



Her Last Scream

Jack Kerley

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A serial-killer targets the country's most vulnerable women in this thriller featuring Detective Carson Ryder.

They thought they were safe at last...

Across the US, a secret network of crisis centres permanently relocates women in serious danger from domestic abuse. But now someone is killing them before they reach their destinations.

Detectives Carson Ryder and Harry Nautilus are having trouble gaining the trust of the volunteers who run the scheme. The only way in is for an undercover police officer to pose as a threatened woman, making herself a target and drawing the killer out.

Reinetta Early is the ideal candidate – but she also happens to be Harry's niece. He always promised his sister that he would keep Reinetta safe from harm. Suddenly he's unsure if he can even keep her alive...

Her Last Scream Details

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From Reader Review Her Last Scream for online ebook

Mary Gilligan-Nolan says

I have read all of Jack Kerleys previous books in this "Carson Ryder" series and it's been a while now since I read one of these U.S. serial killer crime mysteries. I have started to find them a little too fantastic and with more left to chance than good police work. However, this was still a good read. Harry, Carsons partner, has a niece who has just joined the police force and he is not too happy. He worries about her and the dangers involved in their line of work. Carson and Harry are called in to handle the case of several women who turn up brutally murdered in several locations throughout the U.S., all of whom have been women from abusive relationships who have been placed by Womens Refuge Centres into a special relocation programme, which helps them disappear from their spouses/partners, in the hope of finding a new life with a new identity. However, it seems someone has breached the system and is kidnapping these women somewhere along their escape route, and Harrys niece is placed in an undercover mission to see if the killer can be uncovered and take her as bait. As usual, things don't go quite according to plan and her life is placed in serious danger. It's a little unrealistic, as I expected, but still managed to keep me hooked. I had to suspend my disbelief and remind myself it is fiction and so should be given some licence to operate under this heading. I still find Jack Kerley's style of writing a little to high brow for this genre and sometimes, even a little Sam Spade in the dialogue. However, it's still a good read for fans of this genre and worth a look for sure.

Ais says

I picked up this book without realizing it was part of a series. It's written in a way where you can read it without knowing anything, although I imagine some things would hold a lot more weight if you did.

I don't read mysteries or thrillers very often so please keep that in mind in my review in case some things are normal for the genre but stood out to me as an outsider.

There were some interesting choices in the writing style of this book. One in particular is that much of the story is told through a variety of 3rd person POVs except Carson Ryder is 1st person. It does make me wonder why he wasn't also 3rd person but I'd like to check out some earlier books to see if this is an evolved style.

One thing that was an interesting byproduct of varying POVs is you saw the same person described different ways by different people, which was kind of cool. For instance, there's one lady who's described as looking like an owl because of her glasses by one person, while another likens her to Elton John. Little bits of information that together form a bigger picture. It also made me wonder if there were very specific psychological reasons behind this.

For instance, for some reason Carson is constantly describing in detail what people are wearing. At times, you get more information on their clothing than their ethnicity, hair color, eye color, or other physical descriptors. It seems a bit strange for a man to be constantly assessing everyone else's clothing styles to the detriment of other parts of them, but on the other hand it could be because he's a detective who once wanted to be a psychologist. He could be trained in perception and using that information to build an understanding of how that person ticks and what they think of themselves. It was just an interesting tidbit in the book and I want to see if it carries over to the first book as well.

One thing that threw me off a bit was that the 3rd person POV narration would comment on things almost like someone was standing there watching them from the side. For instance, if it was Harry-focused 3rd person POV it might still say, "Harry relented, as if worrying he might be overheard." It makes sense from Carson's perspective because he doesn't KNOW what Harry is really thinking when he relents, but for 3rd person it seemed a bit odd, because who is hypothesizing why he relented?

That wasn't a big deal, just a side note about the style. I didn't have a problem with it while reading it, but it did stand out to me.

One thing I really liked about this book was the way it dealt with domestic abuse as a serious issue, and likened it to essentially domestic slavery. Given the level of control an abuser has over the victim (regardless of gender), this isn't far from reality for many people. This book dealt with an underground railroad similar to the famous underground railroad of history, with Harriet Tubman, except in this case they were smuggling victims of domestic abuse in danger of death to other parts of the country, with a new identity, where they could try to live out their life in safety.

It's an interesting idea for dealing with this issue, and when you consider the number of people who are seriously harmed or killed from domestic violence, and for whom the current legal system can't provide adequate protection, and all the people who are collateral damage along the way, it's something I kind of wish existed. Although, I have no idea. Maybe it does in some form.

MAJOR SPOILERS FOR THE ENDING BELOW!! SPOILER ALERT SPOILER ALERT!

Seriously, this tells the ending including the killer's identity.

