



## Body of Evidence

*Patricia Cornwell*

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## **Body of Evidence** Patricia Cornwell

After months of menacing phone calls and feeling that her every move is being watched, successful writer Beryl Madison flees Key West when a terrifying message is scratched on her car. But the very night she returns to Richmond, she deactivates her burglar alarm and opens her door to someone who nearly decapitates her. Why did she let him in, wonders Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta? And, why is Beryl's latest manuscript missing? Pursuing the answers involves Scarpetta in the murder of another writer - Beryl's jealous mentor. While she copes with a variety of personal and professional problems, Scarpetta's high-tech forensic skills enable her to collect a body of evidence - clues that would mean little without her intelligence, compassion, and imagination - that leads her directly into a nightmare all her own.

## **Body of Evidence Details**

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Author : Patricia Cornwell

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## From Reader Review Body of Evidence for online ebook

### John says

A solid murder mystery that, thankfully, does not rely too much on the forensic science element to further the plot. Cornwell is a terrific writer, and I enjoy her Kay Scarpetta character more than most detectives from other series. The book is fun and light, never disappointing but never reaching the upper echelons of great storytelling, either. Great for a long airplane ride, but not a book you're likely to remember well a couple years after you read it.

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### Noriko says

I believe everybody has books that are near and dear to their hearts, like comfort food that they cannot help but love and embrace despite some issues and flaws.

For me, this Kay Scarpetta series on the whole falls into that category. I remember devouring this series up until the 5th book when translated editions came out.

Although it's been quite a while since I last read this series, this 'Body of Evidence,' the second book in the Scarpetta series, confirmed my conviction that I love, and probably will continue to love this series irrespective of potential issues in respective books.

The plot is intricately and well-contemplated. As usual, the book kicks off with Scarpetta arriving a murder scene of the victim, Beryl Madison and the retrace of the murder well depicts how ghoulish the murder could have been, the dialogues and banter between Marino reeled me in the story immediately.

Although there are a lot of jargon relating to forensic investigation, pathology and such, it didn't thwart my getting invested or immersed in the book. Using Marino as one of us laymen, Patricia Cornwell did a great job explaining such things in a possessable way so that we get to understand what was going on and how things work.

One of the quality I liked about this book is the details and realism in the police procedurals and investigations. Given Cornwell's background before becoming an author, it stands to reason yet it doesn't cease to amaze me how painstakingly small clues and hints are hinted and sprawled out throughout the book and how they get connected in the end like puzzle pieces snugly falling into place.

I must admit that I was a bit impatient while I was in the midst of reading the 'rather lengthy yet painstakingly detailed' descriptions of the investigations and testing. I was also feeling a bit disoriented by how far-fetched the whole thing seemed with several clues and hits that could hardly be in any way connected are somewhat aligned. But seeing how those dots get connected and explained, it made a total sense to me and everything went down quite naturally to me.

I think this is one of those books that you don't necessarily need to play detective. I am speaking from my own perspective, but I felt totally comfortable in letting Kay explain how the case gets solved and how all the clues get connected instead of trying to figuring them out myself. This book didn't frustrate me in that regard and I was quite happy with that.

Kay Scarpetta is really an interesting character in my eyes; to be perfectly honest, I neither like or dislike her. I'm on the fence as far as she is concerned. She does come across a bit aloof and stolid (not stolid, but too

cool and collected for my liking) and she only shows her emotions in the form of her outbursts when she was pushed over the edge , frankly speaking, I have never been emotionally attached to her. YET there's something to her that makes me rooting for her before I even know it myself, hoping that she nails down the murderer as well as escape the wicked hands of them.

She is smart, competent and efficient. There are a lot of qualities that make her an interesting and an alluring character as well as makes me want to be like her, and I cannot wait to revisit this series and see how she entices me down the road.

The face-off between Kay and the villain is the highlight of this book, exhilarating and thrilling. The pacing perfectly matches with the mounting tension, making this book quite a unputdownable read.

As I said in the beginning of my review, this book made me want to read more of this series. The road to complete this series seems quite daunting with more than 20 books in store for me, but I will at least read the next 4 books to see if I feel any different about the series since my last visit. I cannot wait.

I gave this book 4.5 out of 5 stars.

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## **CAM ? says**

*The first book was good, this one's even better! It amazes me how Patricia Cornwell can make everything look so unclear at first then shows you the big picture when she pieces it all together in the end. This book kept me at the edge of my seat and I have learned to become genuinely interested in every character. Definitely worth reading especially for CSI fans like me!*

## **Quotable Quotes**

"Some people simply want company."

"I didn't know what I wanted. Maybe I never had."

