walter Pickett. Pickett is having none of Pendergast's solo expeditions. He'll be stepping on Pendergast's tail with a heavy boot. Pickett gives him an ultimatum: work with a partner or don't work at all.

Pendergast actually seems to possess no sweat glands under pressure. He eyes Special Agent Coldmoon with his usual polite gentleman manner. Coldmoon is a Lakota who has distinguished himself with multiple acts of bravery. Pendergast extends his hand and we're off to the races with this new dynamic duo. But believe me, ol' Pickett is still wearin' those heavy boots.

This case starts to amp up when reports of additional hearts start appearing on the graves of suicide victims. Douglas Preston drops no breadcrumbs in this one and we begin scratching our heads. The usual suspects are not allowed on stage. So who exactly is the who?

Verses for the Dead can actually be read as a standalone. It's not the usual Pendergast feast, though. I missed the peculiarity that wafts around Pendergast and his uncanny ability to focus on blades of bent grass and irregular patterns of dandruff. Pendergast's usual scientific approach is replaced by a snappy young woman coroner who is a wiz at autopsies. Watch what she picks up on.

Special Agent Coldmoon should get a special series designed with him in mind. Preston creates him with a few quirks of his own. Boiled sludge coffee is his favorite. You'll be questioning the pairing and the why behind it as the story unfolds. It has a tendency to overshadow the mystery at hand.

I hope we swing back to New York City in the next one.....more familiar ground for Pendergast. Perhaps Coldmoon can take a trek to the Big Apple this time. All in all, I'll take Pendergast when and wherever Preston parachutes him into a storyline. A day without Pendergast is like....you know how that goes.

Darlene says

The 'Agent A.X.L. Pendergast' series by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child is one of my favorite mystery/thriller series and I eagerly await each new offering. # 18 in the series, 'Verses for the Dead' was worth the wait. If you follow this series, then you're aware that at the end of the last novel, SA Pendergast's future with the FBI seemed somewhat questionable. though Pendergast had received numerous commendations from the FBI and had a high case 'solve rate', he was also considered a rogue agent, never feeling particularly constrained by the Bureau's rules and regulations... and of course, there was the little problem that Pendergast's suspects never seemed to make it to trial but rather ended up in the morgue instead. Throughout his career, Pendergast had had a kind of protector in the FBI.... Howard Longstreet, his supervisor in the organization; but Longstreet was no longer available to act on Pendergast's behalf. This story picked up with the introduction of Pendergast's new supervisor, Walter Pickett.... a man with his eye firmly on furthering his career at the FBI and he made it clear from their first meeting that Pendergast's affinity for skirting the rules would no longer be tolerated. Pickett informed Pendergast that his investigations would have to be strictly 'by the book' and furthermore, Pendergast would also be required to work with a partner... junior agent Coldmoon who was of native descent and whose orders seemed to be keeping an eye on Pendergast's activities.

The story.. and the new case (a bizarre one!) began in Miami, Florida. An elderly woman and her dog were at a local cemetery paying their respects to the woman's deceased husband when she noticed that her dog had found an object on a nearby grave. It was a human heart! Pendergast and Coldmoon were assigned to the case and were instructed to assist the Miami Police Department. Upon arriving in Miami, the two agents discovered that the human heart found on the grave had belonged to a young woman who had been expertly and efficiently murdered before her heart had been removed and placed upon the grave with a note presumably written by the killer and expressing a desire for atonement... but atone for what? Pendergast was sure that this question, if answered, could provide the clue they needed to hunt down the killer. But before they had an opportunity to begin their investigation, more murders were committed... and more hearts were placed on graves in the Miami area.

In typical Sherlockian fashion, Pendergast developed a hunch that there was a connection between the current murders and the people whose graves the hearts were placed upon... the choice of graves was NOT random. They had discovered that the graves belonged to young women who had all committed suicide during the previous decade.... but were these deaths REALLY suicides? Pendergast was certain the killer's choice of these graves was, in some way, connected to the reason the killer felt he must atone. Despite his skepticism about Pendergast's hunch, Coldmoon accompanied him to Maine, the site of the first suicide. The deduction Pendergast made led him (and Coldmoon) up and down Interstate 95.... reinvestigating suicide cases and hoping to discover what might connect these deaths to the murders in Miami and to a killer who was now referring to himself as 'Mr. Brokenheart'.

In a race against time, Pendergast and Coldmoon raced up and down the east coast, attempting to piece together the clues from the killer's past and finally, their hard work paid off... there WAS a pattern! The clues led Pendergast and Coldmoon into the swampy wetlands of Florida where they encountered not only the sudden opening of a massive sinkhole beneath their feet but an alligator farm occupied by dozens of hungry gators. And the story culminated in a surprising plot twist and a harrowing gun battle between Pendergast and a clever psychopathic killer.

