



Die with Me

Elena Forbes

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A new detective series in the style of 'Prime Suspect' from a great new talent from the UK. A series of deaths -- apparent suicides -- of vulnerable young girls is baffling police in London: the bodies are found in the naves of churches after having fallen from a great height. Thanks to a badly-handled leak, the press are all clamoring for a serial killer called The Bridegroom, and amidst the maelstrom of conflicting theories from the media, criminal profilers, politically competitive colleagues and the general circus surrounding a major murder enquiry, the chilling deaths mount up... Elena Forbes writes the kind of creepy and atmospheric crime novel that we love, populated by a cast of fresh and engaging characters: Mark Tartaglia, the Italian-Scottish detective whose good looks get him in to all sorts of trouble, and whose single status is a constant challenge for his sociable sister and extended family; his spiky yet emotionally intelligent colleague Sam Donovan; and his old boss Trevor Clarke, who tries to give Mark good advice while lying in a hospital bed . Together they are piecing together evidence that will lead them to the worst kind of serial killer, one for whom the hunt for a victim and the crime squad's hunting of him are both an equally seductive and irresistible game.

Die with Me Details

Date : Published October 1st 2007 by MacAdam/Cage Publishing (first published 2007)

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Author : Elena Forbes

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Sandy says

3.5 stars

A good police procedural with interesting characters. The 2 MC's, Tartaglia & Donovan, make a good team & there's a definite sense that we're being set up for a "will they or won't they" in the near future. Despite spending a lot of time with the killer we are never told much about him or the motivations behind his actions so it was difficult to fully engage with his story. He'd be much creepier if we understood the significance of his little quirks but you'll have no trouble spotting him as soon as he appears on the scene. I also thought the middle could have benefitted from a good editor as there were long passages of no consequence that wouldn't be missed & slowed the pace & intensity of the investigation. Those pages could then have been used for the ending which felt rushed & quickly wrapped up. There was one character that all readers would like to see get the serious ass-kicking he so richly deserved after having to endure his presence for the whole book. It was a major plot line that just disappeared & I ended up feeling robbed as we're just told what happened later in a conversation between the detectives.

Marian says

This Crime Fiction book is a page turner. It is set in London and reminds me of the series "Prime Suspect". Spent my spare minutes reading this book. Recommend it to anyone who is a crime/mystery fan. I had read Elena Forbes 2nd book, Our Lady of Pain, and enjoyed it so much I decided to read her 1st book. Main characters were interesting. No romance (hate that!!), no sex ... "his pulsating..." you get the picture). Just a full of suspense that you will be suprised as "who done it"

Tracy Smyth says

This is the first book that I have read by this author. I really enjoyed it. It was easy to read and the story flowed. I did like the characters.

LJ says

DIE WITH ME (Pol. Proc.-DI Mark Tartaglia-London-Cont) – NR
Forbes, Elena, 1st book
Quercus, 2008, UK Hardcover – ISBN: 1847241565

First Sentence: The tombstone was nearly six feet tall, weathered and mottled with lichen.

DI Mark Tartaglia has a serial killer on his hands. Someone is luring young girls to the galleries of churches and throwing them to their deaths.

This was such a miss for me. Ms. Forbes male protagonist was not convincing and none of the characters had any depth. There was a lot of detail on what the characters were eating and drinking, but little detail on little else.

For a police procedural, it included next to no procedure. I identified the killer way too early but was never given the reason why he killed. There was very little sense of place and dialogue was passable, but just.

But it was the ending of the book that made it a virtual wallbanger for me. I suggest passing this one by.

Marianne says

Die With Me is the first novel by British author, Elena Forbes, and the first book in the Mark Tartaglia series. When an autopsy on the victim of an apparent suicide in a deserted London church raises questions about the death, DI Mark Tartaglia finds himself in charge of a murder investigation. From laborious examination of coroner's records, it becomes clear that there are at least two, and possibly three, earlier victims. Emails, suicide notes, locks of hair, presence of GHB and other factors point to a serial killer.

With Tartaglia's DCI in hospital following an accident, he and DS Sam Donovan are under pressure to produce results, but Tartaglia is infuriated when DCI Carolyn Steele is brought in to head the case. And even more annoyed when she brings in psychologist, Dr Patrick Kennedy as the profiler. Kennedy and Tartaglia have an adverse history on a previous case; Steele is also not as impartial about Kennedy's role as would be wise. As more deaths occur, Tartaglia is also distracted from his work by his previous affair with pathologist, Dr Fiona Blake.

