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Quiet The Dead: A Promise McNeal Mystery (Promise McNeal Mysteries Book 1)



Synopsis

MURDER IN SLEEPY APPALACHIA. AND PSYCHIC CLUES FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE...Promise McNeal is startled awake one night by a jarring dream: she sees a beautiful woman, hanging over a shallow creek, strangled to death with a red scarf. An unsettling image to say the least for a woman who recently left her lucrative job as a psychologist in bustling Atlanta for the mountains of North Carolina, hoping for some peace and quiet.Â Promise begins to dig into the mystery surrounding the womanâ€™s murderâ€¦until a brand new murder occurs. And Promiseâ€™s hoped-for peace and quiet flies right out the window.Â Promise has always been a little psychic, and a little embarrassed about it. But here in the mountains, the effect seems magnified. Now making her living as a struggling country-store owner, she has to rely on her psychologistâ€™s knowledge of what makes people tick to make her way through the thicket of intrigue within the family of the dead woman. Along the way, she makes a surprising art world find, and starts to fall in love (maybe, just a littleâ€¦) with a very attractive new man...Her tentative relationship with Daniel, the father of Susan, her semi-Goth, twenty-something employee, is one of the major delights of this slightly psychic cozy mystery. Both Daniel and Susan are renowned bluegrass musicians and, wellâ€¦characters. Despite what's right in front of her nose (and what Susan tells her), Promiseâ€™s psychic abilities fail her when it comes to mountain menâ€”because Daniel is most definitely â€œsweet on her,â€ as Susan attests. And, true to form, opposites attract hereâ€”alien as he may seem to this city girl, something deeperâ€™s responding. Meanwhile, thereâ€™s that murder mystery. Daniel, despite his endearing overprotectiveness, is able to help out there too, and so is Susan. Meanwhile, Promiseâ€™s amusingly sexist friend, Garland Wang, provides just the right dash of humor. The fiftyish Promise is an attractive new female sleuth whoâ€™s sure to appeal to fans of cozies, especially those by Julia Spencer-Fleming and Louise Penny, and those with a light sprinkling of psychic suspense; admirers of amateur sleuths and their close sisters female private investigators; readers of supernatural suspense and psychic detective fiction of all sorts; and especially to fans of other great North Carolina mystery authors like Margaret Maron, Barbara Neely, Elizabeth Daniels Squire, and Vicki Lane.

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Customer Reviews

An engaging Southern murder mystery from Morgan James. Thankfully for those of us who favor a more easy-going style, there's not a lot of sex and violence; but there's plenty of interesting detail about the law, history, and art. The realistic characters range from sophisticated well-to-do Atlantans to authentic North Carolina ruralites who may remind you of your uncle or grandfather if you're from the South. Protagonist Promise McNeal is a middle-aged non-professional sleuth almost every woman can identify with, as she frets over her bad hair days but also finds some inner strength she may not have known she had. Very much looking forward to the next promised installment in the series involving prescient dreams, Promise's great grandfather, and a North Carolina mountain mystery!

Review for Morgan...Quiet the Killing... From the first moment Morgan James introduces the reader to Promise McNeal until she solves the mystery that drives Promise from the security of the North Carolina Mountains to the busy Atlanta streets, she keeps the reader in her pocket. I felt like I was unraveling a seam, stitch by stitch, that lead to a satisfying conclusion. Not only does the author take the readers on a surprising journey, she gives them a glimpse into the lives of unforgettable characters in Western North Carolina. One would think Morgan James was a native of the mountains. A must read for all mystery lovers!

I really enjoyed this book because of the effortless way it moved from the gritty reality of a murder mystery, complete with stolen art and millions of dollars at stake in a family trust, and a dream-like

journey the main character takes when she is visited by what may or may not be spirits of the dead. This isn't totally a ghost story, but strange shadows walk in people's dreams and in daylight view for some to see. I was really struck with the skill the author used to interweave the mundanity of life with the thoughtful and wistful impressions of the story's settings. In James' book, everyday reality is described with wit and detail that made me smile and nod to myself in recognition- not just settings like neighborhoods and businesses, but also the richly detailed characters that are carefully observed and described by the author. James obviously had a lot of fun turning her keen eye on characters that you or I might have met many times and been both amused and bemused by. The character's dialog and the narrator's thoughts and descriptions are always very lively and clever- and it's made complete by James' mastery of Southern dialect and expressions. She effortlessly has her characters speak in way that you can hear the North Carolina mountain drawl or the South Carolina low country speech, rather than having it spelled out in a clunky way I've seen other writers use- there are no absurd spellings with apostrophes scattered everywhere, the characters just sound that way. With all the colorful, living characters and detailed back stories introduced in this book, James should have material for many more Promise McNeal books- which is something I look forward to.

Since I now live in the western North Carolina mountains and used to live in the Atlanta area this book was totally engaging for me. Familiar names and places seemed to anchor the strands of webbing that connected a "quaint" country store in the mountains of North Carolina to a wealth of history in the Hotlanta area. The author is a master of colorful detailing, bringing her characters right off the page and into your world. A rollercoaster of fun! I highly recommend the ride.

I love a southern mystery, and this is one of the best I've read. It is very descriptive, is filled with well rounded and interesting characters, and portrays relationships in a realistic manner. The mystery is engrossing and is portrayed without resorting to brutally violent descriptions. What a pleasure to read the work of such a mature and skilled writer. One small irritation though: the book needs a good proofreader to get rid of all the small typos etc.

This is a well written, grab and hold your attention, southern mystery. Dr. Promise McNeal, (who doesn't love this name), is an absolutely wonderful main character. Closing her practice as a counselor, she leaves Atlanta for the Appalachian area of North Carolina. Buying a general store and a home at the foothills of the mountains she's hoping to find pleasure running the store,

enjoying the laid back atmosphere of the small mountain town, and providing counseling services only on a part time basis. Her highly tuned intuitive leanings seem heightened in this area so rich in mountain lore and unusual unexplained phenomena. It really begins with a dream and a phone call from an Atlanta attorney/friend needing her services on a case. Of course, the two are connected, and the mystery is revealed. Great characters, beautiful settings, engaging mystery, ghosts of the past, and a hint of romance, is what you'll enjoy in this mystery. 5 stars for sure.

I read this till about the sixth chapter. It seemed there was a good mystery building; unfortunately, it was filled with page after page of so much unnecessary detail that I was bored to death. So much so that I had to quit reading and find something more interesting. I went ahead and gave this three stars, because it wasn't bad writing, just way too much detail for me. There are some things that can be left up to the imagination, and some things we just don't need to know.

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