

Butcher of Dreams

Kay Williams and Eileen Wyman

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Reviewed by Olivera Baumgartner-Jackson for Reader Views (12/07)

I've always loved mysteries. If I had to read just one genre for the rest of the days, I believe my choice would be the immensely entertaining field of mystery and suspense. I like the short, cozy British ones, adore the old classics and fall easily under the spell of the more contemporary ones. A lot of the new ones, though, fall short in the "thrill factor" area – they tend to be unnecessarily graphic in their shocking descriptions, yet they do not make me truly afraid and even less truly perplexed.

Kay Williams' and Eileen Wyman's "Butcher of Dreams," aptly subtitled "A Suspense Novel about the Theater," was one of the really thrilling mysteries. No matter how much I tried to guess who the villain was, the authors managed to sidetrack and blindside me again and again. While I correctly guessed one of the subplots, the main mystery remained so until the chilling end of the book.

Lee Fairchild, a talented actress, is managing a rather fledgling theater in NYC's Hell's Kitchen. She is a strong, courageous and smart woman, yet weakened by the recent death of her husband and a crumbling relationship with her only child, Heather. The theater has its own share of problems, starting from the motley crew on its payroll and continuing to its not-so-desirable location, lack of future funding and strange happenings in the area. When a dead vagrant is found in the theatre, his body mutilated in a ritual-looking manner, Lee enters a bizarre world of unexplainable events, all of which threaten the further operations of the theater as well as the lives of crew and cast. Will Lee manage to solve the mystery – or will she become the next victim?

"Butcher of Dreams" by Kay Williams and Eileen Wyman delivered on all the fronts that I consider important for a good mystery book. The writing was tight and precise. The characters were amazingly detailed and believable, with their back-stories intricately weaving in and out of the main story line. None of them were totally good or totally bad, which made them all the more human and the reading more pleasurable. The mystery remained mysterious to the very end of the book. And the book was scary enough that I did not want to read it when I was alone in the house.

Utterly enjoyable, "Butcher of Dreams" is a book I would wholeheartedly recommend to any lover of well-written mysteries. If that person happens to like the theater and NYC, they will enjoy it even more. Kay Williams and Eileen Wyman have made my list of authors to watch in the future and I am eagerly awaiting their next book.