



Shadow of Death

Patricia Gussin

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Pull a trigger and everything changes. Medical student Laura Nelson had just finished examining her first patient when she is forced to make a split-second decision that will alter the course of her life - forever. One life will end, and one life will never be the same. But keeping her dreadful secret will be one of the toughest challenges Laura will ever face. With a persistent and perceptive detective hot on her trail and a host of eerie incidents suggesting that maybe her secret isn't really a secret, Laura is drawn into an unseemly web of peril, deceit, and treachery and is forced to risk both her freedom and her sanity. Will her deadly secret come to light, or must she live forever in the shadow of death? Set amidst the upheaval and smoldering chaos of the Detroit riots of 1967, *Shadow of Death* is a haunting tale of unrest, fear, and consequences. Hailed as a stunning debut novel, *Shadow of Death* provides a spine-chilling glimpse of what lurks in the shadows.

Shadow of Death Details

Date : Published March 1st 2006 by Oceanview Publishing

ISBN : 9781933515007

Author : Patricia Gussin

Format : Hardcover 360 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Suspense, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Medical

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From Reader Review Shadow of Death for online ebook

Matt Schiariti says

Admittedly this is a book I probably never would have read if it didn't pop up on the kindle top 100 free list. Also, admittedly, I found myself having a lukewarm response to the first several chapters. I stuck with it and I'm glad I did because it soon picked up and ended up being a very good story.

Set in Detroit at the time of the historical riots, Laura Nelson is attending the local medical school, her dreams to become a doctor well underway as a first year medical student. The ongoing strife and violence of the city however doesn't seem to care about her dreams when she's assaulted coming out of class late one night in the dead of winter. Laura survives..the assailter doesn't. Her dreams of being a doctor threatened, the dark cloud of possibly loosing her family also threatened, Laura makes a snap decision. She's not going to tell anybody. Not the police, not her friends, not her husband or family. What follows is a pretty intricate story about the consequences of the decision to keep this dark secret to herself no matter what.

It's not a story about the Detroit riots although the times and the violence in the area during them serve as a backdrop. It's a story about making what you think is the best possible decision at the time and watching the dominoes that are your life fall one after the other, after the other.

There were a few moments where you may be able to see what's coming and there were, quite honestly, some melodramatic 'mushy' moments, but overall this is a well told story that will have you turning the pages one after the other. I liked this so much I just downloaded Twisted Justice to my kindle because it follows the same characters. What's more is sometimes books written by MD's about fictional MDs can get bogged down in overly long passages about medical procedures and nomenclature. This book has just enough to get you involved in what the character's doing but not enough that you feel you need to skip page after page of medical jargon.

Jane says

I really enjoyed this book - a romance mystery. It explored much of the rage of the Chicago riots in the 60s and certainly gave me some new insights to life for those caught in poverty there.

The author explored family relationships and how unexpected and complex they can be. People do inexplicable things out of love, terror and fear.

I will definitely read the next one in the series

Karla says

Melodramatic and predictable - this would make a good Lifetime movie.

Joe says

My aunt wrote it!

Christina says

Pass on it.

This one was just a bit tedious for me. There are far too many oddities. I found the diction to be annoying at times. It was just not the kind of book that I could enjoy.

Stephanie says

First let me just say the only reason I read this book is because I was a First Reads winner of this author's After the Fall book. When I received the book I found out it was the 5th in the series. I do not read books out of order (I know I should lighten up right?). That being said, this obviously is the 1st book in the Laura Nelson series and it was a tedious read for me. It was OK and at times it was interesting but it was way too much coincidence/happenstance and ridiculousness.

The story focuses on Laura Nelson a 1st year med student at a hospital in Detroit, Michigan during the 1967 riots (There is a lot of racial politics and fear going on. There was also some women's lib stuff addressed). She is mistaken for a blond haired doctor who irrevocably injures a patient after he was shot, causing him to die not from the gunshot wound (even though he had been shot in the head) but by the botched medical procedure. The patient's brother, Johnny, sees this occurrence but only sees the doctor's blond hair and assumes it's Dr. Nelson. Johnny is hell bent on making her pay. He later attacks and rapes her. During the assault, Dr. Nelson shoots and kills him and then worries the rest of the book if she will get caught(it made no sense how she rationalized not telling the police but whatever).

There are interwoven storylines and characters. The author was basically saying it's small world and we all have interconnected lives even if we don't know it. The problem with that in a story like this, is that there are so many characters and overlapping storylines and sometimes the transition from one person to another was not cohesive.

*****SPOLIERS AHEAD*****

There is also the story of the family of Johnny, Johnny's friend, Snake who is OBSESSED with Johnny's sister, Stacy and getting Revenge against the doctor that killed Johnny's brother and all the white people. Even though he is a talented artist. There is the story of Dr. Monroe the head of surgery who is in love with Dr. Nelson even though he is married to a ridiculous socialite who is having an affair with a woman named Ruth who works at the Law Firm of one of the other medical student's husband. Dr. Nelson is also 24 years old and has 4 children under the age of 5 and by the end of the story has 5 children. Yet she maintains a ridiculous work schedule and basically straight A's in med school. (I'm not saying It's impossible but COME ON).

Then there is the story of Dr. Nelson's husband Steve who has a complicated relationship with his parents

and is Social Worker in Detroit. he just also (later in the story) happens to be the boss of Johnny's and Stacey's mother and the case worker on the case for Snake's mother. Then the investigating Detective is the father of the other med student who is Dr. Nelson's best friend.

