



Malice Prepense

Kate Wilhelm

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Forget about Grisham, Turow and all those other scribbling ex-lawyers. The best writer of legal mysteries working today is Kate Wilhelm of Eugene, Oregon. Her first two books about Barbara Holloway -- **The Best Defense** and **Death Qualified** -- were sleeper successes. Holloway is a marvelously dense and thorny character, and her father and legal colleague is equally interesting. "He resolutely denied himself awareness of the time clock ticking away, and while denying it, he tried to remember if she was thirty-nine or forty," Wilhelm writes of father Frank thinking about his daughter. "In his head, she was sometimes a very young girl, and then a woman older and wiser than he was; he no longer knew which image was more accurate. He suspected she was both, and then a few others, too."

Malice Prepense Details

Date : Published December 31st 1996 by St. Martin's Press (first published 1995)

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Author : Kate Wilhelm

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LJ says

FOR THE DEFENSE - NR

Wilhelm, Kate - 3rd Barbara Holloway

Teddy Wendover is a hulking twenty-eight-year-old with the mind of a child. An accident at eight left him severely retarded. But did it turn him into a cold-blooded killer?

Someone has bludgeoned Oregon congressman Harry Knecht to death. Knecht was the man who organized the ill-fated field trip that led to Teddy's injury.

Two more murders convince defense attorney Barbara Holloway that there's a broader circle of guilt. Before staging a dramatic courtroom performance, she must sift through dead ends, hearsay, and veiled clues--only to discover that truth is more dangerous than speculation

Except for the courtroom scenes, the dialogue was stilted, the hints to the past annoying and the writing inconsistent.

Chris says

THIS SUMMARY/REVIEW WAS COPIED FROM OTHER SOURCES AND IS USED ONLY AS A REMINDER OF WHAT THE BOOK WAS ABOUT FOR MY PERSONAL INTEREST. ANY PERSONAL NOTATIONS ARE FOR MY RECOLLECTION ONLY

Personal Note: I think the book is to long, but not something I will remember forever.

An old friend of Frank Holloway's turns up at his office and tells him a story that she may be a witness to the murder of a Congressman, which has been in Oregon's papers. Frank tells her he will check it out and go to the police with her on Monday, but she is murdered over the weekend. This makes the case Frank and Barbara's case. They want to find out what happened. The first one the police investigate for the murder of the Congressman is Teddy Wendover, a boy who had an athletic future ahead of him tragically cut short in an accident that occurred when he was a teenager which left him with brain injuries and a cognitive age of eight years old. He is now a friendly, active, six-foot-two man with the mind of an eight-year-old boy who suffers the prejudices of his neighbors. At first, Barbara thinks he might be guilty. She too shares the prejudice about mental illness. But as time goes on, she starts to learn that the murder of the congressman is connected to some other murders and they all have to do with an environmental issue-land development and maybe gold mining

The 3rd in the Holloway series. This is every bit as good as the first two. Holloway is an attorney but she ends up solving the crimes for which that her clients are on trial.

The prosecuting attorney first charged a 28 year old brain damaged man with murder but the charges were dropped when Barbara found a witness who had pictures of the man making sand castles with her children

on the beach at the time the senator was killed. The prosecuting attorney then charged the father since the man's wife had been having an affair with the senator. The prosecuting attorney wants to ignore 2 other linked murders for which Barbara's client has no motive and has alibis.
As always, lots of drama and a really good mystery

Coco says

Great book in a great series! I find myself laughing as I go along and remember back when this series was just a "baby". When Barbara has a group of legal students doing painstaking research all by hand and pen I remind myself that there was no Internet then! I find myself screaming at the characters for not having a cell phone but then i remember that all they had were giant "bag phones" back then!!! I love her father's character. I don't think you would HAVE to read the other 2 books in order to know what's going on in this one but I recommend it so you build a relationship with the characters.

Kathleen Hagen says

Malice Pretense, by Kate Wilhelm, a-minus, Narrated by Anna Fields, Produced by Blackstone Audio, Downloaded from audible.com.

