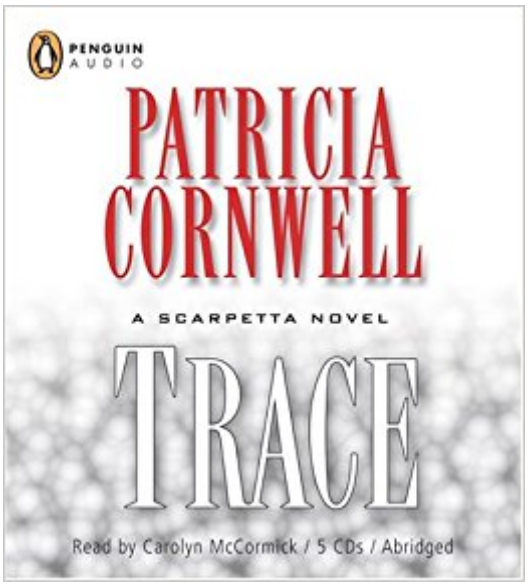
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Trace (A Scarpetta Novel)



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Synopsis

Since Postmortem garnered critical acclaim and a record-breaking five awards for a first crime novel, the Scarpetta novels have often been imitated, but never bettered. Against her own judgement and the advice of Benton Wesley and her niece, Lucy, Scarpetta agrees to return to Virginia as a consultant pathologist on a case involving the death of a fourteen-year-old girl. Accompanied by Pete Marino she finds the once familiar territory of her morgue and her department much changed, and the new Chief Medical Examiner treats her with disdain despite the obvious fact that he is in desperate need of her expertise. But professional as ever, she re-examines the evidence and proves the girl was murdered. She also finds trace evidence which matches that found on an accident victim and at the scene where one of Lucy's operatives was attacked. It is not only a forensic puzzle, but opens up the probability that someone is after those closest to Scarpetta. Visit the author's website at www.patriciacornwell.com --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Cornwell's latest after the disappointing Blow Fly has indomitable medical examiner Kay Scarpetta returning to her office in Richmond five years after being fired. This homecoming will cheer fans: not only does the move put Scarpetta on her own turf, it reinvigorates Cornwell's storytelling, restoring some of the spunk lately lacking in her lead character. Dr. Joel Marcus, Scarpetta's replacement as Virginia's chief medical examiner, has summoned her back to help him puzzle through the

mysterious death of a 14-year-old girl. Marcus is generally loathed: he's petty, inept, has a secret garbage-truck phobia and harbors an intense hatred for Scarpetta. Meanwhile, Scarpetta's niece Lucy, owner of a fabulously successful private-eye firm, has her own troubles trying to sort out who attempted to kill her friend Henri (short for Henrietta), who's now under psychiatric treatment by Scarpetta's lover in Aspen, Benton Wesley. Lurking in the background is Edgar Allan Pogue, a nutcase who has a thing for dead bodies and a grudge against Scarpetta. It's her job, as always, to connect all the puzzling forensic dots and identify the killer in time to save herself and her loved ones. She does this, mostly, but leaves the reader to puzzle out a few salient points on his or her own. Cumbersome backstory slows the action, but in general the old Scarpetta comes through, at least in the main, and this will be enough to reassure her many fans and carry them over until her next appearance. BOMC, Literary Guild, Mystery Guild and Doubleday Book Club main selection. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
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Against advice from her niece Lucy, Kay Scarpetta answers a request to return to the Richmond medical examiner's office, the same office from which she was fired, to help with the sensitive case of a dead teen. When she and Pete Marino arrive, they find the new medical examiner to be a vituperative, uncooperative martinet and the office that Kay ran so efficiently in chaos. Two murders, oddly linked, demand their attention. In the meantime, Lucy, still unsettled despite her success with the Last Precinct investigative agency, is having personal problems (there's been an attack on her housemate), which strangely enough find her treading the same path as her aunt Kay. Traces of the smart, dynamic, yet vulnerable Scarpetta of the early novels are in evidence here, and Cornwell has better control of her plot and characters than in her last few efforts, faltering only occasionally when psychobabble weighs things down. The mystery is intriguing, there's plenty of forensic detail, and the ending, though perhaps too abrupt, opens the way for Scarpetta and her associates to proceed in any direction that calls to them. Stephanie ZvirinCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

