



Final Truth

Mariah Stewart

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From *New York Times* bestselling author Mariah Stewart comes a novel of sexy romantic suspense for fans of Nora Roberts, Catherine Coulter, and Karen Robards.

In her thrill-packed trilogy *Cold Truth*, *Hard Truth*, and *Dark Truth*, Mariah Stewart proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that she can brilliantly and suspensefully handle the truth. Can you? Then prepare yourself for the shocking, eye-opening *Final Truth*, in which a woman who specializes in exposing lies finds herself trapped in a real-life nightmare.

All that stands between Lester Ray Barnes and the state of Florida's death chamber is a judge's signature. He is sentenced to die for the rape and murder of a young woman, his conviction hinging on two pieces of evidence: DNA testing and an eyewitness who placed him at the scene. But when the story breaks that the DNA testimony at trial had been fabricated and that the eyewitness was coerced by a cop, all hell breaks loose. In the absence of credible evidence to sustain the conviction, the court is forced to set Lester Ray free. It's the sort of circus the media adore—until it turns into the kind of Grimm's fairy tale the media love even more.

Intrigued by the story of a young man railroaded by justice, true-crime writer Regan Landry is drawn into Lester Ray's camp like a moth to a flame. For Regan, writing is a way to stay connected to her late literary-legend father, and her knack for detective work makes her a natural when it comes to uncovering new leads in even the murkiest mysteries.

Eager for the spotlight, Lester Ray willingly agrees to work with Regan on a tell-all about his experience as an innocent man on death row. But less than a week after leaving prison, he vanishes from the Sunshine State. Soon after, darkness descends on the outer banks of North Carolina as a string of women are raped and murdered in a frenzied spree. Fearing the worst, Regan, along with Special Agent Mitch Peyton and the FBI, sweeps in to confront the unspeakable: the horrifying possibility that they have helped to free a cunning monster with an insatiable appetite for death—and a ruthless determination never to be caged again.

From the Hardcover edition.

Final Truth Details

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From Reader Review Final Truth for online ebook

Jessica says

Final Truth is listed as a 'suspense romance' novel. As I mentioned in my Voices Carry review, I'm reading some of Mariah Stewart's more mystery-suspense works because I really loved the Chesapeake Diaries and am hoping to find more of that in her other stuff.

Final Truth was like reading a combo of Criminal Minds and CSI - there's some profiling involved in solving the case and a healthy dose of forensics being used as well. Lucky for me, CM and CSI:NY are some of my favorite shows. Would I say there was any romance in this at all? Nope. Yes, two of the main characters are in a relationship. I wouldn't call that a romance novel though. The furthest they ever got was telling each other 'I love you.' (While that is an important statement to make, it's one that can exist in a mystery/suspense book without it being listed as romance.) Castle and Beckett (from Castle) had more of a romance feel to them even before they were in a relationship than these two characters ever did.

I liked the case in this one, it felt really intriguing. That's why I'd have to give this book 3.75 stars.

Maura says

Regan Landry, a popular true crime novelist, becomes interested in the plight of a felon on death row who may have been falsely convicted. She and her boyfriend and sometimes partner in cold cases, FBI Agent Mitch Peyton, check out the case and unintentionally draw a lot of attention to it. When the felon, Lester, is released, girls start dying in the manner of his first victim. Regan begins feeling uncomfortable at the role she may have played in this, and helps the FBI draw him back in. In the meantime, Regan is also looking into the identity of someone whose papers her father had been holding on to.

This author is quite talented at the police procedural and even the mystery-suspense element and honestly this one was one of her better ones. The mystery was good and trying to figure out how the criminal had managed to do what he did was exciting - this was a great plot. (view spoiler). My biggest complaint with this author thus far though has been lack of character chemistry (and not just romantic chemistry either!) There is supposed to be friendship chemistry that just doesn't really show through in her characters. There is usually a touch of romance to these stories and more so in this one than most. In this story, Regan and Mitch are lovers (although this book is completely clean) and are in love, but are about as boring (romantically) as you might imagine an elderly married couple to be. They almost manage an inkling of chemistry, but don't quite get there. For the most part, even in partner mode, discarding the romance altogether, these two don't feel all that connected. Even when Ms. Landry is held at gunpoint, we don't feel the emotion that should exist between the characters.