Like I said tedious and way too many characters. Anyway glad I'm done. I plan on reading the series now and I will say the second book's synopsis sounds more up my alley but I just hope the writing gets better and the story a little more succinct. This was a book that should have taken me 3-5 days to read and it took me almost 3 weeks.

Gina says

This book wasn't really a murder/ mystery but really a family drama revolving around around a murder. I did like learning about a time in history, the Detroit riots in the 60's, but I did find the story a little unbelievable. Laura Nelson is a Med Student and the book follows her studies through her four years of medical school in City Hospital in downtown Detroit starting just months after the end of the riots when racial tensions are still high. I had a difficult time believing that such a smart character such as Laura would keep making such dumb decisions that would threaten her career. She kept major secrets from her husband, Steve, but was critical of him when he held back on her. There were just so many things that happened to Laura that it was just incredible that no one caught on to what had really happened, especially when her best friend from school, Susan, was the detective's only daughter. I can't believe no one put together all of the coincidences surrounding Laura's experience. It was all just too much! I couldn't maintain my level of believability even though I knew it was fiction. There were too many twists and turns that the author threw in that it all became too much. I don't think I will be continuing with the series because there are better books out there IMHO. 3 stars.

Jamie Pancake says

Laura is a medical student, who, despite the fact that her husband would rather that she stay home and raise their children, works hard each day in the classroom as well as in the hospital when she is seeing patients. After she is raped and forced to defend herself with deadly force, she fights to keep the events of that evening a secret, even as she learns how close her family is to that of her assailant.

Amber says

I'll admit I was interested in what was going to happen next but I also found myself growing increasingly incredulous at all the many coincidences, etc. I found the entire premise of the book a little difficult to believe and even aggravating at times. Further, I couldn't help but roll my eyes at certain aspects of the story that were introduced and then barely touched on and/or shrugged aside as if it no longer mattered. All in all, a decent read but not one that I would read again.

Brandy Brow says

I abandoned the book in the first half. I wasn't interested in the setting, the characters angered me, and the scattered plot lines advanced too slowly to hold my interest.

Ashley says

I admit, from the first page this book had me completely hooked. The premise of story, such a controversial time in history, has always fascinated me, and this was no exception. I love medical dramas, being in the medical field myself, so this was right up my alley. The story started out strong, and the tension never stopped building, not even up to the last pages. That being said, though, there were definitely some jarring errors I noticed within this novel.

First, the drama that is involved right at the beginning of the book between Laura and Johnny seemed a little...rushed, a little brushed off. I understand it was written within a rush of riotous scenes, but still. The casualness in which her husband brushed off their lack of love life bothered me a little too. I know for one my husband would at least find it suspicious.

The book, though, hit quite a few things right on the head as far as accuracy goes, especially the affair and the failed relationships between the human doctors. From what I have seen, it's all too common for that to happen in the medical world. The action was intense, and the story kept me clinging to the pages until I got to the last page.

Janice says

I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway in exchange for an honest review. Laura Nelson is a first year medical student. Married with two young sons, Laura's first patient examination is a gunshot victim from the Detroit riots. Shortly after the exam on her way home Laura is raped and the perpetrator threatens to kill her. Fearing for her life, Laura pulls out her gun and shoots him in the head. Because she is scared the police will take her from her children, Laura tells no one. Her friend Susan's father is a policeman and questions Laura several times because she was close by when the young man was shot to death. Then Laura finds out she is pregnant again. Is the baby her husband Steve's or is the rapist the father? Two months prior to the birth, Laura is working a rotation in the OR when a psychiatric patient rams her in the abdomen, causing her to go into labor. Fearing the outcome she confides in the medical director about the possible outcome. Laura starts to relax when twin girls are born and Steve appears to be the dad. But what has happened to her is always at the back of Laura's mind and her life seems to be entangled with the shooting victim's family as it turned out the rapist was his brother. His mother is also one of her husband's clients, whom he has been able to help. The shooting victim's sister ends up being a friend of Laura's. The book had several twists and turns and surprises up until the end. I really enjoyed the story.

Angela Reese says

This was interesting for the first half of the book then there were too many coincidences to make it even

remotely believeable. The second half seemed to drag on with the question of what is going to happen next and how can such an intelligent woman make such incredibly dumb decisions. If the book ended around midway, it would have been more enjoyable and more believeable. The writing style was very good as the story flowed but it kept making unnecessary turns.

Parthenia Ham says

Should have five more stars!

I just spent five years with a cast of remarkable people! The whole story is so engrossing...so believable. As you read, you feel like you're living along side them. I can't wait to start the next book in the series!

Betty says

Categorizing this as a mystery or suspense is ridiculous. There was no mystery element at all. This was a psychological drama about the impact of crime. There was a minor level of suspense, minimized by the reality that it was obvious things would not turn out well. And the absurd number of coincidences made the entire story pretty preposterous, to the point that one of the big reasons I found myself continuing to read the book was to discover the next unlikely connection between characters from vastly divergent lives.

I would ordinarily give this only a single star, but it earned the second star because I did like Laura and her circle of friends. And it was a good reminder of the challenges that women face when trying to enter a male-dominated field, and especially how exponentially greater those challenges were not terribly long ago, with pressure and little to no support from friends, families, and colleagues and constant criticism of a decision to be something other than a stay-at-home mom.
