



The Metaphysical Detective

Kirsten Weiss

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When Riga Hayworth finds her new client, Helen Baro, dead, she smells a set up of metaphysical proportions. Now, to find a killer, Riga must travel from San Francisco to the underworld – and make it back alive...

Helen believes her husband is trying to kill her. One problem: Helen's husband died in a car crash last year. Riga isn't sure what to think. Is Helen mad? Is someone else trying to harm the woman? Or is this really a case of attempted murder from beyond the grave? But then Helen is found dead, leaving a strange haiku and tarot for a clue, and Riga is hurled into an investigation that threatens the detective and those she loves.

A noir paranormal mystery based in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Metaphysical Detective explores the power of the archetypes through the double lens of tarot and Greek mythology.

The Metaphysical Detective Details

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From Reader Review The Metaphysical Detective for online ebook

Dana says

4.5 stars

I bought this book and its sequel at Orinda Books after hearing the author read at a book event last weekend. I finished this book in a day and a half, carrying it with me around the halls at work, on my lunch walk, to the bathroom... well, you get the idea. Strong, well-rounded characters; several unique story hooks; unexpected twists and turns; a couple of really creepy scenes (I'd tell you more, but I hate spoilers. Just look for the scenes at the Billiard Room and Riga's neighbor's apartment); and some very evocative descriptions of San Francisco made The Metaphysical Detective a delight to read. The author feeds out information on the heroine's background in small, tantalizing doses and avoids info-dumps.

Two reasons this is 4.5 instead of 5 stars:

1. There were a couple of places where the transitions were a bit abrupt for me and I felt cheated of details. Gimme more! There was one particular villain who I wanted to see at the end rather than just hear about his/her fate.
2. I figure the second book is going to be even better and wanted to hold out that extra half star for it!

A very well-crafted mystery, especially enjoyable for those who enjoy a touch of the paranormal!

Karen says

I somehow managed to read the fourth book in this series and liked it so much that I decided to go back to the beginning and see how it got to where it was. I definitely liked the characters a lot or else I would not have bothered. Well , I am not liking the characters so much right now and am actually a little bored with the way things are going in this book. I am willing to give it a go because I know that things do get better as the series continues. Right now the characters are dull and their surroundings are dull and one dimensional.

Riga's new client, Helen Baro, says that her husband is trying to kill her. The thing about that is, her husband has been dead for the past year. Hence the need for a metaphysical detective rather than a conventional one. When Helen is found dead there is a haiku and tarot left behind as a clue as to what happened. Riga finds herself in an investigation that threatens not only her but those she loves as well.

Riga kind of annoyed me because she is so bland and the plot does not seem to be going anywhere. Riga is a strange detective/witch who is lost when it actually comes to the supernatural it seems, though maybe her back story will give more. There is a lot more than the original plot would lead you to believe but it is not all that exciting either. But as I said the books get better as time and characters evolve. So I would say to give it a look and decide for yourself. Lukewarm recommendation.

Tiger Gray says

I am giving this book two stars because I loved it so much.

Okay, I know that sounds weird. I loved the IDEA of this book. But that made the let down hurt that much more.

The opening chapters had me hooked. I thought it was going to be a Harry Dresden type book, only with a female lead and done in a much more understated fashion. I like understated. In fact one of my problems with the Dresden books is that EVERYTHING is weird and magical. Not even Harry's pets are just pets. So it was a relief to see that Riga just had some magic and a gargoyle companion.

The mystery was sufficiently gripping. The scene where Riga sees the ghost of one of the murdered people was truly scary. The little spinning cottage she visits at one point was also very nicely rendered, and it added depth and color to the narrative.

Unfortunately right about there, this book went off the rails and became, frankly, a hot mess. A lot of this book read like stereotyped cut outs being propped up and jerkily moved about as needed. For example, the only two Asian characters (who are bit players in the first place) are distinguished only as Wise Karate Master and Girl With Exoticized Black Hair. Even their names are quite common, and we only see them once or twice. The fact that Wise Master makes bad tea is not enough stereotype nose thumbing to be successful. The only black person I can recall has dreadlocks and is a owns a curio shop style shaman. There are a couple of disabled people, too, though again they're bit players and we don't even know what their problems actually are. However, I suspect that Riga is a trans woman and while that isn't confirmed in this book, if it's true in later volumes I will jump for joy. I want to read about other trans people and unless it's a horrifically bad portrayal I'll hand out a star for that alone.