This novel was classic Pendergast, complete with his trademark eccentric but oh-so-charming manner and his scarily odd ability to solve crimes with just minimal clues. This book kept me listening long past my usual bedtime... wanting to listen to just a few more minutes of the expert narration performed by Rene Auberjonois.

Now, I await the next installment.....

Monnie says

What a joy it is to enjoy a book so much that you're sad when you reach the end! Over the years, I've become a fan of several series, including this one - never (or rarely) missing a new installment. And over those same years, I've watched way too many of them become rather stale; characters I'd come to love fall off their professional games, take on lesser roles in their own stories and even, in one instance, continue to act like a silly pre-teenager well into what should be grown-up years. Not so here; although I admit to wishing for a bit more interaction between FBI agent A.X.L. Pendergast and his ward, Constance, his remarkable sleuthing powers and clever repartee haven't faded one whit.

But while many things remain the same, others have changed; most notably, a new chief at the FBI's New York field office, who isn't pleased with Pendergast's think-outside-the-box tendencies, no matter how many cases he solves as a result. As such, he gives Pendergast an ultimatum: Henceforth, he must work with a partner. That turns out to be junior agent Coldmoon, a Native American from the Lakota tribe who's very intriguing in his own right (in fact, he's interesting enough that I can see him with a series of his own (are you listening, Messieurs Preston and Child)? For now, though, they're a dynamic duo - and watching two very capable characters who really don't want to work together work together is a treat.

As the story begins, a very fresh human heart is found in Miami on the grave of Elise Baxter, who died 11 years earlier - her death deemed suicide by hanging. A note announcing the "gift" is signed "Mister Brokenhearts," so the search begins to identify the writer as well as the former owner of the heart. When the rest of her is found, Pendergast and Coldmoon are assigned to the case (in fact, Coldmoon gets another concurrent assignment, but the nature of that one isn't for me to reveal).

The two detectives head first to Maine, where Baxter died, but clues or ties to the heart-deprived woman are nonexistent. Meanwhile, another fresh heart turns up in a mausoleum in Miami - on the container holding the remains of a woman who reportedly committed suicide in a manner eerily similar to Baxter. By this time, Pendergast's supervisor is plenty riled up, and his anger only escalates when Pendergast insists that exhumation of the long-ago suicide victims' bodies is highly advisable. Ultimately, though, he gets his way, and when an especially capable medical examiner does her thing, clues start falling into place that lead Pendergast and Coolmoon to uncharted territory and a fight to the death (who bites the dust is yet another tidbit that's for me to know and other readers to find out).

All told, it's quite an exciting adventure, and I'm sorry it's over. I have confidence that another installment is in the works, of course - but hey, fellas, could you please hurry it up just a little bit?

Chad says

Agent Pendergast is saddled with a new boss and partner as he investigates a serial killer who cuts out women's hearts and leaves them on the graves of suicides in Florida. The new director wants no part of Pendergast's unorthodox methods and is looking for any reason to get rid of him. This is a good jumping on point for new readers. There's very little of Pendergast's personal baggage, it's all about the case. I found it refreshing after so many volumes revolving around Pendergast's eccentric family.

Liz Kirchhoff says

While this was a good mystery with some great new characters, it lacked the depth and atmosphere that has been such a part of the rest of the series. The setup was fantastic and the mystery compelling, but the ending felt rather rushed. Still, it is always great to spend time with Pendergast. I'm looking forward to more Constance in the next book!

Denyse Prendergast says

Descent to the Ordinary

A series I've always enjoyed, in large part due to its quasi-mystical overtones and interesting characters; the plots, though convoluted, are always coherent. However, the old crew are largely gone along with the hint of the supernatural; this is just another serial killer procedural. The story held my attention but it was just...ordinary.

Faith says

It's a mystery to me why the plotting in this series is so much better than in the other series written by these authors together, and also in the books written by them separately. (I read one two days ago that was unpardonable.) I've read every book in this series and it's still entertaining me. In this one, Pendergast is forced to work with a new partner, Coldmoon, a Native American who's mission is to never let Pendergast go rogue since Pendergast's suspects tend not to survive long enough to be prosecuted. Here there are distant suicides, current murders, stolen hearts, literary references, alligators and atonement. As usual, Pendergast is preternaturally insightful but he shows a little more humor in this book. To my great relief, Constance makes only one very brief appearance in this book. I'm already looking forward to the next one in the series.