"The older I got, the more I was of the opinion that love can be experienced in many different ways. There is no right or wrong way to love, only in how it is expressed."

"You can never be real sure who's all right and who ain't... It's real hard to know these days, that's for damn sure."

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## **Matt says**

Cornwell brings Dr. Kay Scarpetta back in the critically acclaimed series to test her wiles in a new and disturbing manner. When a murdered author is found in her home, investigators are left with little to know insight, which bothers Scarpetta almost as much as the slaying itself. Questions grow exponentially while answers remain deftly hidden behind layers of the victim's past. Scarpetta and the police being piecing things together, discovering a deeper back story related to her current piece of work and a collection of letters she wrote to a mysterious 'M'. After a related murder, Scarpetta realises there is more to the story than meets the eye. When an old flame resurfaces, he could be the key to putting it all together or the impediment that the killer needs to make a clean getaway. As things begin to come together on one level, they unravel before

Scarpetta can make sense of all the gathered evidence. Will the killer slide back into obscurity before being called out to face justice? A brilliant, thought-provoking novel that will lead fans of the genre begging for more. Great character back story strengthens the foundation of both the novel and the series, still in its infancy.

Cornwell does a fabulous job with all aspects of the novel. I must keep reminding myself that she forged the way in the genre, where characters such as Tempe Brennan and Megan Hunt followed suit with their own medical sleuthing. Scarpetta does defy the modern female protagonist with her crass perspective and vices galore. A great series for Reichs' fans to try, while waiting for the next novel. Sure not to disappoint the reader who keeps an open mind. Any fan loving a great murder mystery with a hands-on medical professional will surely eat this up.

Kudos, Madam Cornwell. I am a fan and cannot get enough of these books.

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### **Meags says**

#### **3 Stars**

I don't know whether it's the writing itself or the time when it was written (early 90s), but Kay Scarpetta is one silly broad, who constantly makes choices that had me scratching my head in confusion (and frustration). For a character that is so beloved I can't quite find the appeal (yet). And her detective friend (?), Marino, is wholly unlikable, with his gruff, assholish demeanour, and his constant prejudice slurs and harsh judgements of nearly everyone he comes into contact with who isn't like him. What a prick. If I had to witness one more homophobic rant I would have gone off my tree!

Luckily, I enjoy a good murder mystery arc and this one kept me entertained and intrigued enough to plough on through the character bullshit. I'll probably continue the series at some point, just not immediately.

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### **Judy says**

This series is what I call a "guilty pleasure". Not at all high-brow, but easy to read thrillers with some mystery, and I have to admit that I enjoy the gruesome details about forensic pathology. Being an engineering type, I like to know the details behind things, how things work, in particular when it comes to problem solving or investigative techniques.

I do love the character of Kay Scarpetta; she's a strong, smart woman who is also attractive. She makes me nuts sometimes when she does risky things that her superior brain should be telling her not to do, but then there wouldn't be a story, would there?

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### **Laura says**

3.5 stars. Not nearly as good as the first in the series, but I know this series gets better. I don't think I ever read this one, though. There were some interesting twists in this, definitely not what I would have guessed. A

solid entry in the series, but without the crackle of the first, Postmortem. I'll definitely continue with the series.

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### **Rajan says**

“Restraining orders aren’t worth the paper they’re written on,” I retorted, my anger nudging me closer to the limits of self-control. Not a year went by that I didn’t autopsy half a dozen brutalized women whose husbands or boyfriends had been slapped with restraining orders.

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Marino snorted. “It’s like in your place, Doc. No such thing as preventive medicine. We’re nothing but a damn cleanup crew. Can’t do a damn thing until after the fact, when there’s hard evidence. Like a dead body.”

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“Various emotions are associated with colors. It’s a legitimate basis for color schemes chosen for public places, hotel rooms, institutions. Blue, for example, is associated with depression. You won’t find many psychiatric hospital rooms decorated in blue. Red is angry, violent, passionate. Black is morbid, ominous, and so on.

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“I’m too old for change,” she explained. “I’m too old to pursue good health and new relationships. The past breathes for me. It is my life. You are young, Dr. Scarpetta. Someday you will see what it is like to look back. You will find it inescapable. You will find your personal history drawing you back into familiar rooms where, ironically, events occurred that set into motion your eventual estrangement from life. You will find the hard furniture of heartbreak more comfortable and the people who failed you friendlier with time. You will find yourself running back into the arms of the pain you once ran away from. It is easier. That’s all I can say. It is easier.”

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Attraction turns to obsession, love becomes pathological. When he loves, he has to possess because he feels so insecure and unworthy, is so easily threatened. When his secret love is not returned, he becomes increasingly obsessed. He becomes so fixated his ability to react and function.