The biggest stereotype of them all has to be the obligatory love interest, Donovan. Besuited Rich Guy With Ornamental Females sweeps in to the story and Riga never really questions it, even though the people at the bar insist she's been coming here with Mr. Suit for years, when clearly she has no memory of any such thing. It was like every chapter reset the story. Some of the chapter breaks were also very awkward, so characters would leave in what felt like the middle of a conversation, with no warning. Mr. Suit does what most men of his ilk do best, in that he disrupts the perfectly serviceable mystery the author has established thus far so Riga can talk about his pretty eyes and coo over his private jet. I actually love romance but it can't take precedence over the plot, for me, and I felt that it did here. However, I do give the author kudos for not turning these situations in to date rape, since they keep drinking bespelled wine and blacking out together. I was bracing for the usual date rape is love chestnut but thankfully it never appeared.

The last third of the book takes a very strange turn, to the point where I felt like the ending didn't fit with the beginning at all. The subtlety I enjoyed so in the opening chapters didn't so much disappear as it exploded. We went from hauntings with the PNW as a backdrop to cavorting about Olympus with gods and goddesses solving murders.

I have to mention that at least I liked the concept of "horsing" as it is sometimes called in the pagan community. This is when a given deity decides to use you as a host, a method for inserting themselves in to the human world. It was nice to see that idea, since we discover that all the major players are being ridden by gods and goddesses.

The problem is, I don't think it was sufficiently hinted at, and I don't think the extremely literal take on the whole thing did this novel any favors. For example, I see nothing connecting Pen, Riga's niece, and Persephone the goddess. I also personally shy away from books where massive theological questions end up having such a neat answer. I think the author could have played with the being ridden by gods thing without actually introducing us to the gods. Furthermore, it's a bit weird that a human investigator ties up a mystery that deities haven't been able to figure out.

That's another thing. Riga is an investigator, but she's terrible at it and I don't think it's on purpose. There are two separate moments where she's questioning people in groups. One of the oldest techniques in the book is to separate everyone and question them one on one, because group dynamics almost always work against the investigator, not for.

I don't buy in to her and Donovan as a romance even after they aren't being ridden anymore. This book needed another edit or two to correct flow and to make me believe in the connections between the characters.

However, I stayed up all night to finish it. I can't say that about many books. It actually did make me feel appropriate tension and interest, mostly. I will probably read the next one. But it's too tone deaf and jarring for three stars.

So, I Read This Book Today says

I have a confession - I picked up "The Shamanic Detective" The Shamanic Detective (A Riga Hayworth Paranormal Mystery Novel) from my daily e-mail from Freebooksy.com (if you don't get the e-mail, you should. I have already found some great freebies from them!) After reading a few pages, I decided that, rather than starting with book three, I would go back and check out book one, "The Metaphysical Detective (A Riga Hayworth Paranormal Mystery Novel) first. I downloaded the free sample, then, totally caught up in the story already, purchased the book and settled in to read.

One of the best things about Freebooksy (and the worst) is that you might get access to a freebie that is the first of a series, or you might get the second or third. In this case, the third was offered, pricking my interest enough that I am now already well into book two!

Riga's story is unique, clever and well plotted. Ms. Weiss did a bang up job of researching the history and mythology of the Olympians, then blended in a tight story line based upon multiverse theory, magic and shamanism in a way that was unique as compared to other UF stories I have recently enjoyed. It has been a long time since I have read Greek and Roman mythology, and this book brought back much of what I truly enjoyed about the old stories.

