

The Fontana Resurrection

David Edey

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This thoughtful, character-driven mystery is a well-crafted tale of the evil some can do if the money is right.

A mystery tale rises or falls on the believability of its characters' actions and the credibility of its plot. In *The Fontana Resurrection*, David Edey delivers both in spades. A uniquely diabolical plot infused with multifaceted characters makes for a captivating tale of greed and murder.

No one is suspicious when old people die in a nursing home. After all, nothing is more commonplace than death by "natural causes." And if lonely, wealthy widows have been convinced by a smooth-talking doctor to place their assets with their trusted upscale care facility for safekeeping, it makes a perfect setting for mass murder. The only problem is how to dispose of all the corpses.

When an old woman's decomposed body washes ashore on a deserted beach in Nova Scotia, the investigator for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police suspects the body was never meant to be found but had somehow slipped free of its weights. Forensics lead him to contact the woman's son-in-law, whose background as a former Mountie and counterespionage agent seemingly makes him a good sounding board for the investigator's progress. But Stanley Watson has plans of his own for the ruthless owner of the Fontana Spa and Clinic.

This book is not a typical mystery potboiler but instead focuses on the complex development of the handful of characters and their motivations, particularly those who created and run the deadly clinic; like the building itself, their facades are appealing, even beautiful, but they hide a ruthless brutality. The psychology involved as they convince themselves and then others to participate in the elaborate scheme of theft and murder is paramount to the story; even seemingly good people can be enticed to do evil things if the money is right, and if the correct buttons are pushed.

The author's background with the RCMP and Canadian intelligence, coupled with his familiarity with the book's settings of Nova Scotia and British Columbia, bring great verisimilitude to his well-crafted tale. He writes with taut sentences replete with dripping detail, and he spends the necessary time on the characters to develop them into realistic people. Each individual springs full-bloom into the tale, and then key pieces of their backstory are revealed to help explain the reasons for their behavior. This technique is satisfying and enables the story to retain a feeling of suspense, even after the culprits have long been revealed.

The unique plot and elaborate character development will appeal to readers of thoughtful and creative mysteries.

ALAN COUTURE (November 10, 2014)

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