



The Death of Friends

Michael Nava

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When a judge leading a double life is murdered, Henry Rios comes to the controversial defense of the prime suspect

Chris Chandler, a long-married California state superior court judge and family man, has been found dead in his chambers—beaten to death with his recent Judge of the Year award. When his young lover, Zack Bowen, is arrested, Henry Rios takes on Bowen's defense. For Rios, who has kept Judge Chandler's secret since law school, it means going up against a closed community—including Chandler's angry wife and son—to defend a man he believes innocent. Then Bowen vanishes.

As Rios copes with tragedies both personal and communal, he finds himself front and center in a case that becomes a test of his own moral courage.

The Death of Friends Details

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From Reader Review The Death of Friends for online ebook

Rod says

His book get better and better. I am intrigued with Henry Rio.

Lena♥Ribka says

4,8 stars!

First of all - a big thank you to my Secret Santa who gave me this book as a Christmas gift.

The Death of Friends, the 5th book in the Henry Rios mystery, is the best for me until now. I agree with all readers who said that this series is getting better and better from one sequel to another.

Chris Chandler, a superior court judge, a married man, a father of twenty year old son, a friend of Henry since law school has been found dead in in his office. Was his death in some way connected to his decision to come out after so many years living in closet? How many secrets did Chris hide from his family and his friends? The mystery part was great, there were many suspects, and I wasn't 100% about any of them.

But it was not only a thrilling mystery that made the book 5 very special. It was again some very private emotional moments of Henry Rios' life, the thoughts about being gay, the ability to love and responsibility for one's actions and choices...

And then this ending....WOW.

I think I HAVE/NEED/MUST to read the next book. ASAP.

Antonella says

Wonderfully written, lovely literary quotes, good mystery, scenes in the courtroom like out of a gripping movie, the touching relationship with Henry's former lover Josh as he is dying of AIDS, the discussion being in the closet versus being out dealt without preachiness: because of all of this you should read this book even though you can suspect beforehand that the quote by W.B. Yeats from the title is quite literal.

Scot says

In this fifth entry in the Henry Rios mystery series, the title reference is to a W.B. Yeats poem, "The Tower." Also serving as an epigraph is this quote from the Gospel of Thomas: Jesus said: "If you bring forth what is inside you, what you bring forth will save you. If you don't bring forth what is inside you, what you don't bring forth will destroy you."

How do these connect? Henry must unravel the mystery of who murdered a closeted high ranking judge (who also happened to have had a relationship with Henry when they were both in law school at Stanford). This provides opportunities for some reflection on what was gained and lost by both men as one chose to marry, join a prestigious firm, raise a family, and keep his homosexual impulses confined to a secret double life while the other chose to live openly as a gay Latino man. It might sound too philosophical for some, but trust me, the plot line pulls you in, and as he has demonstrated in his earlier novels, Nava makes the courtroom sequences opportunities to learn how this bureaucracy and process really work while keeping the interchanges lively, the story moving forward.

There is also the subplot of Henry's former partner Josh reaching advanced stages of AIDS. I was touched by how gracefully a wide range of honest emotions were handled here. The end of the book was more sophisticated than I expected.

With each book, I come to appreciate both the hero and the author more.

A.B. Gayle says

Excellent continuation of a great series

Once again Nava gives us a great plot and gritty insight into the law as it is, not as usually portrayed on TV. Plea bargains, suppression of evidence. This isn't a police procedural, it's a legal procedural. In the background is a heart rending picture of the impact of being HIV positive and having full blown AIDS. Underlying this is a picture of a society with an increasing gap between the Haves and Have nots. Of bankrupt counties. Underfunded government services and a society decaying from within. America is like a frog in boiling water. It may have jumped in when the water was cold, but it's too late to jump out now. Yet no one seems to realise this.

Neet says

The 5th in the Henry Rio's novels is one of the one that touches me the most. It's like a study of Henry's grief as he says goodbye to two people that were a big part of his life. We watch as Henry's world is literally shaking in the form of an earthquake. When he's back on steady ground, Henry discovers a handsome young man at his door who brings news of the death or should I say murder of a law school friend. Chris was a lover, and decided that he wanted to be married and have children and be successful and he felt that being gay was something that he could give up like you could cigarettes. When the young man shows up and says that he's Chris lover and he planned on divorcing his wife, Henry is shocked. Chris was also a superior court judge and before that a lawyer at his father-in-law's prestigious law firm. All this and Henry is facing the emotional turmoil of witnessing the physical decline Josh who is dying from AIDS. We see the love that is still there between these two men and see

how hard it is for them to let go. This book is a sad journey to take because you know that the ending won't be a happy one. I urge you though, to take the journey, it leaves you with a lump in your throat, but you realize though death is a part of life, it's still hard to say the final goodbye.

Ije the Devourer of Books says

I think this must be my favourite in the series so far. This was a deeply engaging mystery with many twists and turns that kept me guessing and I didn't know who did the murder until the very end.

