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The Last Lie Details

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Jim says

This book was okay. I originally started reading Stephen White's books because they were set in Boulder, CO. I lived in Boulder for several years and enjoyed the familiarity with many of the places that appeared in his books. This book is the 18th Alan Gregory novel. I think it is time to "retire" the Alan Gregory character. Alan is starting to get annoying and I he's getting boring. The books starring Alan haven't been especially great either. White's last book, The Siege, that starred Alan's friend Sam Purdy as the main character was good. Recently, most of White's books that have starred side or new characters and placed Alan as a background or subordinate character have been better than the ones with Alan in the lead. The book starts with a prologue that provides a hint as to what the main crime and focus of the novel will be, then doesn't address it again for over 100 pages. Everything in between is just filler. Second, Alan rarely accomplishes anything on his own and for the majority of this book, he does nothing except sit around and learn about the alleged crime from other people who are directly involved. Alan eventually becomes directly involved towards the last 100 pages and somehow becomes in control of the events because everyone else has been telling him the full story which no one else has.

Another way in that Alan is getting annoying is demonstrated by a conversation with his cop friend Sam. Sam has knowledge of the case while Alan has even more knowledge from separate sources. They are having dinner and Alan is trying to get Sam to divulge information about the case, which Sam will not do directly. Instead, Sam tells Alan a parable of a similar (real life) case as a way to tell Alan what is going on, without actually talking about the investigation. Alan is either too stupid to get the comparison, or is really good at acting stupid. Its as if Alan cannot figure out that Sam is quietly telling him what Alan needs to know without violating the investigation. Alan instead pushes Sam to tell him blantly what is going on because Alan can't take a hint. It is really annoying.

I never like books where the main character is not an active participant in the story instead hearing everything second hand from the actual participants (or third hand in some cases). I think Alan Gregory has ran his course and White needs to develop a new primary protagonist. White can create engaging characters and develop page-turning stories, I just think Gregory shouldn't be in the lead anymore.

E says

While I am still a big fan of this series, methinks White must have some kind of hold over his publisher to get this horse out of stable in this hobbled state. This book is in need of both a good story editor and good copy editor. Has he just gotten so popular that they'll let him do anything he wants? The three-chapter "background" on the Kobe Bryant story was more like a rant than a contextualization. I might agree with most of what is discussed, but it felt way too drawn out and irrelevant. When Sam asks Alan, who is listening to his Kobe Bryant diatribe, if he is boring Alan, I want to yell, "Screw Alan, you're boring the reader!" Some of the chapters where Alan conducts clinical supervision also suffer from the same type of thing - isn't part of being a good writer understanding that you don't have to write down every literal sentence, facial expression, teardrop, and leg crossing that such a conversation might entail to get the conversation's jist across? Honestly, Stephen, get a grip, hire a good editor, and tighten things up next time!

Janice says

Alan Gregory has frequently struggled with some ethical boundaries in this series, and in this book he really gets into some muddy waters: he is right in the middle of a possible crime, and receiving information from a law enforcement perspective through his friend Sam Purdy, from a prosecutorial perspective from his wife Lauren, and from a professional and clinical perspective from his supervisee, who is the therapist for the victim of the alleged crime. Alan ends up with more information than anyone, from all three of these sources, but unable for ethical reasons to share any of his information. What a dilemma. And Sam becomes pretty disgruntled with the whole process, when it appears that once again justice will be circumvented through deals and exchanges of money that occur outside the courtroom. Another good read from Stephen White.

Anica says

(3.5 stars)

This book was a bit too slow in some parts than I would have liked, especially in the beginning. However, I do think that the overall plot and the way everything comes together really makes up for all the faults in pace.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

3 1/2 stars

I always enjoy the books in this series, some more than others. In comparison with the earlier Alan Gregory novels, I found this one too cerebral, wordy, and dense with descriptions of the architecture, layout, and history of Boulder. I kept thinking White made too many trips to the thesaurus while writing this. Big words where simpler ones would have served just as well or better. It was also heavy on discussions of domestic complications.

He tried to give me an earworm on page 29, but HA! it didn't work because I already had "Kodachrome" stuck in my head.

Susan (aka Just My Op) says

It all started with that damn housewarming.

This latest Alan Gregory novel is about a partially-remembered rape, about the new dog-hating neighbors (I tend not to trust people who don't like animals, but that's just me), and about justice. Especially about how justice is sometimes hijacked by lawyer wizards. The mystery was entertaining and I liked the book for the quick read that it is. I had read only a couple of this series before I read this one, so I occasionally lost a bit of the back-story, but it didn't seem significant to me.

Alan Gregory is practicing psychology in Boulder, Colorado, is married to the Deputy DA, and professional

ethics once again come into play.

Aside from the basic story, I had some issues that demoted this mystery from 4 stars to 3. Alan's wife, Lauren, has never been someone I can really relate to in the books I've read. I don't feel like I know her. Alan frustrates me because he uses so much of his psychologist persona that it seems he doesn't react in a very real way. I understand needing to hide some of his reactions, but I don't understand not having them. He seems like a nice guy, sometimes too nice. But the biggest drawback to me...I got really tired of hearing about Boulder.

Don't get me wrong, I like Boulder. I live in Colorado and reading about an area I know is usually a plus. But how many times can I read about the colors of the sunset, the view of the Flatirons, which building had what view.? Apparently, fewer times than were in this book. It got not only boring, but downright annoying to me.

I did find it very interesting to read about some of the factual alleged crimes and their outcomes. Despite the shortcomings for me, I did enjoy the book and will read more of Mr. White's writing.

