



## A Merciful Secret

*Kendra Elliot*

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**A Merciful Secret** Kendra Elliot

**A pair of ritual murders could expose Mercy Kilpatrick to something terrifying: her own past...**

Raised off the grid by survivalists, Mercy Kilpatrick believed in no greater safeguard than the backwoods of Oregon. Unforgiven by her father for abandoning the fold for the FBI, Mercy still holds to her past convictions. They're in her blood. They're her secrets—as guarded as her private survival retreat hidden away in the foothills.

In a cabin near her hideaway, Mercy encounters a young girl whose grandmother is dying from multiple knife wounds. Hundreds of miles away, a body is discovered slashed to death in a similar way. The victims—a city judge and an old woman living in the woods—couldn't be more different. With the help of police chief Truman Daly, Mercy must find the killer before the body count rises. Mercy knows that the past has an edge on her. So does her family. How can she keep her secrets now...when they're the only things that can save her?

## A Merciful Secret Details

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## From Reader Review A Merciful Secret for online ebook

### Rabid Reader says

The thrilling start to this story sets the stage beautifully for the rest of the exciting, suspenseful tale. When two seemingly unrelated victims are killed in a similar manner, Mercy and Truman find themselves drawn into the hunt for their cruel murderer. With hints of the supernatural, this tension filled story will defiantly keep you guessing. It has lots of breath holding, on the edge of your seat moments, great twists and plenty of action. It is my favourite of the Mercy Kilpatrick books so far, it's exciting and I love the character development. Mercy has grown with each book; slowly opening her heart and allowing others in. The ongoing romance between Mercy and Truman is beautiful, it's nice to watch her painstakingly built walls slowly come down. Even though there are threads that run from one book to the next, each novella can easily be read as a stand-alone. I received an ARC from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. This in no way influenced my opinion or review.

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### Liz says

I'm becoming a bit of a Goldilocks with audiobooks. And the formula that's just right for me involves a steady pace and a straight forward plot. This series fits the bill, although this book was not as strong as the prior two. While I really enjoy Mercy and Truman and it warms my heart to see their developing relationship, I felt there was too much of their looking longingly at each other. It detracted from the story and made me wonder if I was listening to a romance novel or a mystery.

The plot involves the murder of two seemingly unrelated people. One, a local woman, was considered a witch by many in Eagle Rock. We hear chapters from her daughter, Salome, giving the history of her teenage years.

I don't recommend reading this as a stand alone. You need the background, especially Mercy's, provided in the earlier books.

While I wasn't as enthralled with this book as the prior two, it's still a decent mystery and I will definitely read book four.

I've got to give kudos to Teri Schnaubelt. She does a masterful job as the narrator.

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### ? Kimberly says

I am really enjoying this series from the rural setting, to tidbits about preppers included in these suspenseful and deadly cases. As Mercy is returning from her cabin in the wood, a young girl jumps out in front of her car. She lives in a remote wood cabin with her grandmother and mother. The mother isn't home, but the little girl's grandmother dies as Mercy tries to aid her. The killer in a rage slashed the poor woman with a blade. When a similar murder occurs the FBI steps in.

This was a fantastic case with a likely suspect and people with secrets. While other agents are quick to point fingers, Mercy continues to dig. I loved how Elliot tied in secondary threads and characters to weave a believable tale and timeline.

The series has romance as Mercy learns to open-up and trust. Elliot serves the developing relationship as a side dish along with a nice helping of Mercy's estranged family. I adore Mercy's sister Rose and enjoyed getting updates and seeing a possible love interest for her.

While arc in the series develops the relationships and shows character growth, they will work on their own. Each book has a case that the author takes us through and wraps up before the end. The flow to the stories are easy and I can usually read them in one or two sittings. I can usually deduce who the killer is, but not always, the why, until it's revealed. This review was originally posted at Caffeinated Reviewer

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### **Jean says**

Another great addition to the series! This is the 3rd book in the Mercy Kilpatrick series but it can also be read as a stand-alone.

Mercy Kilpatrick is an FBI agent trying to repair the damage with her estranged family. Raised within a family of preppers, she has a soul-deep need to always be prepared in case of TEOTWAWKI, the end of the world as we know it. She has a secret cabin where she goes to stock supplies for an emergency. On her drive back home from the cabin, she almost hits a young girl that runs into the street that is desperately looking for help. Morrigan Sabin's grandmother has been stabbed multiple times and Mercy helplessly watches her die. Hundreds of miles away, a judge has been found dead with similar stab wounds. Mercy is on the hunt to discover how the two deaths are related.

Excellent story with a great cast of well developed characters. While reading it, I wanted to go out and buy a couple of cases of water and canned food. I definitely recommend this very suspenseful thriller. I look forward to reading the next book in the series.

