



Last Dance, Last Chance and Other True Cases

Ann Rule

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America's best true-crime writer and her new collection of crime stories drawn from her private file.

Last Dance, Last Chance and Other True Cases Details

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From Reader Review Last Dance, Last Chance and Other True Cases for online ebook

Jen Mays says

Ann Rule provides a detailed run down of one attempted murder case in New York in which an arrogant doctor tries to remove his wife from his life through slow and constant poisoning by arsenic. This was on top of a lifetime of using and abusing his relationships in every attempt to advance himself. Shortcuts were the name of the game for the guy, and any kind of criticism or humiliation was clearly incorrect and misplaced in his mind. His arrogance leads to the death of a patient in his office and begins the spiral of danger for his own wife.

Following this main account are four additional crime accounts dealing with men who received second chances and proved that they didn't deserve them.

Reading Ann Rule's book are a bit like getting absorbed into episodes of The First 48 Hours and similar programs. There are some true stories that are more absorbing than others and, therefore, some Ann Rule books that read more quickly than others depending on the reader's interest. I found this one to be a much quicker read than the one I read a couple of months ago. It's always baffling to me, however, the extent that people will go to in order to get their own way in the world. I guess it should be a comforting thing that I find it so bizarre and not the least bit intriguing or tempting. Instead, it holds the same kind of grim fascination that I suspect engrosses people when they pass the scene of an accident: that brief touch of a horror made more horrible because it's real, and the dark realization that it's a reality anybody can become the victim of simply because it doesn't seem rational. These stories kind of make one want to hole up in a quiet room and just not talk to anyone. Ever.

I guess it's a good thing I don't read these all the time!

Katherine Addison says

*"Last Dance, Last Chance": Buffalo NY 1999: Anthony Pignataro capped off a long and despicable history of medical malfeasance by attempting to murder his wife as part of a convoluted plot to clear himself of culpability in the death of a woman who came to him for breast-augmentation surgery. Despite the phenomenal amount of arsenic Deborah Pignataro's doctors found in her system, some twenty times the naturally-occurring rate of arsenic in the human body, she survived. Pignataro pled guilty and was paroled in 2013.

*"The Accountant": In Seattle in 1948, Jack Gasser murdered Donna Woodcock (beaten, raped, strangled with her own bra, and sexually mutilated after death). Sentenced to life without possibility of parole, he was nevertheless paroled in 1962. He violated his parole in 1964 and was sent back to prison, then was paroled *again* in 1969. Got an accounting degree; got a job as a state auditor, traveling around Washington state; got married. Got divorced in 1981. Murdered another woman in 1982. (And as Rule points out, there are plenty of unsolved murders between 1969 and 1982 that might be his work as well.) As of 2003, he was 74 and still imprisoned.

*"The Killer Who Begged to Die": James Elledge beat a motel owner to death with a ballpeen hammer in 1974. He was paroled and reincarcerated, paroled and reincarcerated, paroled for the last time in 1995 and murdered again in 1998. He said there was something evil in him that he couldn't control. He refused to

allow his defense attorney to argue against the death penalty and refused to allow him to file appeals. Elledge died by lethal injection in 2001.

*"The Beach": Moclips WA 1975: William Batten picked up two girls hitchhiking, took them to Moclips, then that night found them where they were camping on the beach and murdered them. He was caught partially because of the knots he used to tie their hands, which were exactly the same as the knots he'd used eight years previously when he kidnapped several young boys, tied them to trees, and threatened to castrate them. (He was sent to Western Washington State Hospital's sexual psychopath program and "released shortly thereafter." Rule's had things to say about the culpable negligence of that particular program in earlier books in her Crime Files series.)

*"The Desperate Hours": Kent WA 1963: man murders his girlfriend's mother because he thinks she's broken up their relationship, murders his best friend in order to steal his car (which then doesn't start), then invades the home of a woman alone with her three small children, kidnaps her, forces her to drive him to his brother's house, then when the brother (not realizing that the poor woman is a captive) refuses to help, forces her to *keep* driving him until law-enforcement officers mercifully force them off the road. Psychiatrists argued about whether he was psychotic, schizophrenic, sociopathic, and whether he was or was not legally sane. He was found sane and guilty and sentenced to death in 1971. The death sentence was commuted to life, and the "life" sentence, as per usual, fell a fair ways short. He was paroled in 1991.

Falina says

I don't know why I like true crime, and I don't think Ann Rule is a good writer, but there's something really enjoyable about reading these "Crime Files" books. Maybe it's similar to that morbid fascination that makes one slow down and look for blood when passing by a car accident.

Alisi ? wants to read too many books ? says

Very enjoyable. The first story reminded me of this of Stalin and his son before WWII.

Apparently, Stalin was a horrific father. He had at least three kids, two boys and a girl. The girl fled to America and the boys were killed in WWII.

