ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

MYSTERY

Places the Dead Call Home
Paul L. Hall
iUniverse
978-0-595-41071-2
Five Stars (out of Five)

While many novels in this genre start out slow and weave their way toward an exciting climax, this one jumps right into the action and never lets up. Hall has mastered the art of pacing, feathering in just enough detail to ensure that readers understand what is going on without giving away too much or belaboring the point. *Places the Dead Call Home* is a well crafted, exceedingly entertaining mystery.

Twenty-five years after the incident, freelance reporter Jeffrey Bonus sets off on a cross-country mission to unveil the mysterious demise of his father, a decorated army Colonel who fell, jumped or was pushed from an officer's club balcony in 1977. The military officially declared the death a suicide and further inquiries by Bonus and his mother over the years have proven fruitless.

On the way to his goal, Jeffrey picks up an enigmatic hitchhiker, Jeanette Koskos, a woman with a hot body, a stolen gun, and a quarter of a million dollars cash in her duffel bag. Together they set out to interview a potential witness, Josh Kincaid, not realizing that they have also picked-up a tail…

A bartender today, Kincaid was one of the first people to arrive at the officer's club during his short stint as a military policeman. It is possible that he found something at the "suicide" scene that was not filed in his report—some vital clue to Colonel Bonus's fate that might still be revealed.

Like Bonus, Kincaid also lost his father to violence. The Kincaid mystery is not so much about why he died—he was gunned down during a failed convenience store robbery that also left his wife in a coma—but rather where he was headed and what he had intended to do when he got there. Kincaid's Cousin Frankie McKnight, a former Detroit policeman, arrives unexpectedly, claiming that he has uncovered a vital clue for resolving the 44-year old mystery of Kincaid's father's destination.

While the plot is not complex, the pacing, settings, and characterization are all first-rate.

Fascinating characters with believable personalities carry the story. Everyone is well drawn, even folks like Gary Grote, Tommy Three Hands, Juan Rodarte, and Marlene Griswold who play important, albeit minor, roles. And, as the paths of these characters intertwine, they discover that someone is willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that the truth is never revealed… From the mysterious Yankees fan in the black SUV to the climactic shootout in the high desert, this book is a real page-turner. Highly recommended!

Lawrence Kane