This is an excellent murder mystery that captures the feel of the west London suburbs and introduces a team of realistically flawed members of the Metropolitan Police force. While the astute reader may be able to determine the perpetrator and the source of various red herrings, this is, nonetheless, a page turner that will keep the reader enthralled to its gripping climax. Forbes leaves plenty of scope for further books in the series, and readers who enjoy this one will be pleased to know there are a further three (so far) to be savoured. An excellent debut.

Filip says

That was an interesting read. The plot flows nicely, the riddle itself is good, even though I much prefer more... mundane murders. The characters are quite nice, even though it seems that in this book women are incapable of doing anything else than thinking about relationship drama.

The ending is a bit anticlimatic to be honest, but I can see where the author was going with it. All in all, quite a nice beginning to a new crime series.

Karen says

There's a bit of a clue to the context for Gemma's death on the front cover of *DIE WITH ME* - "You could find your new best friend on the net ... or discover your worst nightmare". Oh dear, another the Internet is all bad story? Well no.

Gemma's death is written off as a suicide when she is first discovered. She seems to have jumped from high up in the church, dying on the floor of the dark church on a dark evening. But postmortem tests show a small amount of alcohol and GHB in her system, and there's the astute observation of Dr Fiona Blake who notices a small lock of Gemma's hair has been cut off. Mind you, if this isn't suicide why is Gemma's stepfather concealing a suicide note, and who was the older man that Gemma was seen kissing on the night she died? Emails on her computer reveal that she does seem to have been drawn into a suicide pact with Tom - who is Tom; where is Tom; and how many other suicide pacts have there been?

DI Mark Tartaglia is convinced there's been others and he sets the team to find out. He's in charge for a short while. DCI Trevor Clarke got a new girlfriend and a mid life crisis in the form of a motorbike at around the same time. He promptly crashed the bike putting himself into a coma, with the distinct possibility of never recovering, or of being a paraplegic. Mind you, Tartaglia's not in charge for long and Carolyn Steele takes over as his boss - although Tartaglia and the team still do most of the work. Just to make Tartaglia's life even more miserable Steele brings in a profiler that he can't stand. This profiler, Kennedy, seems to have a rather close relationship with Steele just to add to Tartaglia's sense of unease. Add to this a sister that's convinced Tartaglia shouldn't be single for too much longer, and his considerably more laid back work colleague - Sam Donovan - and you've got a well drawn cast of characters.

DIE WITH ME does a few things incredibly well (especially as this is a debut book). The characterisations of the main police team are strong - Tartaglia is a complex man, a bit of a loner who is fiercely loyal to DCI Clarke, he's equally willing to work with Sam or to go it alone if circumstances dictate. Sam Donovan is a similar character in some ways - more laid back, but as much a loner as Tartaglia. Throughout the book "Tom" is also somebody the reader gets to know a little. Slowly hints are revealed that give the reader a fair chance of working out which of the possible suspects Tom could actually be.

Fans of the pure investigation style books will probably find the failure to ask the glaringly obvious question of one participant in the investigation frustrating. It's a minor point though in a book that was populated by interesting and engaging characters. *DIE WITH ME* uses an unusual premise and explores that in a sympathetic manner. We also get to meet a new cast of Police characters that have some real potential to grow further as the series continues.

It seems a sequel book is planned, and I'm really looking forward to it's arrival.

Tracyk says

Gave it four stars but for me it was 3.5 at the most. A good police procedural with good characters, but I did not enjoy the serial killer aspect. Not too much graphic violence at all, but I just don't enjoy stories about twisted serial killers.

G. Michaels says

Disappointing Ending. I love mystery novels and this one is well written. It took me a while to get through it because it drags on a bit through the early stages. It is the first novel I have read by this author and so the characters were new to me. The first few pages did their job and drew me in quickly but then it bogged down and trudged along for quite a while. It wasn't until the last third of the story that I truly felt compelled to read on and then, three chapters from the end, it lost me. I thought I had the villain identified and I was right. I had two to choose from. Sadly the author seemed rushed to finish and the ending, for me, fell flat. Three stars. I wanted to give it more but the last three chapters disappointed me.

Trish says

Elena Forbes was a new name to me when I began this first-in-a-series police procedural, though the name Forbes had some resonance. The author managed to create a worthy group of characters that escape being mere copies of their more famous forebears by being younger and more attractive than we usually see among the British and Scottish captains of storied police forces, but just as capable and job-obsessed.