However, before WWII broke out, one of his sons decided to kill him. Why? Ah, hell! Come on! Why wouldn't he want to? There's just too much to write on that topic.

This was his first of two attempts. The later attempt succeeded (because suicide is much more preferable to allowing his father to execute him for the high crime of getting himself captured by the Germans.) This time, however, he ran up to his room, grabbed his gun, and shot himself.

After the family was made aware of this, Stalin said "He can't even shoot straight."

The first story in this book involves a Narcissistic doctor. He was smart but his narcissism tended to get him kicked out. He tried five different hospitals in his attempt to finish the two year service before certification. He was always let go and he eventually forged papers that let him take the certification tests.

So, after killing patients that he truly hadn't meant to, he decided to kill his wife. He gave her enormous

amounts of arsenic. She had levels of arsenic poisons the worst they'd ever seen. She survived. No one thought she would. It was unheard of.

So what's this have to do with Stalin? Well, I couldn't help thinking about how ironic this doctor was. He couldn't even kill a person on purpose. XD

Laura Leilani says

You just can't make stuff like this up; no one would believe it! The novella is about a man from an upper middle class family who wanted to be a Dr. Since he couldn't do it the traditional way, he did it himself. He printed up his own diplomas and accreditations, opened a clinic where he did surgeries in the basement. He was successful, if by that you mean he drove a Lamborghini. However the basement surgery room had nothing in case a patient went into crisis. Not a smart move, considering no there was no anesthesiologist on staff!

This book is great for anyone who works in the medical field. You will not believe what you are reading!

If you do read this book, be sure to Google the " doctor". He was released from prison last year and went right back into " practice"!! Unbelievable !!!

Jim Thomas says

Rule hits another one out of the park!

Judy says

Your basic Ann Rule story where she writes her characters so well and vividly you feel like you know them. The main story was quite chilling, but not in a macabre sense. What made it so frightening is that Tony Pignataro was a practicing doctor (and now we know why they call them 'practicing' because it turns out we're all guinea pigs) who used his authority as a doctor to do whatever medical procedure he pleased whether he knew how to or not. His surgical standards were nowhere near code yet he just kept chugging along, his patients unaware. It appears he was censored several times but still allowed to keep on doing what he was doing. Fascinating tale and quite surprising that one of Tony's victims managed to live through what he did to her. The other stories in the book were interesting too but I have a hard time with short stories--you just start getting into them when boom, they are over.

CatBookMom says

This was more interesting than the usual anthology, partly because a couple of the stories took place in locations and times that have links to my husband's life. The main story, about a criminally incompetent doctor, is fascinating.

Christie Stockstill says

You probably already know that Rule writes true crime stories. Last Dance... contains about 5 stories. SADly, as a somewhat desensitized, modern American, the stories don't stack up against other horrific thrillers, until you remember that you are reading about actual killers and actual victims. Then, it becomes a bit disturbing. I haven't read any other Ann Rule books, although someone gave me two more of her books, but I suspect she has better books out there than this.

Jill Hutchinson says

A so-so read from Ann Rule who is America's foremost writer of true crime. This book is made up of one novelette and three short stories. This novelette, Last Dance, Last Chance save this book from getting a lower rating. It is the chilling story of a doctor who is a total charlatan, loses his license and then decides to poison his loving wife for a rather obscure reason. Not a case I have heard of but it is interesting enough to hold your interest. The rest of the book reads like a series of magazine articles of various crimes. Not one of Rule's best efforts by any means.

Turgut Yildirim says

Real life crime story engagingly told.I guessed who done the evil but what interested me was how it was going to be revealed.That kept my curiosity all story long.On the other hand, story to be taken from real life really impressed me.

Ula says

This is my 1st Ann Rule book, i haven't been able to find A Stranger Beside Me at the library yet. I don't really read true crime so it's a first for that genre in general. I really liked the main story and the depth that she goes into each person involved. The smaller stories at the end could've been left off I think. Overall she has a really engaging way of writing that I enjoyed but I definitely need some unicorn chaser books in between.

Jason says

It's been a while since I've read anything by Anne Rule, now I remember why. She writes of these criminals and their victims so vividly that they get into your head. I need to get them out now!

jv poore says

At the end of the first story, I noticed the criminal was up for parole in 2019. Based on what Ms. Rule has taught me, I expected he'd gotten out earlier and was curious, so I googled his name.

Yes, he did get out early and yes, he's already been found to have committed the exact same crime in at least two different states since his release, although there don't appear to be any pending charges. I find that a bit disconcerting.

Jan Sydnam says

Ann Rule is always captivating in her story telling. She takes your mind and emotions with her into the thick darkness of the criminal world. Her books are hard to put down once you start. As the victim's in the story start running, you, the reader start breathing harder as well.
