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For half Jewish, half Southern Baptist Miami criminal defence attorney Mary Magruder Katz, life starts to spin completely out of control when a minor fender bender turns out to be an unlikely shot from Cupid's bow.

Fatal February Details

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From Reader Review Fatal February for online ebook

Susan says

This is a nice mystery set in Coral Gables, Florida. I'm familiar with the area since one of my children went to the University of Miami. It was fun to read about places I've been to, and especially nice to do so during winter in the Northeast. The story has a good pace and the characters are interesting. I was ready to give this 4 stars until the ending which I felt was a little rushed and tied things up by implying what happened rather than spelling it out.

Sherrie says

Fatal February is funny, intriguing and easy reading. Ms. Levenson added just the right amount of romance without making it sappy. One thing I liked about this book was the way the legal stuff is written. Ms. Levenson explains each step of the criminal and legal proceedings in a way that is easy to understand and enjoy. And does Mary keep her lover? Does she find out who the real killer is? You'll have to read the book to find out.

Normalene says

This was fun and quirky and yet the mystery was good. I loved the characters and the setting of florida was just right for this mystery and yet we get enough details so the flavor of the place comes through.

The mystery was well done but I figured it out pretty early although that didn't detract from the story. I'll definitely be reading the rest in the series.

P.J. Coldren says

While I enjoyed reading this, there are some major flaws in it. One hopes that during the final editing process, all the typos and transpositions are taken care of. I doubt that the holes in the plot, the unlikely behavior of the main character, and the periodic lapses into total unbelievability can be rectified at this late date. Still, flaws aside, it was a fun read. Just don't expect greatness.

C.C. Thomas says

A couple of weeks ago, I reviewed Justice in June by this author and enjoyed that book so much I was anxious to read the first one in the series. Fatal February is the debut novel of Mary Magruder Katz, a wise-cracking legal eagle whose life is turned upside down in the carwash. (I'm not just talking about a fender bender here!)

Mary's life is going great: a lawyer in a prestigious law firm, engaged to the partner at the firm with a huge rock--career and professional life just humming along. Then her car is rear-ended by some hot-tempered hottie at the car wash and within the week, Mary has lost her job, her fiance, her ring and been brought up on ethics charges!

That's not even the crime itself in this novel! Along with all that, she has to set up her own law practice and defend a woman accused of murdering her husband in what looks to be an air-tight case.

Her life leaves me exhausted just trying to describe it, much less live it myself. And I loved every minute of it! I loved the absolute abandon of Mary Magruder Katz who often jumps first and then thinks through things later. It makes her moves and the plot so much juicier and really keeps the reader on the edge of the seat. You really never know what's going to happen next.

Another thing to love: Carlos. He is an amazing character and one of those who is so real he just jumps off the page. I am going to delude myself into believing that he is real. What's not to love? Hot Latin temper, great sense of humor, protective, he cooks (!!), and he is head over heels for Mary.

One last thing to love: the author's sense of ease in writing the book. Since I have absolutely no criminal background (either as a jailbird or police), I often get bogged down in books that are too heavy on the procedural stuff. It seems as if when some lawyers or criminal investigators turn to writing, they forget that most of their reading public don't know all the jargon and inner workings and don't bother to explain it. Levenson isn't like that. She explains each step of the criminal and legal proceedings in a way that is easy to understand and enjoy.

Currently, there are only two Mary Magruder Katz books on the market but I hear number 3 is on its way. I can't wait!

Patricia says

Mary Magruder Katz is a criminal defense lawyer with a fiancé, a good job, and a dog -- in other words, a nice life in Miami. Things change when she is asked to defend Lillian Yarmouth of the murder of her husband. In a flash, Mary loses both her fiancé and her job and gains a new boyfriend.

No graphic sex but she is sexually active
No violence

Jackie says

I had high hopes for this book. I had read a review and thought it sounded like such a good, fun read. At two stars, I may have over-rated it. It IS a light, fun read.

However: It is definitely, to my mind, a first book. The writing could be lots better. I was a little annoyed at the "too good to be true" Carlos. Even his mother seems one dimensional.

The plot was ok, not great, and I guess I was disappointed in the wrap up. It somehow seemed a little like a

cop out.

But the biggest thing that bothered me about this book was the editing. My goodness! There were so many instances - nearly every page it seemed - of incorrect usage of quotation marks it got to be annoying. It interrupted the flow of the reading and caused me to have to re-read some things to be sure who was talking. Also too many misspellings.

I read this one in a couple of hours, and while I don't completely wish for those two hours back, I would really have hoped for more return on the investment.

Martha says

Mary is a feisty defense attorney who works in a prestigious law firm with her fiance of five years. One morning her car is rear-ended coming out of a car wash. She is ready to berate the loud, pushy driver until she gets a full look at the man's Latin good looks and charming smile. Then things begin to spin out of control.