Thank you to NetGalley and Montlake Romance for supplying me a copy of Kendra Elliot's "A Merciful Secret" in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Kathy Martin says**

Mercy Kilpatrick is on her way back from checking on her wilderness cabin when she almost runs down a girl. Morrigan is desperately searching for someone to help her grandmother. When Mercy gets to their isolated home, she finds the grandmother dying after a brutal knife attack. Being out of cellphone range she takes Morrigan and drives to somewhere she can get reception before going back and waiting for the police. Morrigan's mother Salome is away from home and can't be contacted.

Meanwhile, boyfriend and Chief of Police Truman Daly is getting worried about Mercy because she wasn't planning to be gone all night. He goes off to try to track her down and discovers her at the crime scene where she's being interviewed by the police.

When Mercy learns that Oliva Sabin's death is very similar to the death of Judge Malcolm Lake which happened nearly the same time in Portland, the FBI takes over jurisdiction for the investigation of both deaths. Mercy can't be directly involved but her good friend Ava is put in charge. Both she and Truman are interested in the investigation but neither are legally involved. That doesn't stop either of them from doing what they can to investigate.

Since Olivia and her daughter Salome are both considered to be witches by many in the community of Eagle's Nest, it is thought that there might be some connection there. But that doesn't explain the judge. Although the judge did live in Bend for a while years ago and a connection is found between him and Olivia which could explain why she has been hiding in the woods for many years.

This story was a fast-paced mystery with flashbacks to a time when Salome was a teenager and knew both Truman and Judge Lake's son Christian. It also has some sections from Salome's point of view. I am especially fond of Mercy who has a unique background. She was raised by preppers and, although she has left the group, she is still doing her own prepping in case the world as we know it falls apart. Her supplies and her isolated cabin give her a feeling of security. She is also finding a new sense of security with her niece and with Truman that is causing her to open herself up more than she has in years.

This was a great story with plenty of action and excitement as well as being the story of two people who are committing themselves to each other.

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### **CD {Boulder Blvd} says**

I really loved this series when it first came out in 2017; giving A Merciful Death (book #1) 4 stars and A Merciful Truth (book #2) 5 stars. I'm also a big fan of Kendra Elliott and I've enjoyed a number of her books.

With that said, this book just didn't work for me as well as the first two in the series. I was actually hugely disappointed. Most of the disappointment is due to personal preferences. I don't like 1st POV and I don't like hopping POVs. These personal preferences definitely impacted not only my reading enjoyment but how I starred the book. A lot of readers don't mind and some like these elements so I'll be a little more specific about what didn't work. I did read an ARC provided by Net Galley so there may have been changes between the ARC I read and the final publication.

Although this can be read as a stand-alone novel as the mystery itself is stand alone, the nuances of the characters including their relationships, personalities and lifestyles are more easily appreciated and understood if you start with book #1 in the series.

The daughter of a murder victim, Salome, is one of the primary characters in this book and when she is starring in the narrative, it's in 1st POV. There is almost a dear diary element as she does a self-diagnosis of her emotions, her family relationships and the attempt to hide from a dangerous person(s). She looks back historically so we get past/present jumping. I didn't really enjoy these sections of the book.

Mercy and her significant other Truman Daly are pulled into the murder investigation mostly due to personal involvements versus legal jurisdiction. There were some times where I had issues with how the investigation elements flowed. I started wondering if things would have been handled that way in real life. Again, I wasn't as engrossed into the suspense plot as I wanted to be. Truman is one of my favorite beta heroes. Strong but caring, he's a capable law man without excessive chest thumping. However, there were a couple of incidents

where he came off more bumbling than capable...it was disappointing. He however, does make the awesome heroic effort at the end. Mercy is a strong and independent female which is a huge plus in my book.

One of my other stumbling blocks with the book was the witch/other worldly elements of the story. These elements also didn't work for me.

The murder mystery was actually very good. Who killed Salome's mother and wanted Salome and her daughter dead? I did guess the killer and the motive early so the important element for me was the story telling. With hopping POVs, the story telling felt a little choppy.

Will I keep reading this series? Definitely! This is just one book that didn't work for me. I like the setting and the primary characters. And I usually like Ms. Elliott's writing style and I'm still a big fan. I look forward to the next book in the series.

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### **Tulay says**

#### **Good story.**

Author created characters we care great deal what happens to them and that makes us read this series. Knifed and killed two completely different people. Mercy and her boyfriend police chief Truman, finds many family secrets.

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### **Kara says**

DNF.

Not interested in reading about the H having wanted to screw OW in this story in the past. It could easily have been any other male character in the series who had a past with Salome, but it ruins Truman for me to read about him lustng over OW, even if it was forever ago.