(view spoiler)

At the end of this book, I can say that I liked the characters/setting enough to be curious about the others in the series. Now I want to read their stories, especially after a few side comments from Ryder.

I really debated what to rate this. I volleyed between 3, 4 and the gambit in between. I think I would rate this maybe around a 3.5. It was an enjoyable read and at times I didn't want to put it down so I kept awkwardly trying to read it while doing things like making tea. At the same time, as an emotionally driven reader I can't say I was obsessed with it or the characters-- but maybe this is because I accidentally came into a series on book 8-- and as an analytical reader there were a few things that didn't seem super realistic. On the other hand, there were little details that DID, in places where it mattered.

To keep this consistent with my other ratings, I have to keep it in the 3's because 4's and 5's for me are books that have at least one extra thing that makes it really stand out to me or causes me to be unable to stop thinking about it after I put it down.

I don't know what the first book is like compared to this, but if they're of similar style or quality I would say if you're into detective novels, you should give it a try.

Robyn Ball says

Excellent. Couldn't put it down.

Mary says

An interesting and lacy crime storey. Up to his usual high standard. For once brother Jeremy doesn't appear in the storey which made it , for me, even better. A good read.

Best Crime Books & More says

This book is the 8th release from jack Kerley in the Carson/Ryder Series. His last two books I really enjoyed but this one for me was better because I loved the story but not quite as good as others and I can't even say why?!?

Detectives Carson Ryder and Harry Nautilus are not only partners but friends. They have been through a lot and soon become aware that this case is going to be maybe worse than previous ones. When women start turning up dead, there appears to be no connection. Before long it becomes clear that women who are in hiding from abusive partners enter a supposed safe route out, only to wind up in even more danger than when they left their partners.

Early on in the book we see first hand one of the women who is on the end of an abusive relationship and you almost wonder how long it's going to be before the woman winds up dead. Although the subject matter was really unpleasant, Jack Kerley has written a corker of a story using this terrible crime as the basis for the book.

Harry and Carson are easy characters to like, even if you haven't read any others in the series. I prefer to get to know the characters and their history which is why I tend to be a fan of series of books, but you can still read this as a stand alone book. Harry's niece Reinetta Early has actually joined the force and to Harry's dismay she wants to get involved in the case by going undercover as a woman on the run.

I really liked Reinetta as she was feisty and young and seemingly up for doing anything needed to catch a killer. Of course it sets the scene for some extremely dangerous things happening. I think the pace was as usual kept quick the whole way through the book and as usual when reading Kerley's books, you are in for some twists and turns. The one thing I really liked about this book was that I was convinced I had it all planned out as to who the killer was, only to be proved completely wrong!

The only thing I thought was lacking was anything major happening with Carson/Nautilus. I found that there was no 'extra' sparkle regarding wither of them. On reflection, maybe this is because Kerley wanted to make a platform for Reinetta to feature in follow up books, which I think would be a great move.

Overall highly recommended!

Rosa says

I like the story. it's quite easy to follow, the plot is not too fast pace, but enough speed for a cat and mouse chase. Love the ending when all this time the killer is only across the hall. One thing I like is the twisted plot that the professor character is actually doing a research. Well, I never really thought that's the case and it all revealed in the end.

The nice thing about this story is all puzzle got answered in the end. Which is sometimes quite rare with crime mystery. The story itself is gripping from the first chapter until the last page.

There are times I feel like gripping harder on my tablet because the chase has become so intense. I could feel the scare.

This is a book that you don't want to put down until the end.

John Thurrell says

Good I have liked the others in the series a little better

Jo says

Abused women are being whisked away by women's centres as part of an unofficial protection system that gives them new lives and identities. But some of these women are turning up dead. Carson and Harry team up with Harry's niece Reinetta to find out more. Brilliant page turner.

Raven says

Been a fan of the Carson/Nautilus series for some time and always look forward to the next instalment but did find myself a wee bit disappointed with this one. Although the central premise of somebody targeting abused women using the modern day equivalent of the old slavery underground railroad was interesting, I'm afraid to say that I did find this book a little stilted in the unfolding of the story. I also thought the rather unbelievable inclusion of Nautilus' nearest and dearest being thrust into the path of a killer after so little time in the police force did grate on me and also subdued the natural and entertaining interplay between himself and Carson as Nautilus spends the whole book with his panties in a bunch. Whilst not the best of the series new readers could pick up and enjoy this and then have the joy of going back and starting Kerley's series from the beginning.

Justin says

I devoured this book! Might be the best in the Ryder series since 100th Man. Fantastic storyline, characters, and suspense.