Steven says

Now THAT was a Pendergast book. I loved the last book, because, well, I love anything Pendergast, but let's be honest here... it felt a little like a retooled previous entry in the series. This one, on the other hand, was a top notch return to form. One of my favorite of the recent volumes in the series. Highly recommended.

Bob Milne says

With *Verses for the Dead*, the 18th novel in the Agent Pendergast series, Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child continue the soft reset they began in *City of Endless Night*. Once again it's a standalone story, one that only touches on the wider mythology, completely devoid of any monstrous themes or supernatural elements . . . and which introduces the twist of a new Director, uncomfortable with Pendergast's methods, and a new partner.

The introduction of a new character can often be uncomfortable, upsetting the chemistry with which readers have become familiar, but Agent Coldmoon is a welcome addition. In watching him work side-by-side with Pendergast, not just observing but questioning his methods, we get an immediately interesting new point-of-view. His wonder, his bewilderment, and even his frustration is something we share, but Coldmoon is more than that. He has a not-so-secret agenda that casts a pall over the story, but he ultimately proves himself to be a capable agent and a loyal partner.

There is also a young forensic coroner introduced who adds an interesting new dynamic to the story. Her conflict with her boss allows Pendergast to demonstrate that, after all his suffering, he has once again found the calm, polite, respectful temperament of a Southern gentleman, but it also allows him the opportunity to prove he is not a man to be trifled with. The way Fauchet admires him, somewhere between romantic attraction and platonic hero worship, is a nice touch, and even her enthusiasm in the later chapters isn't enough to cast a shadow over her role.

As for the story, it's a relatively simple one compared to other outings, but still fascinating. What we have is a serial killer who murders women in busy areas, where the risk of discovery is greatest, who takes the time to remove their hearts - and then deposits them on the graves of suicides, along with a literary-themed note. Why he does it, and what the connection is between victims, both past and present, is the mystery that drives the book. I had a light-bulb moment about two-thirds of the way through, figuring I had it solved, but the ultimate solution was darker and more complicated than I had anticipated. There are some great set pieces along the way, making great use of not just the state of Florida but a few other locations, and the swampy climax is one of their strongest to date.

Even if you were to take Pendergast out of the story, *Verses for the Dead* would be a better-than-average crime thriller. With him driving it, however, better-than-average becomes a must-read.

<https://beauty-in-ruins.blogspot.com/...>

Bam says

In the latest book in this long-running series, FBI Special Agent Pendergast is assigned a young partner, junior agent Coldmoon. Of course, Pendergast has no doubt that his partner's main job is to spy on him for their new chief, Assistant Director in Charge, Walter Pickett.

Their first assignment takes them to Miami, FL, where a young woman has been murdered and a body part

removed. Said part is found on the grave of a woman who committed suicide some ten years before and with this 'gift' is a stanza from a poem: verses for the dead.

After a second woman is found murdered with a similar MO, they begin to realize they are dealing with a highly organized killer 'who quotes Shakespeare and Eliot, uses fine paper and rare vintage pens--in short, a man of literary pretensions.'

It's very interesting how they follow a trail of clues. Pendergast is sometimes dogged in his determination to leave no stone unturned.

As usual, the conclusion is wildly exciting. I'm not sure I buy the motive but then I'm not a crazy psychopath! Very good addition to the series. I, for one, am glad that the authors have left behind the plots involving Pendergast's brother and gotten back to some real detection.

Terry says

So sad to have caught up to the authors! I hope there will be more Pendergast books in the future. This one got back to the basics, and I found it refreshing as well as good. No doubt about the fact that Pendergast is one of my absolute favorite characters out there. Highly recommend this series!

Ginger says

5 STARS!

What a great way to end the series if *Preston & Child* decide to do just that!

Verses for the Dead starts off with FBI Agent A. X. L. Pendergast investigating a murder in Miami that defies explanation and lots of questions. Pendergast unfortunately has one thing that is affecting his flow of the murder investigation, and that is:

Dun, dun, duuuun, A PARTNER!

FBI Agent Coldmoon is now partnered with the elusive and eccentric Pendergast and doesn't really know what to think about him.

I loved this partnership! Both characters worked well with each other and I hope to see more of Agent Coldmoon if the series continues.

Verses for the Dead is another excellent, exciting and thrilling addition to the *Pendergast* series!

The plot involves the humid and bright setting of Miami, the terrifying landscape of the Everglades and the great chemistry of a brand new character interacting with my beloved Pendergast!

Hey *Preston & Child*, don't wait to long on writing another Pendergast book!