Carlos grabs Mary to serve as his attorney on a real estate transaction with some strange arrangements. When client relations heat up, Mary and Carlos are caught in a compromising scene by her boyfriend who fires her on the spot. She fires him as a fiancé and off she goes to set up her own office with encouraging support from Carlos.

Mary lands a new client through a referral from her brother who is an estate attorney. Lillian Yarmouth is accused of killing her husband though she claims she found him on the bed already stabbed and bleeding. The police and prosecutors fail to do a thorough job of investigation so Mary is pretty sure she can win a dismissal at an early hearing.

Mary has to fend off some nasty, low-blow proceedings brought by her ex who is more angry about losing to Mary than losing Mary. She is also coping with slashed tires, rocks thrown windows and a ransacked home.

I like Mary's 'go get 'em' attitude even though she did seem a little reckless (for my conservative nature.) Carlos is a little suspect but you have to appreciate that he is there giving Mary moral-- and other--support. It was fun that he was always sharing Spanish quotes that didn't "seem to translate very well."

I enjoyed the several court room scenes where Mary really kicked butt. Ms. Levenson also blends in some commentary on the lack of resources for proper investigations. This is an easy read with writing that flowed well with a chatty feel to it. The characters are cute and Mary's dilemmas make for fun revelations, especially with a little extra digging at the end of the case.

I picked this title out of my "Free Kindle" TBR library as it had "February" in the title. It was for my Just For Fun Reading Challenge. I am very glad I got to read such a fun mystery and I would be glad to read more from this author. I recommend this to fans of light, cozy mysteries and those who enjoy legal procedures and courtroom entertainment.

Scilla says

Criminal Defense Lawyer, Mary Katz gets a client recommended by her brother, an estate lawyer. Lillian Yarmouth is accused of murdering her husband. She has just met her new love, Carlos Martin, who rear-ended her while leaving a carwash, and then hired her to help him with a property transfer. Mary's fiance Frank catches them in the office, and they end their betrothal. Then Frank tries to get her in trouble with the Bar and begins stalking her. We follow the murder case, and the love case together. Although the state has done no investigation of the murder, Mary finds out lots and collects some witnesses and learns of another possible perpetrator.

Jessica Andersen says

I read this book because it was written by my neighbor. She kindly brought me a copy of her latest book in this series, but of course I have to start at the beginning.

The book is about Mary Magruder Katz, a criminal defense attorney in Miami. Mary becomes the attorney for a woman accused of killing her husband.

The bad about this book:

Some of the personal story stuff, especially at the beginning feels forced and rushed. It almost made me not like the main character. However, hang in there, it gets better! This has the feel of a first book and the author is working out the voice, and by the end, she finds a better balance.

The good about this book:

The mystery is compelling. Once it got into the meat of the mystery, it was hard to put down. Levenson did a good job of not getting too lawyer-technical, it felt like watching a good procedural on TV.

I normally read a lot of amateur sleuth, and it was nice to read a more procedural, where the person is doing their job and not stumbling across dead bodies. As much as I love my amateur sleuth series, they do occasionally stretch my suspension of disbelief.

I really enjoyed this book and will definitely read more in the series.

Wendy Hines says

When the prosecutors fail to divulge their findings of a high society murder, criminal defense attorney Mary Katz turns the other cheek. She initiates her own investigation and pity the fool who gets in her way.

Mary Magruder Katz is a criminal defense attorney in Miami, Florida. During a routine trip to the car wash, her car is rear-ended by handsome Carlos Martin. Sparks fly between Mary and Carlos and it does not take long until they are steaming up the desk in Mary's office. Unfortunately, they are caught in the middle of the act by Mary's long-term boss and fiance'. She suddenly finds herself dumped, fired, and jumping into a sizzling new relationship with Carlos. With his help, she finds an office to start her own practice. With a recommendation from her brother, she lands her first client, Lillian Yarmouth.

Lillian Yarmouth loves her husband. She has been aware throughout their marriage of his philandering ways, but she doesn't believe in divorce. Expecting their two children home from a college break, she runs a few errands and returns home. Calling out to her husband on her return yields no answer. Concerned, she searches throughout the house and finds him in their bedroom. Lying in the bed stabbed with her grandmother's antique silver letter opener, Lillian is unable to resuscitate him. Hysterical, and by now covered in blood, she dials 911. The police arrive, and after their initial investigation, suspect foul play. They arrest Lillian and charge her with the murder of her husband.

The Yarmouth murder is the society murder of the year. The highly publicized crime puts a small crimp in Mary's investigation. Hardly any cooperation from the state prosecutors annoys, but does not deter Mary. But what seems like a cut and dried case soon turns south of the border. New circumstances and evidence come to light that could help or harm Mary's case. Trying to balance her new workload with her new demanding love life soon has Mary's life spinning out of control.