Paula Phillips says

Our favourite two detectives are back in action - Detective Harry Nautilus and Carson Ryder and this time they are being called to the morgue and crime scenes as someone is killing women and mutilating them , taking out their eyeballs. It seems too that their is no leads as every lead they chase comes to a dead end. Unlike the previous novels , Her Last Scream tends to start with numerous storylines and characters which eventually work well together as JA ties the loose ends. We discover that their is an online chat group of men who hate women and want them wiped out from this world and then on the other side is a group of women who have been abused by their husbands , partners and are looking -desperately seeking a way out . Enter "The Women Centres" , these women centres offer safe houses and an underground escape route for the women to move to a new town and start a new life. However, it seems that their is a rat in the organisation and somebody is targeting these women and instead of being able to enjoy a new fresh start in life, they are being murdered and tortured. It seems that the only way to capture and lure the killer out is to send someone undercover as bait - that someone happens to be Harry's niece - Rein Early , a new cop on the force. What happens though, when things for Rein get a little out of hand and she finds herself stuck in the killer's clutches with no escape . Will this be a mission gone wrong or will Uncle Harry get there in the nick of time ?

Find out whether this will be Rein's Last Scream Goodbye in Her Last Scream by JA Kerley. The only downside about this novel was that their was no sign of Jeremy - Carson's psychotic and insane brother whom no-one else realises they are related and Jeremy sometimes helps Carson out on cases along the way. To me Jeremy is a cross between Dexter and Patrick Jane from The Mentalist. I look forward to more JA Kerley novels especially one that will reveal Carson and Jeremy's relationship , now that would be exciting :)

Rebecca eley says

This is the next in the Carson Ryder sage. No Jeremy this time though, I even missed him just a little. Unlike the Killing Place (that I also read this weekend) the story was at least original and I am not quite sick of Carson or Harry yet.

This follows the story of a killer who targets the underground network of a women's shelter with Harry's niece going under cover to catch the killer. There are some gruesome murders and suspense thrown in along the way. Carson does the legwork himself this time with no assistance from his brother.

If you are following this series of books the book is definitely worth a read. I enjoyed it. I did miss Jeremy though he gives the previous books a dimension that stands them apart from other crime fiction.

Kim says

A cracking psychological crime thriller featuring Carson Ryder in his 8th outing - abused women are being channeled to safety by means of an 'underground railroad'-type of network similar to that previously used for runaway slaves. But someone has hacked into the network and is taking women from the system, torturing

and murdering them. Carson and fellow detective Harry Nautilus see the only solution is to put a woman into the system to find out who the culprit is. Unfortunately, the officer chosen for the job is Harry's niece, Reinetta, so Harry becomes so protective he runs the risk of endangering the operation. A gripping tale, gruesome and disturbing in places particularly in relation to abuse in relationships - 9/10.

Nuran says

Entertaining thriller, though sometimes there are parts where I feel is a bit over the top that it was almost a bit pantomime. Also, different points of view of many different characters can get a bit confusing, had to go back a few times to remind myself who these characters were, because sometimes you don't see them again for a while. Plenty of good twists, some are predictable but still quite entertaining. It has a slow, confusing start but persevere and it'll become a page turner.

Subject matter would be tough on some people, so if you're looking for something light and easy to read, this may not be the book for you. Some people find this subject matter disturbing and wonder how the writer thinks this up, but I wonder if these people ever watch news or take notice of what happens in the real world. Far more deadlier stuff happens to women on a daily basis in the real world. It was interesting to at least glimpse (nothing in-depth here) into the men's mind that commit violent crimes against women. At least in this book, you feel there's a chance for justice.

It can be unintentionally silly and unbelievable at times, some character behaviour seem odd to their normal behaviour, and I'm talking about the good guys here. For an instant, there is a support female police officer goes in an extreme childish huff in front of a suspect which I felt that a trained officer would not allow themselves to do. It felt like such an odd behaviour for her character, and was only written because she happened to be a woman and the writer wanted something that the suspect would react to so we could see how villainous he was but it was done in an unbelievable way.

The main story itself, is a good thriller, good twists, some decent characters, good plot and a few surprises, so for the price it is now, despite some short-commings it's worth a read, not a "must" read, but still it's a good read.

Pearl says

Carson and Harry are back and Lord how I have missed them. This series is one of those where I forget how much I love it until I pick up the next one.

What I love about the way Kerley writes is that, no matter how sure I am that I have paid attention, and that I am positive who the perpetrator is, it is NEVER who I suspect. He is a master of throwing us red herrings and weaving a plot so tight that you can't see the ending until it creeps up and surprises you right at the end.

It was nice to learn a little more about Harry in this addition. Carson will always be my favourite of the two, but it was nice that this story focussed more on him as a character for a change. I did however miss the inclusion of Jeremy, Carson's psychotic brother. I always look forward to their interactions and I am sad that he wasn't included in this volume. I hope that this book has introduced us to a new recurring character as I love Rein, she is feisty and witty and I would love to see her return in a later book.

This is a series that I can't wait to continue on.
