

The Entitled: A Nicole Graves Mystery

Nancy Boyarsky

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In Nancy Boyarsky's chilling London mystery, *The Entitled*, American PI Nicole Graves must clear a teenage murder suspect.

Nicole is tasked with bringing home Abigail, an entitled beauty whose view of her wealthy, adoptive parents soured, and whose study abroad term was cut short when she embroiled herself in an unstable love affair. But then Abigail's boyfriend, Sami, winds up dead, police find evidence implicating her, and the stakes for Nicole's mission skyrocket.

Believing that Abigail has been framed, Nicole looks for why Sami was targeted. In London's Muslim neighborhoods, residents grow wary of her nosing. Her suspenseful investigation alternates with chapters from fearful Abigail, who faces bullying in a juvenile detention center while waiting for a resolution.

Nicole's Shirley Temple looks belie her savvy and shooting acumen. She's an outsider to the investigating constables and to everyone she questions, but her dedication and concern about repeating a tragedy from a previous assignment push her forward. Tips from quicksilver characters like Yo, a man of many accents and faces, couple with help from Nicole's boyfriend, Reinhardt, whom she suspects is a spy and who helps to shield her from danger.

The case breaks through luck; solutions land on Nicole's doorstep. Cloak and dagger thrills culminate in unmasking vices, though the audacious scheme is relegated to background, with hints at troubles within Britain's immigrant community. The mystery stays light and focused on relationships. Abigail's shift from a young woman with a chip on her shoulder to one who's humbled by experience is heartening, if surprising. Nicole and Reinhardt's romance, which teases at an enticing future, is rife with the glamorous secrecy of his job.

Vibrant street scenes, swift pacing, and Nicole's steely nerve make *The Entitled* an entertaining adventure.

KAREN RIGBY (September / October 2020)

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