The main characters, Riga, Donovan, Penn and Brigitte are well defined and very interesting in their development. Additional human/magical creatures are interesting, with their own stories and tight dialog. The magical and Olympian characters, archetypes all, are beautifully written, falling gracefully within their personal mythologies. The ghost, Vinnie, was a hoot, but Brigitte is my favorite - I love gargoyles!

The mysteries flowing through the book are surprisingly well developed. The stories are both creative and not easy to figure out, which is a true pleasure. The ending of the mystery on Olympus flowed in true Agatha Christie style (which Ms. Weiss gives full credit for) and I absolutely loved it.

Strong writing, strong characters, sweet plot twists and great research. There does need to be some editing done, though.

Lori says

I must say that I enjoyed The Alchemical Detective much better. While Kirsten Weiss takes you on another thrill ride to get to the bottom of a murder through a variety of means it gets really confusing when she takes you through saw much unneeded Greek Mythology that takes you away from the main story. While her love "Donovan" and her niece "Pen" are also present in this story... they take somewhat of a back seat to this novel.

Still looking forward to the rest of this series along with so many of her other novels as she is a wonderful writer!

Sharon says

This book is the first in a series featuring metaphysical detective Riga Hayworth, a San Franciscan whose ability to investigate magical crime is beginning to manifest.

She's being pursued by handsome Donovan Mosse, a casino owner with secrets of his own, and some mysterious soul who is leaving Valentines on the doorstep of her apartment -- in a building with a doorman.

There are a good many twists and turns here, some of which will leave you reaching for a reference on Greek mythology but are so well entwined in the tale that you won't mind.

A good, fun read.

N.D. says

This is the first time I've read a book by Kirsten Weiss, but it won't be my last. This is a very well-written paranormal mystery novel. Weiss has created an interesting world steeped in Greek archetypal mythology, which she uses to weave an engaging plot. I enjoyed the characters and their interactions with each other. Yet there is so much more to them than presented in book one of the series. It should be fun finding out what Weiss has in store for Riga, Donovan, and Pen. There was one part, without giving spoilers away, where I thought the "how it happened" was a little too pedestrian for this type of book and all that the author presented. I'm interested enough in the characters to see where this series will go.

mandy says

~Disclaimer~

An electronic copy was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review

A few days ago I was over at a friend's house, where we spent the afternoon watching Ally McBeal DVDs. There was a particular scene where Ling and Nelle were conversing -- the exact topic of is not relevant -- but it clung to me because it expresses exactly how I felt while reading this book.

N: Last Saturday, I ran out in the morning to get some coffee. I bumped into somebody from my old firm. He didn't recognize me at first without my make up. Four years; I worked three offices away, he didn't recognize me.

L: So?

N: So, there are people who've never seen me without make up.

L: when I hear you talk this way Nelle, it makes me wonder; is there a point?

Much of *The Metaphysical Detective*, first in the Riga Hayworth paranormal mystery series, will make you question the same thing. Scenes and characters are introduced to us out of the blue -- fun scenes and intriguing characters, mind you -- but you're always wondering. Is there a point?

But if you just wait for it, just like ambitious, intelligent Nelle, this novel manages to tie everything up; and all these seemingly random mixture of people and events merge into a single coherent arc.

In my case, this worked as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, I *love* the sense of satisfaction upon reading disjointed bits and pieces and finally piecing them together into a complete set.

Riga goes about her days like any detective -- like any *woman* -- would. She gets a case, she does some sleuthing, she goes and has a few drinks nothing that you wouldn't expect in an average lady's day-to-day life. Well, except for the fact she has a special gift, and has a really awesome gargoyle friend. She solves a haunting, meets a mysterious man, gets entangled in some Sinister Business; all this while being a great aunt who looks out for her niece and does some major ass-kicking in the process.

One of the brightest point of this book was Riga herself. I really don't want to, but I can't help but compare *The Metaphysical Detective* to the first novel in *Vampire Academy*. Although both books are immensely different, the protagonists show a lot of similarities. They are both *physically* kick-ass, independent women (or teen, in the case of the latter book). They are both attractive, intelligent, and have some sort of ward who they are immensely attached to and would do anything to protect.