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### **Terri ♥ (aka Mrs. Christian Grey) says**

Well, better than I anticipated. And better plot wise than the books before. The villain was slightly predictable. I'd excluded that person for that simple fact. But hey, I was wrong which is a good thing. I enjoyed it for the most part. And now I'm really interested in seeing where things go.

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### **Anita says**

Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) provided by the Author and Publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an fair and honest review.

This is a really, really great mystery. It has a lot of layers and a lot of secrets to uncover to get to the baddie. Just a great old school mystery. Sorry you romance fans, the romance that is here is the cozy variety, but the

mystery is off the charts good.

Mercy is flagged down in the middle of the night, near her hidden, prepper, mountain cabin, by a young girl whose grandmother has been attacked. The woman dies holding Mercy's hand and Mercy is determined to bring her killer to justice, even though as a witness and an FBI agent, she has no authority at all. The night before a Judge in Portland, OR was killed in a similar manner. That is enough to bring in the FBI and FBI Special Agent Ava McLane (Callahan and McLane Series). Ava, Mercy and Truman must all work to find this killer before more people die. What is the possible connection between a sitting Judge and an old woman living in the wild woods of Oregon?

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### **Caitlyn Lynch says**

Mercy Kilpatrick is no ordinary FBI agent. Raised by a family of doomsday preppers, her life's philosophy boils down to Be Prepared... for anything.

So when a terrified young girl stops her car on a deserted road through deep forests in the middle of the night, Mercy reacts a lot better than most in the situation would. At least, until the child leads her to an isolated cabin where an old woman is bleeding to death from multiple stab wounds.

Soon, Mercy is embroiled in a tangled web of murders, trying to figure out the connection between a retired Portland judge and an old backwoods woman all the locals say is a witch. And she needs to figure it out fast, before she joins the list of the killer's victims.

I loved this book. It's clearly not the first in the series but that wasn't an issue, as everyone appearing got just enough backstory for me to find them interesting rather than confusing, and the author never fell into the trap of infodumping. Mercy and her prepper philosophy was really fascinating, as was the mystery itself and the other characters introduced during the story. The final confrontation was absolutely gripping and my heart was in my mouth reading through it, not sure who would make it through in the end.

This is a terrific mystery/police procedural with a bit of romance thrown in. If you like genuinely strong women heroines, you'll absolutely love this. Five stars.

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book for review through NetGalley.

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### **Melanie says**

#### **4.5 Stars!**

*A Merciful Secret* is even more action-packed and exciting than the first two books in the series with an intriguing case for Mercy and some great development for the characters.

Mercy Kilpatrick was raised in the backwoods of Oregon by a family who believed in being prepared for the end of the world. Now an FBI agent, Mercy still believes in being prepared but hasn't held on to her father's distrust of government agencies. Late one night after leaving her hidden cabin in the woods, Mercy nearly hits a girl who runs out into the road. The girl is desperate for Mercy's help and leads her to her grandmother

who is dying from several knife wounds. When this woman's murder is linked to the murder of a high powered judge in Portland, Mercy realizes she will have her work cut out for her if she wants to stop the killer before they strike again.

Mercy struggles a bit with this case as due to her being a witness, she cannot be allowed to officially work the case. Of course Mercy finds her way around such restrictions and ultimately becomes fully involved when it becomes clear she won't stay on the sidelines. As to Mercy's personal life, her relationship with her niece Kaylie develops nicely and I enjoy the scenes where they're together. We also get a few scenes with Mercy's sister Rose who is an amazing character that I love seeing pop up.

I enjoyed watching Mercy and Truman work together again as I feel their styles complement each other very well and allow them to explore different avenues to the case they might not have tried otherwise. Mercy and Truman's relationship continues to progress at a good pace with the only thing slowing it down being Mercy. I liked how much progress they made by the end of the book though and I look forward to seeing their relationship develop further in the next book.

I was curious from the beginning how the author would tie together two murders of people from vastly different circumstances and I was quite pleased with the way things worked out. I felt the story had just the right amount of surprises to keep things interesting and the plot was believable which is something that is sometimes lacking in suspense books. There is a bit less of a focus in this book on the prepper lifestyle compared to the first two books, but it is something that comes up as being a prepper is very much part of who Mercy is.

Overall the pacing in *A Merciful Secret* is great and I flew through the book fairly quickly. This book has been my favorite of the series so far and I'm looking forward to future books in the series. I would definitely recommend this series for fans of romantic suspense that are looking for books that are a bit lighter on the romance aspect.

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*\*\*I received a copy of this book from Netgalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review.\*\**

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### **Linda Strong says**

FBI Agent Mercy Kilpatrick is not only a dedicated agent, she is also a 'prepper' ... a person who believes a catastrophic disaster or emergency is likely to occur in the future and makes active preparations for it, typically by stockpiling food, ammunition, and other supplies. Raised off the grid by her survivalist parents, this way of living is something very normal for her.