Colleen says

This was the final book in the Truth series and I read them all back to back (it's the way I prefer to read older series, so I remember everything). This was my least favorite in this series. When I really enjoy a book it's

hard for me to put down. I put this one down very easily and I also read an entirely different book when I was halfway through this one (I needed a break from it!). I still liked the book, thought it tied up the suspense nicely (and the Kroll mystery). I don't think it did a thing to tie up any of the romances in the Truth series (including Mitch and Regan) - if you can even call them romances to begin with. In her other series she brought up previous couples and gave an update as to how they were doing - you didn't get this in this series at all. When you finished the book, that's all you got. Just a bit frustrating for this reader.

Kathleen Hagen says

Final Truth, by Mariah Stewart A.

This is the last in the series. With the word "final" in the title it probably is meant to be the last one. In this book we have two plots. First, Regan becomes aware of a convict on death row whose DNA sample was botched by the lab and who may be getting out of prison. She is drawn to the story as a possible next book, and gets in contact with the lawyer. She meets Lester Ray and thinks he is truly sorry and that he might be really innocent. Then he is released, and murders fitting his original MO start happening. Regan is sick at the possibility that a guilty man was released to go on killing. Regan comes into the cross hairs of this possible murderer, or someone else copycatting him? And is in danger. The other plot, which has been a part of all four books, is that her father, Josh Landry, had left some notes about Eddy Crowel. She has been trying to track down the mystery of Eddy and why her father had information on him in his files. She finally succeeds in this book. A very nice closure to the series.

Theresa says

Ugh, this was seriously annoying; I spent 3/4 of the book frustrated and annoyed and calling the main characters idiots because it was so incredibly obvious what was going on and who the killer was. I would give this a half-star if I could; it was that bad. Definitely not a mystery nor suspenseful, as it's insultingly easy to predict what's going to happen, and not a romance either, since the relationship between the main characters is hardly explored. A thoroughly unfulfilling and annoying read; like Dark Truth, certainly not worth buying and not even worth borrowing. Borrow Cold Truth and Hard Truth for quick, interesting one-time reads if you have a lot of time on your hands, but definitely skip Dark Truth and Final Truth.

TJ says

This was in the stack of books in the beach cottage I rented for the week and it sounded interesting so I picked it up and read it in two days. I'd never read anything by Mariah Stewart before and I will probably give her another shot - the story was enough to engage me and entertain but very predictable. Even the part about discovering something about her own past (don't want to give too much away) although was intriguing, by the time it was revealed I knew something very similar was going to be revealed - I will confess I didn't have it pegged exactly, but close. I did have the ending pegged however long before it was revealed.

All in all for a beach read it was fun and had it not been as predictable I would have rated it a little higher -

as it is 3 starts is too low so if I had the option it would be 3.5.

Joyce says

Great reading. Normally I have little patience with chick lit, but Stewart takes the plot beyond the usual. A female true crime writer becomes involved in the story of a death row inmate who shortly thereafter is released because of bad and untruthful DNA testing. She agrees to further investigate and possibly write about his story. Then more women are murdered the same way his original alleged victim was. There is a romance (come on, this is chick lit), but it is handled better than most others in the genre and there is an actual connection between the protagonists that appears real. It was good cold weather reading and I will read more of Stewart's novels.

Katy says

A thriller about a crime writer who inadvertently gets wrapped up into telling the story of a man who was sent to prison for murder. However, the crime lab tech botched up the DNA evidence. After he is released, he goes on a vacation to the Outer Banks and young women start being murdered all with the same MO.

Ada Iaboni says

This one was well done and kept me guessing to almost when the "bad guy" was revealed. I'm not sure if this is the end of the series or not, but I enjoyed them.

Anna Mcfadden says

All that stands between Lester Ray Barnes is sentenced to die in the state of Florida's death chamber for the rape and murder of a young woman that his conviction hinges is hanging on the evidence of DNA testing and an eyewitness who placed him at the scene. But when the story breaks that the DNA testimony at trial had been fabricated and that the eyewitness was coerced by a cop, all hell breaks loose. In the absence of credible evidence to sustain the conviction, the court is forced to set Lester Ray free. "Intrigued by the story of a young man railroaded by justice", true-crime writer Regan Landry who is following in her literary-legend father footsteps teams up with Lester Ray writing to write a tell-all book about his experience as an innocent man on death row. But in under a week Lester Ray goes missing and after a string of women being raped and murdered and with her knack for detective work makes her a natural to team up with Regan is teamed with Special Agent Mitch Peyton and uncover new leads in even the murkiest mysteries.