Of course she's named after her

The only difference is I *liked* Riga. I love awesome characters -- who are aware of their awesomeness to some extent -- and, the best part, who do not constantly have to *tell us readers* of how awesome they are. Riga's actions spoke loudly for themselves, and she is definitely the sort of female character I could get behind. Her relationship with other female characters were also very satisfying; particularly with Brigitte the Gargoyle.

Although I did not fully comprehend how Riga could so easily trust the mysterious Donovan, or at least not take a more hostile position towards him considering all the oddities that seem to appear in his wake, I did

come to tolerate, if not like him as a character. I'm thankful though that **romantic seeds were planted in this first book, perhaps with room to grow** as the series progresses, rather than having an instantaneous love affair thrown out at us here and now, distracting readers from the actual meat of the story.

The story itself seemed at first random and disjointed, but I didn't mind. Amidst Riga's main investigation were hauntings and other oddities that broke the rules of the "metaphysical world". On the downside, **the way the plot unraveled just derailed us off the main focus of the book**, which I thought was a murder investigation. More and more questions piled on with few to no answers -- and even when they *were* answered, it came out as a complete shock to me.

If you've read *The White Forest* by **Adam McOmber**, you'll notice how the novel follows a similar pattern. For sure it is a paranormal mystery, and you'd expect paranormal themes to pop up as you read. But while the first half of the novel was conventional and innocuous enough, towards the end **the twist just took us to a completely unpremeditated direction**. I cannot blame lack of foreshadowing, since if you look closely and read between the lines, you'll see that the mythology was introduced early and consistently enough that it should not have been ruled out.

I suppose I was just not prepared for it to take that road, and I also blame my stubborn refusal of reading any reviews or detailed book synopses prior to reading -- which would have given me a heads up.

The murder-mystery aspect of the book is what really caught me, and combined with **awesome characters and some truly spine-tingling scenes**, for well over half the novel this was a solid four-star read for me. Unfortunately this unexpected twist was largely what bothered me and prevented me from giving *The Metaphysical Detective* a higher rating, and I was torn between giving this a three- or four out of five. On the positive, I truly appreciated Riga as a character and would definitely not mind reading about any future (mis?)adventures she gets herself wrapped into.

Secondary characters were also very promising -- Pen and Brigitte in particular I found likeable, and being the first novel in a series, it was a pity they were not given more depth; but I do hope to see more of them in future books.

You can also find reviews at my blog

Katy says

Book Info: Genre: Paranormal mystery

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: those who like mysteries with a bit of paranormal

Trigger Warnings: murder, assault

My Thoughts: I can't even remember how it was I heard of this series, but I had been collecting the books before I was ever contacted by the author to review the latest one. When I mentioned I was still missing the first as well, she was kind enough to send that along, too. So, a big thanks to Kirsten Weiss for letting me read this whole series in one swell foop! It's something I've been looking forward to for a good, long while.

Overall I really liked the story. I was especially amused by Riga's Agatha Christie impression when

presenting the denouement to the Archetypes. I was, however, annoyed with the perpetuation of one of the biggest misrepresentations of Tarot there is out there, and that is that the Death card literally represents Death. Anyone who has seriously studied Tarot knows that Death represents change, often abrupt, sometimes difficult (but not as traumatic as that of the Tower), but only change. Depending on the other cards and the placement in the reading, it can also mean rejuvenation. It definitely does not mean literal death.

But that's a minor gripe. Overall I enjoyed the story, and I really liked most of the characters. I thought Pen was a little immature for being 17; I certainly don't remember being that disrespectful toward relatives (other than my parents) at that age. If Pen were my niece and she'd talked to me that way at that age, she'd probably end up with a cuff to the ear for her troubles.

Nonetheless, if you like mysteries with a touch of the paranormal (and gargoyles—let's not forget Bridgett, because she's awesome), then you'll like this book. I'm very much looking forward to reading the rest of this series.