She has a cabin deep in the woods where she goes every chance she gets. It's in these woods where a young girl hails her and asks for help. Her grandmother needs help. She finds the girl's grandmother dying of multiple stab wounds.

Calling her Police Chief Truman Daly, they discover that a judge, miles away, was also killed in the same way. What is the connection between the judge and an elderly woman known as a with, complete with potions and spells?

This is the 3rd in a series of 4 books featuring Mercy Kilpatrick and Truman Daly. Although this one is okay

as a stand alone, I highly recommend starting at the beginning. This has been a highly suspenseful series. The 4th book is due out June 2018.

The book is well written with a great plot and many credible characters. Categorized as a Romantic Suspense, this is much more suspense than romance. The suspense builds and builds until the surprising, explosive ending.

Many thanks to the author / Montlake Romance / Netgalley for the digital copy of this Romantic Suspense. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

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### **Jennifer says**

I didn't like this one as much. There were some explicit memories of the H doing sexual things with OW in the distant past (20 years ago). This is way before he met the h, but I didn't like it, especially since it wasn't balanced out by anything intimate between him and the h in the present. I don't understand why the author wrote the story this way. The H had such a nice, non-manho vibe about him. Why did the author have to include a character with whom the H had a history, no matter how brief? Ah well.

I also don't enjoy reading first person narratives and this book includes the OW's POV told in the first person.

On the up side, the mystery aspect of this story was strong and the H's cat was cute.

Trigger warning: some violence and murder.

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### **Maureen Carden says**

You can take the girl out of the family circle but you can't take the prepper out of the girl. Mercy Kilpatrick is an FBI agent who has a hidden cabin in the woods and is a secret prepper. On the way back from a late night visit to her cabin she almost runs over a child desperately seeking help for her dying grandmother. Morrigan Sabin's grandmother, Olivia, isn't just dying, she has been slashed to death and Morrigan has been alone with her. Her mother, Salome, left before the crime and Morrigan doesn't know where or for how long, or why.

The family's isolation isn't for the same reason as Mercy's hidden cabin; the Sabins stay hidden because they are healers, herbalists and maybe other spooky things. They have been ostracized for generations, unless of course someone needs their help. Then they come sneakin' 'round that back door.

Mercy has been told in no uncertain terms that she is a witness, nothing else. Yeah, like she is going to listen, especially since a judge in Portland, OR has just been found murdered. The Judge has slash marks in the same pattern as Olivia Sabin. He also has family connections to the area. Since he is a federal judge, this brings the FBI into the picture. The murder also brings a welcome appearance of two characters from Elliot's Bone Secrets series.

Mercy, along with her lover, Police Chief Truman Daly inserts themselves into the investigation of the two connected murders. Truman does so as local law enforcement who knows everyone, even the missing Salome, a fact he doesn't wish to acknowledge. Mercy has her own personal connections to some of the

suspects.

Mercy is a complex and conflicted character. How she made it into the FBI is amazing and would probably not have happened in reality. She has an absolute need for her secret cabin, dating back to her being raised by a family of preppers. Her upbringing is still an integral part of her, despite being banned from the family by her father. Mercy thinks she is prepared for any eventuality with her cabin, except for what really happens.

Mercy has been estranged from her family for eighteen years but recently has reestablished contact with some members. Her blind sister Rose still remains Mercy's closest friend and relative. It is disquieting to read about Rose's happiness with her pregnancy, even though the baby was conceived in a violent rape. The information presented in the book about preppers, their communities and other survivalists is so fascinating. The mindset seems so stupid, or it did until recently. First thing Mercy does is check the morning news. Think about that for a moment. Think about N. Korea. Think about Hawaii and its recent scare. Who's the crazy one?

Chief Daly is still a steady character, providing loving balance for Mercy. He continues to learn as much as possible about the unusual people of Eagle Rock and the surrounding area.

The more I read about Bend. OR or the fictional Eagle Rock, the more I want to move there. Right after I move for awhile to Three Pines and Virtue Falls. Elliot paints a picture of her settings that equals her unusual characters, both major and minor. Eagle Rock and its citizens is a whole 'nother world.

Twists and turns abound in this book, just as they do on the mountain road to Mercy's cabin. The story draws you in and keeps you guessing.

There is a hint of the supernatural in *A Merciful Secret* with a lovely scene between Mercy and Salome. Of course *A Merciful Secret* can be read as a standalone, but then it would be like missing a visit with weird neighbors and catching up with them.

Thanks to NetGalley for and ARC in exchange of a fair and honest review.

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