An old friend of Frank Holloway's turns up at his office and tells him a story that she may be a witness to the murder of a Congressman, which has been in Oregon's papers. Frank tells her he will check it out and go to the police with her on Monday, but she is murdered over the weekend. This makes the case Frank and Barbara's case. They want to find out what happened. The first one the police investigate for the murder of the Congressman is Teddy Wendover, a boy who had an athletic future ahead of him tragically cut short in an accident that occurred when he was a teenager which left him with brain injuries and a cognitive age of eight years old. He is now a friendly, active, six-foot-two man with the mind of an eight-year-old boy who suffers the prejudices of his neighbors. At first, Barbara thinks he might be guilty. She too shares the prejudice about mental illness. But as time goes on, she starts to learn that the murder of the congressman is connected to some other murders and they all have to do with an environmental issue-land development and maybe gold mining. This is a very good murder mystery toward the beginning of the series, and we get to hear Anna Fields narrate the book. She was one of the best narrators and narrated the first Barbara Holloway books before her untimely death. I still miss her as a narrator.

Jenny says

****Spoiler alert- Don't read this if you don't like spoilers. This is not a review. I write these summaries just to keep track of what I have read. *****

Not as bad as some reviews I read. Barbara Holloway is again involved in a couple wounded men's lives- one wrongly accused of murder (a brain damaged man who is, in all senses except how he looks- an 8 year old), the other is a man who helps out in the investigation who was severely injured in a mining accident. Half of the book is pre-trial, the rest is the trial.

The trial portion is okay- but it's all court room details. The actual killer is found at the end, as the jury is out making its verdict. Bobbie puts together who did it, through process of elimination and some clues of motive and access. Then the killer goes a bit crazy and grabs his loving wife (out of the blue??) and comes after our heroine, drops his wife, takes Bobbie out in the car, she crashes it, escapes and he shoots himself. His brother and father who helped and or killed one or two of the three victims. Meanwhile it was a hung jury and the wrongly accused father goes free. Sort of a weird ending- the purpose of the book seemed to be the trial, and the information on mental health/developmental disabilities explored due to some characters...

BeParticular says

This was not quite as attention-grabbing as the previous book, but that is not surprising. Few authors can manage that "grabs you and doesn't let you go" level each time. Wilhelm's courtroom scenes are marvelous. The relationship between Barbara and her father continues to grow and develop in realistic and loving ways. I am very fond of many of the characters, but I love Barbara. I'm looking forward to what develops next. Recommended.

Donna says

The 3rd in the Holloway series. This is every bit as good as the first two. Holloway is an attorney but she ends up solving the crimes for which that her clients are are on trial.

The prosecuting attorney first charged a 28 year old brain damaged man with murder but the charges were dropped when Barbara found a witness who had pictures of the man making sand castles with her children on the beach at the time the senator was killed. The prosecuting attorney then charged the father since the man's wife had been having an affair with the senator. The prosecuting attorney wants to ignore 2 other linked murders for which Barbara's client has no motive and has alibis.

As always, lots of drama and a really good mystery.

Debra Belmudes says

I'm always so excited to find a new author I really enjoy. Kate Wilhelm gives John Grisham a run for his money and then some!

Rhonda says

The author did an absolutely horrible job depicting Teddy Wendover. The whole idea of this adult man with a mental age of 8 is not well researched at all. The stereotypes perpetuated are inaccurate at best, and malicious at worst. The Malice in this story is how the author describes mental retardation (which doesn't happen because of an accident - it is developmental) and the similar stereotypes perpetuated about mental illness.

I would only recommend this book if it were to show how uninformed people spread mis-information that is potentially harmful to large numbers of individuals who happen to receive a head injury or experience a

trauma at some point in their lives.

Stacielynn says

okay, this one drove me nuts. because of the new narrator. i just couldn't get into the story at first. finally i did some research and discovered that the sudden and tragic death of the original narrator was the cause of the switch. i was certainly sympathetic and completely understood, but i was disappointed that the switch was so hard for me.

i did, of course, stick it out and make it through this legal thriller. the plot was intriguing, as always, and the characters were the usual collection of cliches and quirky oddballs.

but things beyond the narrator seemed changed, too.

the reference to mama and papa arno drove me crazy -- were they a religious sect or what? it was never clear. the strained relationship between barbara and john was absurd. he always knew what she did and how she did it. how could he be so surprised and shocked?

it seemed like things were being rushed and not given the necessary time to percolate. deadline pressures? not the quality i have enjoyed in past titles.