Series Information: Riga Hayworth Paranormal Mysteries

Book 1: *The Metaphysical Detective*, received from author for review

Book 2: *The Alchemical Detective*, picked up on Amazon during KDP promotion

Book 3: *The Shamanic Detective*, picked up on Amazon during KDP promotion

Book 4: *The Infernal Detective*, received from author for review

Disclosure: I received a free copy from the author in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

Synopsis: When Riga Hayworth finds her new client, Helen Baro, dead, she smells a set up of metaphysical proportions. Now, to find a killer, Riga must travel from San Francisco to the underworld – and make it back alive...

Helen believes her husband is trying to kill her. One problem: Helen's husband died in a car crash last year. Riga isn't sure what to think. Is Helen mad? Is someone else trying to harm the woman? Or is this really a case of attempted murder from beyond the grave? But then Helen is found dead, leaving a strange haiku and tarot for a clue, and Riga is hurled into an investigation that threatens the detective and those she loves.

A noir paranormal mystery based in the San Francisco Bay Area, *the Metaphysical Detective* explores the power of the archetypes through the double lens of tarot and Greek mythology.

Pamela Tracy says

I think this was the one I read out of order, not realizing that I'd read number two first and had to go back to see how Donovan and Rega met.

This was a strong mystery. I liked the cast of characters from ghosts to relatives.

I was a little 'meh' on the Greek gods and underworld, but then I've read all the Rick Riordan books so couldn't separate one from the other.

Vinnie really came to life "hah".

Satisfying ending.

Laura Thomas says

I have already read Book Four and then Book Five in this series and had no difficulty getting into them. The author reintroduces you to the characters and past invents with no slowing down the new story.

I couldn't wait to get to this first book so I could meet Riga as if for the first time.

What a rush this was. Riga took on a client who claimed her dead husband was trying to kill her. Voila, the client ended up dead and powerful magic was afoot.

The author lends Greek mythology and the power of Tarot to this mystery, keeping it interesting and driving the story forward.

As much as I was curious about who killed who, how, and why, I was also curious about an odd incident Riga had. She goes to the usual pub for some wine and encounters a sexy, enigmatic man who claims they know each other very well. Riga blows him off as a nutcase as she has no friends.

What tweaked my radar was a comment the bar owner, Takako, said. After Riga told her the handsome stranger was no friend of hers, Takako uttered, "But you two have been coming here together for years."

With Riga's powers acting wiggy, I wondered what in the world was going on and had a fantastic time finding out.

Meeting characters I already knew as if for the first time endeared them to me even more. I loved this book and can't wait to read the next two!

I recommend this to everyone who likes a mystery in a mystery, lots of magical elements and strong writing with a mixed bag of characters, human and otherwise.

I received this book for my honest review.

Michelle English says

I really enjoyed reading this book, I was not sure what I would get when I started, but it kept me engaged the whole way through and made it very hard to put down. I am a very busy person with little extra time these days but I made the time to read this. The Characters are well rounded and believable and the storyline keeps you guessing and wanting more. I immediately ordered the next two books in the series.

Ellen White says

Helen is sure her husband is trying to kill her, can't go to the police...why, he is dead. In describing him, he was brilliant, dashing, for fun "magic".

Riga had an extended house sitting gig for another two hundred twenty years, atop Nob Hill. Keeping her gin behind the bar, which is below her office. Gives one a feel for the unique characters, an unusual plot. The death could have just meant changed, not a literal death. I thought overall was amusing, with a touch of magic and murder, to make an enjoyable story. First I have read by author, and will look for more.

Alexandra G. says

Jesus Christ that was boring.....

? Gramy ? says

I am usually fond of metaphysical fantasy. So, I believe this book had the potential to involve so much more interesting experiences. Instead, it bounced from one subject or world to another without introducing a change in topic, which for me was extremely confusing.

The actual investigating was minimal, next to the strange escapades the detective found herself floating through unintentionally, not even able to remember large amounts of time spent in the presence of a man she just met and didn't really know anything about.

There was nothing that captures the reader's attention for any length of time before, POOF! . . . change in subject matter, which was not always interesting. Instead, it was dull, disturbing, and boring!

There are many more prospects for me to check out that will possibly captivate and entertain me in my fantasy world.