*A compelling thriller by author Patricia Cornwall, featuring one of her infamous charachters, Dr. Kay Scarpetta!!.....Arriving in Richmond, Virginia, after five long years former Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Kay Scarpetta still felt hurt and shunned by a city she once loved and respected only to have them turn their backs on her. Relocating to South Florida five years later, Kay is more than surprised when she receives a phone call from her successor requesting her help to consult on a bazaar

murder case involving the death of a fourteen-year old girl. Deciding to freelance by offering any assistance she can give, Kay is not only met with a cold resistance by the newly-appointed Chie, she found herself investigating another murder with the same exact similarities including the same type of trace evidence in which was discovered with the fourteen-year old, Gilly Paulson. Needing the help from an old friend, Kay enlists the help from former Capt. Pete Marino, and together they both tried to unravel each murder by the trace evidence leading them both with horrifying results. Refusing to believe that the medical examiner's office in Richmond truly wanted or needed Kay's expert opinion on each murder, former F.B.I.special agent Benton Wesley, was totally convinced that Kay was being set up by her jealous and arrogant successor to make her appear more incompetant and foolish in the public's eye, and if his life depended on it, he would no doubt prove it to her. As Kay and Marino continued their investiagation they soon discovered that their two cases they were currently working on had a strong and distinct connection to Kay's niece Lucy, and possibly Benton too but when they dig even deeper in each homicide, Kay and Marino ended up speechless when they learn that the killer had a whole different motive altogether. As they probe even deeper, Kay and Marino are not only stunned by their discovery and the killer's true target but nothing could prepare them both when they learn the shocking truth and the powerful link between Richmond and South Florida, knocking them both flat on their backs!....a great thriller!..thank you..

A few years ago I gave up on Patricia Cornwell after her star, Scarpetta, devolved into a self-absborbed, petulant, adolescent poseur, noted more for her vitriol than her virtue. Then came the promising reviews of this latest effort that hinted at a return to the kind of work we had once expected of Ms. Cornwell. And so I bought "Trace", approaching it with eager anticipation, but was unfortunately delivered little more than disappointment. I found the character development to be non-existent and the plot to be so rag-tag, disconnected and sluggishly presented that I began to wonder what kind of writer could possibly offer this up as a novel and expect anyone to take it seriously. The lengthy (and gratuitous) episode involving Marino's sexual humiliation at the hands of a sick, grieving mother added nothing to the story or to my respect for Ms. Cornwell as a writer. Ditto the character, Henri - another pathetic loser to dislike. What exactly was the once-burnt-to-a-crisp-but-now-resurrected Benton Wesley supposed to accomplish with her? And did we really care? "Filler", I thought. Sort of like when you make crab cakes. But then, at least, you usually get a little seasoning and spice, too. Not so here. Apparently, Ms. Cornwell has become so jaded and out of touch with life that she feels that tossing around descriptions of the McMansions found all over South Florida (and the flashy cars that go with them) makes for entertaining reading.

While Scarpetta did return briefly to Richmond in this story, "Trace" unfortunately proves true the old adage: "You can’t go home again."

The plot of every one of these stories has become Kay, Benton, Lucy and/or Pete being threatened, injured, etc., etc.Has long since stopped being about solving or preventing a murder.Just can’t allow her characters to have any positive experiences--I guess she doesn’t have many herself and therefore doesn’t know how to write them.I don’t like "romance" books where heroines get carried off by a muscular hunk; but surely there must be some middle ground between that and books that make me ask why I’m bothering to get out of bed in the morning because life is so dark.

It was better than Blow Fly but not by much. It ended abruptly and felt incomplete.She has definitely written better

Patricia Cornwell does it again. Love the Scarpetta series. All of the characters are again larger than life. Keep ’em coming.

Dull and unimaginative. The Henri character lacked depth and she totally sucked. The story felt disjointed. The Pogue character monologues were endless and painful.Where is Cromwells editor? Does she have honest friends? Her books used to be so amazing; the plots were excellent and the writing was superb.

Great read.

Cromwell has apparently generated several plots and melded them rather haphazardly into a single book. It’s unfortunately turned into a rather confused wrangle, unworthy of so talented an author. Her writing skills have not diminished; she is still capable of painting perfectly visualized verbal pictures and her descriptions of background occurrences and settings are untarnished. However her leaping from one plot to another can be confusing and more than a bit disconcerting, yet it would be forgivable if more than one of them were resolved. Lamentably, the tide of the entire book is morbid, positive energy is absent. At times, it’s so depressing that one wonders if the mood wouldn’t fit nicely into one of the more desolate TV soap operas.Cromwell’s prose is wonderful - at times, downright poetic - but the mood in her recent books has become more and more saturnine, reaching a true nadir in TRACE. Until now, I have always enjoyed reading her books. Not this one.I

would not recommend it unless you feel like wallowing in gloom and depression.

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