Albert Riehle says

This book has three distinct parts. There's the beginning, which is slow, boring and verbose. There is the middle which is exactly like the beginning only it comes after you've had to read the crap that came before it too. And finally there's the end which is more of the same. It's like having your Bouvier dog take a crap, on top of a crap on top of a crap.

To say this was my least favorite book by this author is an understatement. He's one of the most frustratingly inconsistent authors I've ever come across. Sometimes his books are sharp, well-paced and brilliant. Then there are ones like this one which is just horrible.

It has zero redeeming qualities. Zero.

Dlora says

I really, really like Stephen White's writing. He writes intelligently and I have to really concentrate to understand what is going on. *The Last Lie* focuses on Alan Gregory and his work as a clinical therapist, this time in a supervisory capacity with a newer therapist. I am fascinated with the inner workings of how a therapist keeps himself out of the "work" of helping a client learn about him/herself through questions and insights. The person being analysed is a rape victim and the rape supposedly happened after a housewarming for Dr. Gregory's new neighbors. He is starting to get threads of information from his wife in the DA's office, the therapist working with the rape victim, his co-worker who was at the housewarming and is friends with the owners, and his cop buddy--not to mention his own observations as a neighbor. He's wearing all kinds of hats and holding all kinds of secrets. As always, the pace is slow and almost laid-back as information is gathered; the focus is almost more on Dr. Gregory's family relationships and problems. And then, wham!, the pace races off, my heartbeat starts thumping, and my guesses and deductions about what is going on and how the story will end are flipped end-to-end. Maybe not a five because there is perhaps too much soap-box thumping from the cop friend about how wizard lawyers are high-jacking justice by circumnavigating the

Another great read by Stephen White. I've been reading this series for a number of years. A good friend of mine recommended his books to me, and she has passed on, but I think of her when I read one of White's books. It is like catching up with an old friend and learning what is happening. Alan Gregory is a psychologist practicing in Boulder, CO. He and his wife and children live up in the foothills in a rather remote area. When their new neighbors have a big housewarming, several strange things happen. There is suspense as events unfold, and I feared for Alex's safety and that of his family. I fear now that this is near the end of this series, because I read that there is just two more books. I will enjoy those and hope that White

finds some other characters to unfold to those of us who enjoy his writing.

Daniela says

This is the latest of Stephen White's "Alan Gregory" novels I picked up in a long time and like any good author of a series he managed to pull me right back in.

Dr. Alan Gregory seems to stumble upon crime -or it on him- in most of the books in the series and this one is no exception. After the death of his previous neighbour and dear friend, Adrienne, a new couple moves in after purchasing her house next door. The new neighbours hold a housewarming party during which events occur that catch the reader in a tangled web of crimes committed, accusations made, memories retold during therapy and people pulling from all sides to untie the knots, which -as we all know- only results in tightening them and entangles some of the main characters unwittingly in it.

White in his typical fashion shares tidbits of very intelligent psychology and insight into the multi layerdness of relationships all the while setting a very realistic background to a storyline that moves rapidly forward.

I agree with previous reviewees that the part about Kobe Bryant is a little extended, however I find it is crucial to the plot and explains why Alan's friend Sam is upset about the case. And somehow the way it is written and the way Alan expresses his desinterest bring the "boring-factor" across beautifully. It's great writing and White's style is as always convincing, smart and fun to read.

I love this series and this book does not disappoint.

Phyllis Sommers says

This author's novels are wearing thin on me. I've previously reviewed the disturbing glibness of White's recurring main character, Clinical Psychologist Alan Gregory, PhD; sadly, his glibness prevails even more substantially throughout "The Last Lie." Typically, there is enough substance and suspense in White's stories to override my annoyance with Dr. Gregory, but I can't say that was the case this time. I found the novel extremely slow-moving and wasn't really drawn into the plot until the final third of the book.

In "The Last Lie," Alan becomes immersed in a crime that occurs at the home of his neighbors, prominent attorney Mattin Snow and his wife, Mimi. Alan's connections to the alleged crime, a rape, are numerous. He initially learns of the crime from his supervisee, Hella, when she confides to him the information given to her by her patient, the apparent victim. Then there's the slight bit of information imparted by Alan's friend, Detective Sam Purdy, and some additional, though scant, input from Alan's wife, Lauren, Assistant District Attorney. All in all, Alan knows quite a bit about the proceedings of the entire night, but has to keep most of it to himself because of doctor-patient-supervisee-husband-friend confidentiality.

Alan's family dynamics become very relevant in this novel, due to the fact that his "adopted son," Jonas, had lived with his birth parents, before they'd died, in the home where the crime occurred. As is likely evident, just in my limited synopsis, the story is somewhat convoluted and relatively shallow. It becomes a page-turner as it reaches its climax, but for the most part, is barely an average read.

BJ says

I have read all 18 (so far) of the books in this series and liked them all. In fact, it has been a favorite since the first book. White is one of the writers whose new books I always pre-order.

Dr. Alan Gregory is not tough, troubled, or prone to violence. He is just the opposite. It is a good thing for him that he is surrounded by much stronger people, including his wife Lauren, his cop pal Sam, and his friends.

The mystery is well plotted and manages to become clear only near the end although one might suspect who the bad guy is.

I have to admit that the loss of a couple of characters in an earlier book remains a sore spot with me. To me these were important characters, whose absence has left a hole in the series. I read once that White considered "killing off" Sam, but fortunately, he changed his mind. If Sam is gone, the only character left that I care about would be Alan Gregory, and although I adore Alan, he probably couldn't keep me coming back all by himself.

Cole says

I didn't realize that this was book 18 of a series when I started it. Relevant backstory? I have no idea. Regardless of that, I enjoyed the book. It kept me guessing and delved into ethical issues in a way that coincided with the plot.
