



L.A. Requiem

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Robert Crais (*Free Fall*, *Monkey's Raincoat*) returns with his eighth Elvis Cole mystery, *L.A. Requiem*, a breakneck caper that leaves the wise-cracking detective second-guessing himself.

Cole's partner, the tight-lipped, charm-free Joe Pike, gets a call from his friend Frank "Tortilla" Garcia. Not only is Garcia a wealthy businessman, he's a political heavyweight and father of Karen, Joe's ex. Frank sends the gumshoe duo out to find his girl, but the boys are beaten to the punch by the men in blue: Karen is found in a park with a bullet in her brain.

The two stay on the case, but when another murder points to Pike as a suspect, things take a turn for the worse. The boys on the force are all too willing to put Pike away -- he has a checkered past. When Cole attempts to save Pike, he finds a lot more than he bargained for.

L.A. Requiem Details

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From Reader Review L.A. Requiem for online ebook

Steve Haywood says

What starts out as a simple missing person's case for private detective Elvis Cole quickly becomes a lot more complicated when her body is discovered with no clues as to who committed the crime. Asked by the girl's father to investigate, things get distinctly more murky when it appears she is the latest victim of a serial killer. It doesn't help matters either that the victim is his co-detective Joe Pike's ex-girlfriend, nor that the police seem determined to obstruct them at every turn.

This is the eighth book in the author's series featuring the investigating exploits of private eye duo Elvis Cole and Joe Pike. Over the years I've read all of the previous books in the series and enjoyed them all - Elvis Cole is a great character, very distinctive and quirky, not your usual private detective fare. None of the previous books are as good as this one however, they are good stories but this one goes deeper and links the story with their past, particularly Joe Pike who has remained something of an enigma until now. In this book you get under the hood so to speak, finding out why he is the way he is and how he got to where he is today.

If you've read previous Elvis Cole novels then you should definitely read this, hopefully you will agree with me that it is his best yet. You'll also benefit from knowing something of the characters histories and relationships which will add something to the book. If you haven't read any of his previous novels though, I would still recommend this book. You don't need any prior knowledge to read and enjoy it, and I think this would be a great place to start. If you really like it and want to read more, you can always go back and start at the beginning with *The Monkey's Raincoat*, or just go forward as he's written quite a few after this one too.

Overall, a great crime fiction read. I haven't read any in a while, and this has got me right back into them.
5/5.

Mike says

An old girlfriend of Joe Pike's is missing, and her father asks Joe and Elvis to help find her. She's found - dead - and the hunt is on. This is the tip of an iceberg that adds up to five more bodies. The question is it a serial killer or murder for a reason?

All the boy's jobs are dangerous, but Crais ups the ante with jail time for one or both of our heroes a distinct possibility, because of a decades-long dispute between Joe and a higher up in the police department.

A good buddy story, with Elvis having to choose between helping his best friend, and his love interest transplanted from Louisiana.

Darcy says

Man, this one got really personal for Elvis and Joe and had me on the edge of my seat.

Joe gets called into help look for a missing old girlfriend. What seems like it will be easy turns into a

nightmare for Joe and Elvis by proxy.

Joe's history growing up is brought out for us to learn why Joe is the way he is. His past will have you shaking your head and wondering how Joe is as normal as he is. We also get to see Joe as a young cop. Through both of these sets of flashbacks you can see Joe's moral code cement together and why once you are a friend of Joe's there isn't anything he won't do for you or to protect you.

Elvis helps out by dealing with the police as that isn't an option for Joe. Even with his good reputation Elvis gets crapped on time and time again. Slowly Elvis gets some help from one of the cops. But this help brings new problems.

Elvis runs into issues with Lucy too along the way. I found myself getting mad at Lucy, she kept playing the "girl" card, wanting things to be about her and got mad when Elvis didn't pick her. Elvis was also disappointed with Lucy in that she couldn't understand why he kept leaving to "do the right thing". Something Lucy should have understood as she meet him while working on a case and his sense of moral right and wrong was the same then.

At the end of the book things are at a big crossroads for everyone. Some people know that they can depend on their "family", others not so much, and along the way everyone paid a high price. It will be interesting to see how things go for our characters in their personal lives from here on out.

Anthony Vacca says

L.A. Requiem is a breath of fresh, cordite-soaked air for a series that was treading into some seriously-stale territory. Crais wisely eschews the formula of his last seven books and does not have best bud private eyes Elvis Cole and Joe Pike stumbling into a mystery that eventually leads them into several gunfights with the stereotyped criminal gang of your choice. But my bitching aside, the real achievement of this book is that Crais decided it was time to quit playing off how much of a mysterious badass Joe Pike is and finally let's the reader get several long, hard looks behind those shades Pike's always wearing.