Louise says

EXCELLENT read...finishes up her first 3 novels in this series well.

From dust jacket:

"All that stands between Lester Ray Barnes and the state of Florida's death chamber is a judge's signature. He is sentenced to die for the rape and murder of a young woman, his conviction hinging on two pieces of evidence: DNA testing and an eyewitness who placed him at the scene. But when the story breaks that the DNA testimony at trial had been fabricated and that the eyewitness had been coerced by a cop, all hell breaks loose. In the absence of credible evidence to sustain the conviction, the court is forced to set Lester Ray free. It's the sort of circus the media adore-until it turns into the kind of Grimm's fairy tale the media love even more.

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Jim says

I've enjoyed the whole series (all four books), but this one the most. In my *Hard Truth* review I mentioned the "secondary characters" were the constants in the series. In this book, they take center stage.

The story in this book move quickly, perhaps even quicker then the previous books in the series. It remains focused, few "excursions" from what forwards the story.

In all of them, there's a touch of romance (not sappy, or pages devoted to it, sort of stuff) and seems that every female introduced there is a comment that she's beautiful--none of it interferes with the story.

I decided I must think like this author. I don't think the "mystery lines" in each book is obvious, but yet I seem to have "guessed" correctly too often to be just chance. I usually don't solve before it's revealed in mysteries. So my previous reviews should not be taken as these books are weak.

It's also nice to read a closed-ended series, so there's an end in sight. I read open-ended also, but sometimes it just nice to reach the end with a nice solid closing of the story.

Merredith says

This was the fourth and final book in the Reagan Landry series, which always feature her as a crime book writer. She is the main character this time, instead of helping, and the crime is not a cold case, but sort of a brand new one. DNA testing at the crime lab was messed up/faked/lied about by an overworked lab guy, and as a result, some criminals have had to be set free, including Lester Ray, who was due to be put to death in a couple weeks for raping and murdering a woman. Reagan decides to write a book about the dead woman and Lester Ray, and the whole breakdown of the system, putting him away with no evidence. But suddenly, more women are being raped and killed. Also, we finally get to the bottom of the Eddie Kroll back story that's been running through the whole series, and the ending was a duh I figured out from the beginning. This book was a bit predictable, and a fast read, you can almost skim through. But enjoyable, and of course, a must if you've read the rest of the series.

Dotti Elrick says

This is the last book in the "Truth" Series. And I have to admit, I struggled a bit with this one. And I can't really put my finger on exactly why. A lot of little things I think.

True crime author Reagan Landry and FBI agent Mitch Peyton have had small parts in the three earlier books of the series. This was their stand alone story.

When Lester Ray Barnes learns about a problem with the lab that did the DNA testing that ultimately convicted him, he wants his test redone. The problem, Lester Ray is scheduled to be executed in less than two months. So his lawyer sets out to get Lester Ray's story out there and play upon the sympathy of the public to give him another hearing.

Regan happens on Lester Ray's lawyer on a TV crime show. She's interested in hearing his story, and maybe using it as the subject of her next book.

The Judge is forced to overturn Lester Ray's conviction when the only DNA samples the lab had are nowhere to be found. And it's come to light that an officer bribed a witness for her testimony against Lester Ray. He is released.

When Lester Ray does not show up for a meeting with Regan to discuss his book, and the lawyer is nowhere to be found, Regan starts to question if they set a killer free. And she's never more sure than when women start turning up dead, in the same manner, and posed exactly the same way as his first victim. The one he was convicted of killing. It seems Lester Ray has picked up right where he left off.

In a side story, if you've read any of the previous Truth books, you know Regan has been looking for the mysterious Eddie Kroll. She found his file in her father's house after his death and has been trying to find out who he is and why her father had information on him. Well, we get the answers to those questions in this book. The mystery is solved and what Regan learns, turns her world upside down.

Like I said earlier, I had a hard time reading this book. It had a very slow pace and it was very predictable. If you are paying attention it was quite easy to figure out. As in the other books of Mariah Stewart's that I've read, I was expecting a conclusion Mitch and Regan's Happy Ever After. But it never came. I've noticed she does this a lot. Let's the reader assume, they get together, but there are no details or explanations. I guess I was expecting something more after four books.

Nancy says

3.5 stars. Nice job .. I don't like serial killer books generally so my rating reflects that but other readers will

think differently.