Angela Lansbury and Columbo have nothing on Mary Magruder Katz. Attitude, grit, and brains make Mary one very likable heroine. With a twisting plot, a backdrop of sunny Miami, and courtroom scenes that will have you laughing and gasping in shock, **FATAL FEBRUARY** is a sure winner. From page one, I was captivated and couldn't put it down. Highly recommend!!

Samantha says

Fatal February begins with Mary Magruder getting rear-ended at the car wash. What follows is the beginning to a whole new change in Mary's life as she breaks off her engagement, starts her own practice as a lawyer, and begins a new love affair with Carlos the man who tail-ended her car. Mary is also dealing with a high profile case as she defends Lillian Yarmouth who is accused of killing her husband. Mary has bitten off more than she can chew as she is dealing with proving her client's innocence and dealing with being sued by her ex. Fatal February ends up being a light and easy legal thriller/mystery.

Let's start off with what I liked about this novel first. My favorite thing about the entire novel were the descriptions the author included of Florida. It is obvious that she has lived in and loved Florida and the way she describes the scenery in the book made me feel like I was there. The main character was fun to read about and kept me entertained throughout the novel. She wasn't afraid to make decisions and stick with them and was headstrong about the way she felt about different things. Plus, Mary just had a knock 'em dead attitude and you couldn't help but root for her. The mystery was interesting although not very complex and the ending had enough of a twist to keep me surprised.

Although I enjoyed Mary's character, I wasn't much of a fan of Carlos. In my opinion, Carlos and Mary's relationship was a bit one dimensional. I felt that the author could have developed their relationship more as it just didn't come across as very realistic. Carlos also didn't come across in a very favorable light to me and I found myself not caring for him very much. That being said I did like the book found it to be a light, fun read.

Amy Lignor says

The word 'allegedly' is what gets a great deal of people into trouble in this story. In fact, for a woman by the

name of Lillian Yarmouth, the press has already made sure that everyone in the greater Miami area has declared her 100% guilty of stabbing her husband with an antique silver letter opener. The problem? She's not guilty.

Mary Magruder Katz is Lillian's attorney. And when the story first begins, Mary is having one heck of a bad day. All she wanted to do was take her car to the car wash and get home through the ridiculous Miami afternoon traffic. What Mary doesn't count on is being rear-ended by a man in a Corvette whose a real obstinate - yet, handsome - jerk. As the hands of fate will do at times, that small accident escalates into a whole new life for Mary. You see, Mary is an attorney, and the driver of the Corvette - Carlos Martin - just happens to be on his way to a real estate closing. He hires Mary on the spot and throws money at her, as she drives this particular jerk to his closing and does the "attorney" deeds that she was paid for. What she doesn't know, is that this particular real estate closing is slightly against the law.

Because of Carlos, and Mary's complete and utter attraction to the man, she suddenly finds herself without a job, a fiancé, and struggling to start her own private law firm. She is also suddenly sued by her old boss (A.K.A. the fiancé) for "sleeping" with a client, and is being investigated by the Bar. While going through all of this, Mary also has to deal with a new man in her life, some seriously difficult staffing issues in order to get an assistant with a brain, and trying like heck to defend Lillian Yarmouth and discover who, exactly, was the real "letter opener wielder."

From the McMansions (which are now called 'Starter Castles') in Miami, to the "Concrete Canyon" where Lillian lives, this author does a fantastic job of showing Miami to the world. The affairs of the heart, as well as the underhanded business dealings, keep the book humorous as well as fast-paced for the reader. And unveiling the real criminal in all these twists and turns is a whole lot of fun!

A wonderful new name in the mystery realm! Readers will love jumping on board for the passion, thrills, and suspense that Ms. Levenson provides!

Jeanne Jenkins says

A great read. I had no idea where this murder mystery was going. Lots of twist and turns. The lawyer, Mary Magurder Katz, was wonderful. The only thing that I could say of the ending of the book, is that I sure hope that there will be another one coming soon.

Judith says

4.25 out of 5. A great romance/court-based drama that features a thoughtful lawyer who happens to be a woman and whose life is turned upside down in the month of February. It is not really laced with sex, but the sexual tension is there and thus, it is almost more romantic as a result. This lady goes to the car wash, and in the process of trying to get through the mass of customers, ends up having a string of events occur that changes her life almost 180 degrees. She's smart and sassy, yet she is deeply compassionate and empathetic. She's a darn good person as well as a darn good lawyer. Her new paralegal assistant makes her life lots easier, and the repartee between them is fun and enjoyable. A great book that I am delighted to have

discovered, even two years after its release.