Sabrina says

I didn't like this book as much as the others in the series. It was still good just not up to snuff like the previous. It drags in many parts and is fast paced in others and the roller coaster effect was beginning to get on my nerves by the end. The plot and actions are over exaggerated and so far out there they don't ring true half the time. The prejudices against people with mental illnesses did not sit well with me. Granted this was written at a time when there was still a ton to learn and for the public to know/learn about mental illness and the author does make an attempt at enlightening and educating us it falls flat. It looks like the author just skimmed information about mental illness and filled in the blanks and said we shouldn't judge people till we know the whole situation or should try putting ourselves in their shoes. It pissed me off because the characters are so misrepresented it's annoying and offensive.

The relationships in this book also grate on my nerves and don't ring true. Frank, Barbara's father is too perfect. He waits on her hand and foot then turns around and lectures her...or tries to as she pays no heed of him in this mode. As for Barbara her relationship to men in this book and in both previous books is that of insta-love/lust. In every book she see's a man (later connected with the case) and falls in love instantly. And they for some reason or another fall instantly in love with her. They "fight" their attraction for a few pages or a chapter and are immediately falling into bed together. Although Barbara is almost 40 she never seems to use contraception and hasn't ended up pregnant. Also all of the men she loves are either broken or become broken by the end of the story. In this book she has two men she insta-loves while still stringing along the guy from the last book. She pairs up the guy from the last book with her new legal aid and lets the least broken guy go in favor for the one that seems least likely for her.

As for the topic of mental illness in the characters involved they keep repeating that the accused is mentally retarded when he isn't. He is stuck at the mental age of 8 but he functions as a normal well adjusted 8 year old, he had reason, logic, empathy and understands action and consequences. As for the inst-love of Barbara's life he was diagnosed as schizophrenic when (view spoiler) that none of the many doctors he sees catch since none of them ask him about his history (no doctor but your first starts from scratch so very

unrealistic) or talk to each other (very true in today's world but not in the past). Last Barbara herself is most likely in need of some mental help and maybe some drugs. Her behavior in all the books leads one to think she has an eating disorder (she either doesn't eat at all or way over eats in one sitting, the not eating is the predominant). She may also be bipolar from her behavior with her clients, her father and her lovers.

Rebecca says

This is my second Kate Wilhelm mystery. It strikes me that there is a pattern with female lawyer detective/detective heroines in mystery novels that they live with or near nurturing fathers/father figures, have dead mothers, and although heterosexual, are unable to commit to one love-interest man (for one reason or another). This allows the author to work in dating and/or sex scenes to liven up the story and humanize the heroine. There's Nancy Drew of course, then Kinsey Milhone and now Barbara Holloway. Hmmm. Wilhelm keeps the plot moving with many twists and turns, brings in topical concerns such as parenting a special needs child and environmental advocacy, and altogether creates a fairly believable though contrived murder mystery moving along to resolution. I find the writing less witty and observant and the dialog less engaging than Sue Grafton, but she is up there overall. How can you not like a lawyer who gives her father kittens for Christmas and names them Thing One and Thing Two?

Ruth Coleman says

I would have given the last half 4 stars, but the first half deserved only 2.

Carolyn Wallis says

Kate Wilhelm certainly delights in tangled webs and notable characters. She knows her Oregon region and descriptively takes the reader into that world. I thoroughly enjoy lawyer stories and this one brings us into the courtroom (which truly is less likely to happen than settling out of court in real life). Barbara Holloway is a complex character and this book again demonstrates that pervading trait.

Kit Potter says

A very complex case is unraveled step-by-step under a tough judge in this case. Focus is on instilling enough doubt in the jury so the conviction cannot happen. The problems in the public understanding of the differences between mental difference and mental illness are emphasized and are part of Holloway's challenge. [This book is not as good as the earlier ones because I find it difficult to believe that an accident can create a developmental delay or the regression that she sets up in the man, Teddy. I find the aspects of public misunderstanding of mental differences accurate and am glad to see this included in the series, I just wish that the basics were better-grounded.] The progression is very 'human' as Barbara and John go from infatuation to finding that their individual daily-life habits and concerns are impacting the growth of their relationship.