Even though the novel is narrated (mostly) by series lead Elvis Cole, this book is as much Pike's as it is his. When the father of an old flame calls up Pike to help find his missing daughter, it's not another twelve pages before she turns up with a bullet in her head. And since the girl's father turns out to be a rich pain in the ass with some serious political sway, the L.A. task force assigned to the murder investigation soon realize that it would behoove themselves to let Elvis and Pike sit-in on the investigation. And, yeah, the detectives on the task force are royally pissed about the situation.

To make matters worse, the lead detective happens to be a weaselly yet mostly-honest cop who has a lingering hard-on to put Pike in prison. And also Elvis finds himself increasingly attracted to a female cop on the force, which is not exactly ideal considering our hero's longtime squeeze, Lucy, has just moved across the country with her kid to start a new life near Elvis.

Crais let's the events move along at a slow boil until the halfway mark, and then everything kicks into overdrive as Pike finds himself trying to outrun a murder rap, and Elvis finds himself having to make split-second decisions about what things in his life he holds dearest. All the while, a deranged but sly killer keeps upping the body count as [let's keep this pronoun gender neutral (SUSPENSE!)] sets about airing out some old and grim grievances.

L.A. Requiem is a definite departure from the last four books, and fits more tonally with the aura of melancholy and darkness that were present in the first three books of the series. Crais makes use of multiple flashbacks which (successfully) answer many of the questions readers may have had about Joe Pike, as well as (less successful) shifts in POV so that the reader gets quick glimpses into the killer's mind, which (kind of clumsily) up the tension.

But gripes aside, Crais really stepped up his game in this entry. *L.A. Requiem* is darker and denser than any of the other books up to this point. It's also sadder than the other books, with a cast of supporting characters that are more layered than usual. Plus, it's a true joy to watch Crais push Elvis to his limits like never before. As much as we learn about Pike in this novel, we learn just as much about the man who's narrating the story.

David says

L.A. Requiem is the book in which Robert Crais elevated his game from being simply a great mystery writer to a great writer. The previous books in the Elvis Cole series center around wise-cracking detective Elvis Cole, a smart, moral guy who solves cases. They are usually funny, have good plots and are enjoyable to read.

L.A. Requiem has all of these characteristics, but is a much more powerful book than other Crais efforts. Like its predecessors, *Requiem* has a good plot: a woman from Elvis' partner, Joe Pike's past is murdered, and Joe and Elvis are tasked with finding the killer. Things quickly move from just a present-day investigation, as slowly, resentments from events long-past are brought into the mix. It is this element that makes the book so good.

The character of Joe Pike has always been a highly original and entertaining one. However, this book takes the time to delve into his boyhood and history in the military in ways that really bring depth to the character. We find out why Joe is persona non grata with the LAPD as well as learn how his childhood affected his present day persona. It is great writing.

At the same time, deeper themes beyond simply moving the plot forward stream throughout the book. Friendship, revenge, humiliation and forbidden love are tied up in the events of the book in ways that make the reader really care about the characters. Lucy Chenier is back, but Elvis also strikes up a friendship with a brash female detective named Samantha Dolan, who is a powerful character. The mousey and resentful Harvey Krantz is another great character.

All of this combines to make the book work on many levels. The mystery unfolds logically and builds over the chapters of the book. Maybe some readers could guess who the killer was, but I was surprised. It builds to a powerful climax and the afterward is powerful as well. *L.A. Requiem* is not only a good mystery, it works as art. You can read it for fun, but you may find that it makes you feel and think a bit more than you expected to when you picked it up.

Johnny says

My brothers are so cruel. All of them have, at one time or another, given me a novel late in a series (Doug gave me a Robert Vardeman fantasy novel that was #3 in the series and, naturally, I had to buy the first two

and fill out the rest of *The Cenotaph Road* series. James introduced me to Martha Grimes' Richard Jury series with *Jerusalem Inn* (somewhere around #5 or #6). And now, my brother David gives me #8 in a series.) Well, you'd better believe I'm going to read the first seven and probably any others that he writes.

To me, Crais' writing is crisper than Wambaugh's and right up there with Connolly's (my favorite). It isn't as disturbing as Ellroy's (which are well-written enough to keep me coming back like a morbid curiosity seeker to a train wreck--I hate myself for enjoying Ellroy, but I do) or quite as nuanced as Dunning's novels. To paraphrase a cliché, he had me at "the a.c. jacked to meat locker."