The lives of the characters were just so multi-layered and complex and this enriched the story. Reading about them was a bit like peeling an onion with different facets to the characters being revealed bit by bit.

The story was also emotional with Henry having to deal with the loss of his friend Chris, the closeted secret judge, and the impending loss of Josh who is dying of Aids related illnesses.

Once again this story gives us more background to Henry's life but it is also brilliant in the way it portrays Henry's excellence as a criminal lawyer.

All in all a great mystery and a fabulous read.

Misty says

**** 4.5 Stars ****

Ami says

Henry Rio tries to reveal the crime in which his friend, Chris Chandler, a Supreme Court Judge, was found murdered. Chris was a closeted homosexual and the night that he was murdered, Chris's boyfriend came to Henry for help. On the other hand, Henry must deal with the last days of Josh, his lover who suffered from

AIDS, after seven years.

Why do I bring myself to hearbreak like this *sob*. I know that this novel will be the "saddest" among all of the novels. But it is still very good. Michael Nava's write with sensitivity and tenderness but at the same time, determination, that comes from Henry Rios's character. I can't believe there are only two novels left *sigh*.

Ulysses Dietz says

The Death of Friends (Henry Rios #5)

By Michael Nava

Open Road Integrated Media, 2013 (first published 1996)

Five stars

“The truth can be painful, but it does not produce evil. Lies are the source of evil.”

Thus says Henry Rios, recovering alcoholic, self-accepting gay man, lawyer for the weak and undefended. If Michael Nava's preceding book in this series, “The Hidden Law,” was all about Chicano rage, “The Death of Friends” is all about the destructive forces of lies.

The story starts with an earthquake—the Northridge quake of 1994 that rattled Los Angeles, killing 60 and injuring 9000. While there is a plot-driven reason for the earthquake's presence in the story, it is an apt metaphor for what is about to happen to Henry's world. Once again, Michael Nava weaves his tale with smart, beautifully crisp prose and a lawyer's gift for layered thinking.

I cried a little more at this one, but at least this time I was at home and not on public transportation. Like his other books, “The Death of Friends” hits close to home for a gay man of my generation. Michael Nava's age places him exactly between my husband and myself. None among those of us who survived the 1980s experienced the devastation of AIDS in exactly the same way; but all of us saw our friends die. All of us lived in the shadow of fear that our uncaring government did nothing to dispel or assuage.

Death is always a central theme in a murder mystery, but here the narrative is bookended by death, and it involves two men about whom Henry Rios cares deeply. Chris Chandler's murder, and the complicated, ugly truths it reveals, sets the stage for another impending death, that of Josh Mandel, Henry's friend and former lover. This is no spoiler. I lived through this, there were no miracle drugs yet. There was no escape once the virus destroyed your immune system. It was all a matter of how and when. Josh's fate is preordained. All we have to learn is how and when.

The greatest joy in these novels is not the courtroom dramatics (which are pretty great), nor the brilliant character studies Nava gives us as we meet the various actors in this tragic history of life in America. No, the bright, vivid center of this series is the increasingly detailed and loving portrait of Henry Rios himself that emerges a little more with each passing volume. This young man, just entering middle age, has rebuilt his life into something strong and good and filled with a desire for justice that has no taint of superiority or self-righteousness. Henry is not perfect, not by a long shot. He has his prejudices, but they are neither thoughtless nor unbending. Henry is fully aware of his own shortcomings, and that awareness gives him the generosity of spirit he needs to see what other people turn away from.

“The Death of Friends” is, in the end, the saddest of the books so far, but it leaves you wishing that Henry Rios was your best friend, and simultaneously wondering if you’d be worthy.

Susan says

Henry Rios is back, finally!! This is the fourth in this legal/mystery series that is really different and very good. (reviewed in 1996)

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

[
I admit, even though I pegged the suspect early on, there were moments when I thought I was wrong, and that Henry was wrong. Even when I figured out how the killer may have done it - which took Henry a little too long to get there, I think - I still doubted it because by that point, I'd forgotten who I originally pinned it on and Henry's deductions were

Dena says

4.5*

Adam says

Nava's own favorite of what he coins "the children," a.k.a. the Henry Rio's series; and I now understand why

This was a moving book, it felt very real for the clash of Henry's personal life (caring for an ex-lover diagnosed with AIDS), with keeping together and focused on his professional life.

Henry Rios' colleague, Judge Chris Chandler, is murdered in his office on the night of a California earthquake. The suspects pile up, giving us more and more insight into Chris' spiraling mess of a man coming to terms with his repressed sexuality. Homophobic son? His wife? His younger lover? The ambitious latter-climbing district attorney? The jealous porn director?

The court room scenes had me on the edge of my seat, I couldn't put this down... One of the few murder mystery/crime novels I can think of that would hold up to a book group discussion.

Michael says

Nava delivers another well written, compelling mystery replete with real characters with real emotions. As the series continue, the narrative is becoming more personal and introspective and I think a bit darker.