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### **Quenya says**

So I liked the book but I think that has more to do with the characters than the actual story. Scarpetta and Marino’s relationship is just too much fun in how much they respect each other but yet can irritate the hell out of each other at the same time.

There were too many similar to the first book that bothered me. The two main things are that yet again Scarpetta’s office is made to look bad with her superiors and the media and the her romantic partner is a main part of the mystery.

I was really intrigued by the murder mystery and it grabbed me right from the beginning but I felt like the author didn't know how to wrap it up so it ended very anticlimactically and all the loose ends were tied up a little too neatly. The mystery is really two stories in one and one story almost overwhelms the book when the other story seemed to have more impact on the outcome.

I look forward to the next one. The narrator of CJ Critt did an excellent job with the characters I loved Marino's voice the most.

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### **Regina says**

3.5 stars. Really good.

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### **aPrIL does feral sometimes says**

Dr. Kay Scarpetta, Virginia Chief Medical Examiner is again in the middle of mysterious murders and personal vendettas!

Lieutenant Pete Marino summons Scarpetta to the house of shy fiction writer and murder victim, Beryl Madison. Blood is everywhere. Knife wounds are like that, especially when deep defense injuries are dripping while the victim is trying to run away down a hallway and up a stairway, down another hall and into her bedroom. Oh well. She didn't suffer much pain after bleeding out from having her throat cut.

Kay's is preoccupied thinking about the forensic clues in the Madison killing as she returns to her house when she hears her telephone ringing. She is stunned into silence after rushing to answer it by a voice from her past. It is Mark James, the love of life who got away after college. Kay has to sit down. It has been fifteen years, but she never got over him. Why is he calling?

She invites him over to her house. She is flustered. He is as handsome as she remembered, and she finds she still has it bad for him. Then, after small talk, he says, "A woman was murdered here in Richmond a couple of nights ago. Beryl Madison..."

Whaaaaat?

He wants to know if she has Madison's manuscript, a memoir about her famous mentor, the novelist Cary Harper. There was a contract signed by Madison eight years ago promising to never write about Harper, but she has gone ahead and finished a book about Harper after all. Threats were made, so Madison hired a lawyer, Robert Sparacino. Soon after, Madison began to get weird phone calls. As it happens, Mark is working for Sparacino. Now, speaking for himself, he'd appreciate it if she would stay out of the ongoing case.

Sure, yeah. Like that's going to happen.

I didn't think 'Body of Evidence' book two in the Scarpetta series, was as sharply done as the previous book, but I still was entertained!

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### **Kat says**

I used to teach this installment of the Scarpetta series as the example of the "mystery" genre in a novels class.

Basic Plot: a writer of historical romances is found murdered, and Kay Scarpetta is on the case again.

Considering the fact that I taught this book, I remember it fairly well, even years after reading it. The pacing was good and there were plenty of red herrings that I used to love to use to torture my students with. If I have any complaints about it, they lie in the fact that the "big reveal" completely comes out of left field. I like to read clues through a story and figure things out with (before if possible) the main character, and this book didn't allow for that. This is dangerously close to a spoiler, so I'm stopping the description there.

I like Kay as a character: logical, older, and a bit pudgy. She's relatable to me and not a "perfect" person. This 2nd book in the series allows the character to grow a bit from the first volume and readers also get to see more of her back story.

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### **Lobstergirl says**

[Mark James, Scarpetta's ex-lover, the killer (hide spoiler)]

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### **James says**

I was such a gruesome kid... in that I loved to read this series. Blood never bothered me, and the more psychopaths you throw at me, the happier of a reader I am. I think I learned some anatomy from this book. :)

The descriptions are vivid, not for the faint-hearted. Hits close to him when it's about a writer being murdered. Almost decapitated.

The MC, Scarpetta, is a challenging character. She's so honest and raw, you have to respect and love her. But she's also got this side of her where I'd be a little scared to be her friend.

Very complex mystery. Lots of clues. Very intense read.

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### **Jennifer says**

Why read: Reading the series.

What impressed me: Body of Evidence was definitely a topsy-turvy mystery. Not only do you not know what's going on with the victims, you really don't have any clue who to trust in the investigation either. Kay's

not knowing friend from foe in her personal life adds a lot of tension and intrigue to the story. And either Cornwell does much better in this second book with laying off the excessive explanations, or I'm just getting used to her writing style.

What disappointed me: Nothing stood out as disappointing. Well, except the crazed homophobia of law enforcement. Was it really that extreme in the early 90s when this book first came out?

Recommended: Yes. Even better than the last.

Continue series: Yes. I'm definitely becoming interested in Kay's personal life.

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