The only reason I didn't give this book a 5-star rating was because I felt Crais was somewhat ham-handed with his red herring. I can't say more than that without spoiling the mystery, but he was very careful with his red herring--so careful that it wasn't a surprise when the hook was bared. But did I feel like he knew Southern California from San Gabriel to Mulholland to Santa Monica and all the way to Palm Springs and 29 Palms? I spent my college years and a few more in Southern California and this book had me going crazy with the Santa Ana winds and longing for Dodger Stadium (Ironic, since my first loyalties were to the Giants and the Angels--of course, the Angels played in Dodger Stadium/Chavez Ravine when I first started rooting for them).

The book handled the LAPD right. I knew some LAPD and LA Sheriff's Department guys. This book reads like stories they would tell--especially the stories about crummy cops who were promoted because they knew where to plant their lips and the secondary story line about the female detective who accumulated about as much respect as Rodney Dangerfield's stand-up routine.

And one of the main characters, Joe Pike, reminds me so much of an FBI agent I once met. I was only a peripheral witness in a fraud case, but when Crais describes those cold blue eyes and that humorless expression, I see that FBI agent in my mind's eye--time traveling right back, coincidentally enough, to Los Angeles. And when the main protagonist and narrator, Elvis Cole, takes a drive across familiar roads to clear his head and proclaims that he loves L.A., it reminded me of some special drives I had taken in some of those same areas just to get away from some bad situations and clear my head.

The mystery itself was handled very well. One finds oneself truly debating whether this perpetrator is merely a serial killer or has a design. I was several chapters into the book before I made up my mind on that one, even though I was pretty sure early on. I like it when an author makes me doubt my original assumptions.

J.P. says

The best novel by Robert Crais that I've read so far. We get background on the stone face behind the shades otherwise known as Joe Pike plus a finely done story that also features Elvis Cole. Typically well written although you can easily tell twice near the end of the book who is and isn't going to buy the farm. The verbal exchanges between the cops are practically worth the price of the book alone. If you haven't read anything previously by the author this is an excellent place to start. 4 1/2 stars.

Tim says

While this does provide a nice glimpse into Pike's formative years, a rather muddled, long, drawn-out ending

fails to enhance this story, almost to the point of depression. 6 of 10 stars

Wendy says

Loved this 8th book of his Elvis Cole series! My favourite of the series so far!

Gerard says

Robert Crais gets you with his terse writing and his humane characters. Crime fiction at its soulful best.

Kemper says

What's this? Joe Pike has a personal history? And emotions? I was thinking he was just another Bad Ass Friend of the lead in a crime novel. Is this even allowed?

Elvis Cole gets a call from Joe asking for help. Elvis is shocked when he finds wealthy Frank Garcia treating Joe like a son and begging him to find his missing daughter Karen. Even more shocking, Joe used to date Karen and admits to Elvis that he broke her heart. The two detectives start looking, but the LAPD quickly shows up to break the news that Karen was murdered.

Frank uses all his money and political juice to get Elvis and Joe into the police investigation so they can make sure the cops are doing everything possible, but the lead detective is an old enemy of Joe's. Things quickly get messy.

This another high quality story about Elvis and Joe, and Crais gets personal this time out. Through flashbacks we learn a lot about Joe's background including his ugly childhood, why he had to leave the LAPD and why the cops still hate him years later. It adds a lot of welcome depth to a character who could sometimes seem on the cartoonish side.

Once again, the only piece I was left cold on was Elvis's relationship with his girlfriend Lucy. I'm not even sure why I don't like her. Crais does a nice job of building up a believable reason for tension and conflict between the two. It's a dilemma where you can see both sides so I should have felt torn by it, but I was just left hoping that Elvis will finally dump her for good.

Carol. says

I can't stop reading Crais.

In this one, our hero Elvis Cole is pulled into a case by long-time partner, Joe Pike. Despite seven earlier books, this is the first story that has Pike initiating an investigation. A very influential and wealthy father of an ex-girlfriend wants Joe to find her after she's gone missing. Elvis, much to his dismay, is pulled away

from helping Lucy settle into her new L.A. apartment in order to help his closest friend.

"The Santa Anas continued to pick up as we drove north to the second Jungle Juice. Palm trees, tall and vulnerable like the necks of giant dinosaurs, took the worse of it. The wind stripped the dead fronds that bunched beneath the crowns and tossed them into streets and yards and onto cars."