The first chapter and synopsis of this mystery were shortlisted for the CWA John Creasey [New Blood] Debut Dagger in 2005 but forgive me reading public, if I admit I put the book aside after reading that first chapter. But resist this temptation! After the creepy first chapter we are introduced to some successfully realized and interesting characters we can care about: Detective Inspector Tartaglia who doesn't want to get involved with women who are not emotionally available; a female colleague of his, DS Donovan, who is interested in being involved with a man but doesn't want to search for one; a police captain Steele (acting Chief Inspector) who is too attracted to an outside contractor whom she hires for more than one job. Forbes manages to land us in the characters' lives midstream: they share a past and already have a history...we just need to get on board a ship already in motion.

The central conceit is unusual: a serial killer preys on Catholics who wish to take their own lives. To do this, they must overcome their feelings of guilt about it. [I am permitted a snicker of complicity here, as I have overcome my Catholic upbringing.] The killer enjoys their desperation and helps them accomplish their goal even if they should change their minds. The victims are mostly young women, which makes the police look into the cases more closely.

The final scene was also troublesome, but I imagine every first-time mystery writer encounters these difficulties: how to begin and how to end are both equally trying. Overall, Forbes has a strong sense of story and character, and very good potential. I look forward to seeing *Our Lady of Pain* (Quercus, 2008) and *Evil in Return* (Quercus, 2011).

Joanna says

Enjoyed the first in this new to be mystery series. Looking forward to reading the next one.

It's set in London, England and it's a good police/crime mystery with lots of interesting characters and lots of

possible suspects.

Deb says

A British police procedural linking the murders of women to one murderer. The characters are likable and the book is well written. I felt that the ending was a bit rushed but it did wrap up loose ends. The book hints on a perpetrator for a future book.

Deb Jones says

This was a nice debut book for the series of titles with Detective Mark Tartaglia as the protagonist. The crimes to be solved were quite intriguing and original. I'd rate this a solid 3.25 stars.

I found a few of the detectives' actions to be less than believable and the romances involved, for the most part, to be gratuitous.

Still, not a bad read. I will likely follow up and read at least the second installment in this series.

Fictionophile says

The debut novel "Die with me" was a pleasant surprise!

Forbes included all the elements of a mystery/psychological thriller that much more seasoned novelists sometimes have difficulty with.

The protagonist is the broodingly handsome DI Mark Tartaglia who inherits a murder case because of the fact that his mentor/DCI is in the hospital recovering from a serious accident.

A modern police procedural mystery set in West London, the crime involves the apparent suicide of a young girl.

However it soon come to light that the girl was 'assisted' in her death by a man and that this was not the first young girl to meet her end in the same manner! Someone seems to be targeting the most 'lost' girls and exploiting their vulnerability for his own sadistic pleasure.

Just when things get interesting for Tartaglia and his sergeant Samantha Donovan a new DCI is appointed to the case in a position above him... a woman, the formidable Deputy Chief Inspector Carolyn Steele. With her comes a profiler, Dr. Patrick Kennedy.

What I particularly liked about this novel was the deep characterization. I felt I knew all the characters well and the satisfactory ending left me wanting more. Since it said on the jacket flap that Forbes is now writing the sequel, I look forward to another quality series!

Shireen says

I downloaded this to my Kobo app well over a year ago and never got around to reading it. Ebooks are way too easy to buy, and so you accumulate a bunch and then end up forgetting about the ones not read right away.

Anyway, I began reading this on my iPod Touch when out and about and finished reading it on my Sony Reader. The two don't exactly co-ordinate -- one of these early-days problems of reading ebooks -- but at least it looked good on both platforms.

It was a decent read. It kind of followed a similar pattern to other British cop books. Lots of relationship angst, lots of swearing, lots of friction between coppers, lots of vulgar thoughts by the bad guy that repelled in a this-is-trite kind of way, and an ending that didn't surprise really. But despite the usual tropes, it was a decent story. I particularly liked the character of Sam, even if she was shoe-horned into being a bit stupid. I didn't realize it was the first in a series when I began to read it as there was an awful lot of back story that seemed like it could have appeared in previous novels. Interesting device. The device that was not interesting at all was the chapters in which the bad guy starred. You know, I see this used over and over, and I'm getting a tad tired of it. If the mystery had unfolded only through the eyes of the detectives, I think it would've been much more captivating.