Out of all the books I've read so far, this one most follows a traditional mystery format. Shortly after the woman goes missing, she's found dead. For a number of reasons, it becomes Joe and Elvis' primary mission to identify and capture her killer. The investigation takes a number of turns, a couple of which were entirely unpredictable. After decades of mystery books, I always enjoy it when a book manages to realistically surprise me, or at the very least, raise the eyebrows. Of course, as the story progresses, aspects become less plausible. I had trouble believing the character of the murderer, when they became known, and found the combination of cunning and reckless crazy implausible. As it was all in way of a positive outcome, I'm forgiving.

"We asked the people at the flower shop if they had seen anything, but they hadn't. We asked every shopkeeper in the strip mall and most of the employees, but they all said no. I hoped they had seen something to indicate that Karen was safe, but deep down, where your blood runs cold, I knew they hadn't."

Character development is solid, with the bulk of it fleshing out Joe and his history. I found myself appreciated the background, as most of the observations Elvis makes about his best friend tend to be consistent (why, why must he always describe the tattoos and the sunglasses?) and underwhelming. In fact, I'm not sure how much of the Joe backstory is actually known by Elvis. Regardless, it added a lot to the story, and I'm sure future books, even if the general psychology of the individual (as Poirot likes to say) was unsurprising. But I appreciate congruence, that the back-story fits the man we've come to barely know. Elvis' characteristic moments of humor that continue to provide lighter moments, as does the surly attitude of Elvis' cat. I don't know if I can say I enjoyed the direction Elvis' and Lucy's relationship took, but it felt largely organic, reminding me of their first encounters in Voodoo River.

Overall, an enjoyable, diverting read. Took me right out of this rainy fall day to the hot, smoky atmosphere of L.A. Bravo. Thankfully, Crais has already written a few encores.

Joyce says

An older Crais that I missed somewhere along the line. It was great reading and actually gave the reader some so Joe Pike's background. The plot is well constructed and fascinating. Cole and Pike are as noir as one could hope. The LA cops (Robbery/Homicide) are as difficult and less than likable as one would expect. Cole and Pike do solve the case, but how engrossing the process is!

Greg says

According to a blurb, Robert Crais is the descendant of Ross MacDonald, who is the literary heir to James Cain, who is the direct inheritor of Raymond Chandler's crown. People who write reviews professionally love saying shit like that, and as in most cases they are wrong. James Ellroy is *the* heir to Chandler's position.

Everyone else is just writing some genre fiction, like Chandler Ellroy is creating art of the the dirt and shit that make up Los Angeles. I'd agree that these other guys maybe are the heirs to Dashiell Hammett, a fine writer but not someone who really makes books fucking sing.

Maybe I shouldn't have started with the 8th book in the series. Maybe I should demand that whomever left this book for free at B&N five years ago have also left the first seven books. I don't know if it would have made much of a difference though.

The plot was four star worthy. I was engaged in what was going on. If only the characters didn't have to speak. If only the characters could be a little less cookie-cutter in their good and bad qualities.

The book was entertaining though, and if I find other books by Crais really cheap I might buy them for a quick roll in the literary hay, but I won't be planning on calling back the next day. But I don't think the book will mind being treated that way.

Dan Schwent says

A woman Joe Pike used to be involved with is murdered and her father hires Elvis Cole and Joe Pike the find the killer. Things take a dark turn when it turns out the woman was murdered by a serial killer and that serial killer appears to be... Joe Pike?

As I've mentioned in pretty much ever review I've done for an Elvis Cole book so far, I thought he was a Spenser ripoff for the first book or two. This one leaves my initial impression in the dust like a drag racer trying to set a world land speed record on the salt flats. For me, this was the pinnacle of the series so far.

It started off ordinary enough but soon tore the doors off. The mysterious Joe Pike's past was explored, revealing much without killing all the mystery. Elvis's relationship with Lucy is strained near the breaking point so soon after she turned her life upside down to be with Elvis in LA. Elvis is forced to make some difficult decisions on his friend's behalf. Great stuff.

The new supporting characters were interesting. Krantz, with his ties to Joe Pike's past, made him one of the most interesting, even though he's a huge tool. I also really dug Samantha Dolan.

Crais had me going a couple times on this one. I had no idea who the killer was until he was revealed and even though I knew logically the killer wasn't Pike, I questioned myself a few times. For the first time in the series, I found Elvis and Lucy's relationship believable, maybe because it was coming apart. Joe and Elvis's relationship is still far more believable, as was Elvis' despair in the last thirty or so pages of the book, wondering if Pike was alive and if Lucy was still his.

That's about all I can say without revealing too much. L.A. Requiem is the best book yet in the Elvis Cole series. If you like the series up to this point, you'll love this one.
