



The Cinderella Murder

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Television producer Laurie Moran is delighted when the pilot for her reality drama, Under Suspicion, is a success. Even more, the program—a cold case series that revisits unsolved crimes by recreating them with those affected—is off to a fantastic start when it helps solve an infamous murder in the very first episode.

Now Laurie has the ideal case to feature in the next episode of Under Suspicion: the Cinderella Murder. When Susan Dempsey, a beautiful and multi-talented UCLA student, was found dead, her murder raised numerous questions. Why was her car parked miles from her body? Had she ever shown up for the acting audition she was due to attend at the home of an up-and-coming director? Why does Susan's boyfriend want to avoid questions about their relationship? Was her disappearance connected to a controversial church that was active on campus? Was she close to her computer science professor because of her technological brilliance, or something more? And why was Susan missing one of her shoes when her body was discovered?

With the help of lawyer and Under Suspicion host Alex Buckley, Laurie knows the case will attract great ratings, especially when the former suspects include Hollywood's elite and tech billionaires. The suspense and drama are perfect for the silver screen—but is Cinderella's murderer ready for a close-up?

The Cinderella Murder Details

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From Reader Review The Cinderella Murder for online ebook

Wendy says

The Cinderella Murder

This was better than I expected it to be. I've read all of Mary Higgins Clark's books since her very first novel was published and the last couple of years she seemed to be losing her touch but I think co authoring with Alafair Burke was a great move on her part. I have never heard of or read any of Alafair Burke's novels before but I may try her out now. I give this book 3 and a half stars.

Magpie67 says

Worst parent nightmare... sending your daughter to college, and having her murdered. Twenty years later, still unsolved... a mother decides to allow a t.v. producer to find the truth or at least get the boyfriend convicted. Loving the premise this title and series brings to the culture now out there... solving the cold cases, bringing justice to the families and peace of mind for the souls. Reality T.V. is a thing, so this series fits in with this scenario; add in the element of a young girl murdered on the eve of her big break in show business and you have suspense. Wait... now add a few complicated individuals and a new religion; or is it? Whodunit is looking wild among the natives. On one hand there is murder and on the other hand there is desperation. Plus: money, fame, greed, cheating and love are all being dealt a hand too. Who will get a second chance after the truth is revealed and who will suffer when all the cards are played?

? Kimberly says

Five reasons to curl up with the Cinderella Murder this holiday season

If you are a fan of unsolved murder mysteries and reality crime shows than Clark's new series will delight you, as we interview those involved with the crime and piece together clues. Clark makes us privy to the behind the scenes workings of a reality drama show.

The case is fascinating. Susan Dempsey a talented UCLA student is found dead. Despite suspects, the police were never able to solve the crime. Now ten years later thanks to her mother's persistence Laurie Moran and her show *Under Suspicion* re-interview those closest to her and the lead suspects.

Clark provides us with an interesting cast of characters. Laurie Moran and her young son know firsthand about unsolved crimes, and this makes Laurie very successful at her job. Laurie's Dad, takes care of her young son. As a retired police officer, he aids the investigation. Laurie is intelligent, quick thinking and level headed. She loves her son and excels at her career. While not without flaws and luggage, she felt genuine. Alex Buckley is the host of *Under Suspicion* and a lawyer. Smooth and patient best describe Alex. I would like to see the man get a little excited. Friends and associates of the victim make for a curious case. Even Laurie's young son makes an impact on the case at hand, notching up the suspense. Clark did an excellent job of fleshing out characters and we even see hints of romances. I loved how diverse the suspect list was from actors to scientists.

The Cinderella Murder was a fantastic audio listen. Alafair Burke did a wonderful job of creating unique voices for each character. Her pacing, breath and emotions allowed me to slip into the story.

Mary Higgins Clark is a seasoned author who knows how to let the story unfold, weaving in red herrings, clues and notching up the suspense. Nothing felt forced or rushed. The mystery was well crafted with an air of believability danger and action. I had a blast piecing things together and enjoyed the twists and turns.

Audio provided by publisher, full review on blog. This review was originally posted at Caffeinated Book Reviewer

Noriko says

3.5 stars. This is a quick review just to jot down my immediate afterthoughts on this mystery. This review could be subject to some changes or re-write.

This is my very first Mary Higgins Clark and I enjoyed listening to this audiobook. It reads fast and the pacing is smooth, flowing naturally without any major flow to it in my eyes.

I found the concept of the TV show - Under suspicion - very interesting.

Laurie Moran herself, the producer of the show, is a victim of a murder case and got her beloved husband gunned down right in front of her kid, Timmy. She hasn't fully recovered from the traumatic experience, the wound is still raw, yet she now steers the show featuring unsolved cases and finds herself in grave danger before she knows it.

The narration style, the way the plot is told, is very interesting and clever. In the first half, probably up until 30% or so in the book, the story is narrated in a sort of 'can-of-worms' or 'domino effect' way for lack of better words, in which you have another character popped up other than the main character of the chapter and then that 'another character' is featured in the next chapter. For instance, you have Madison Meyer, the victim's fellow wannabe actress in college, reminisces of Keith Ratner, Susan's ex-boyfriend and then you have Keith Rater as the main character of the subsequent chapter. The characters are linked to one another and the readers get to know how they are connected. The authors introduce their characters - the main casts of the 'Cinderella Murder case' - one after another in a methodical and clever way and that certainly caught my attention. I really like how all the casts are smoothly eased into the story.

That said though, I found the plot slightly boring until I was past 50% mark.

There are some intrigues and ominous hints thrown into the plot which had me guessing what was going on, but the whole The Advocate of God twist and its role in this book took me a while to comprehend, I also thought the plot moves a teeny bit too slow there. Steady and smooth, yet it took a while for mystery/thriller elements to kick in and I must admit I felt a bit bored at some point.

The latter half is strong. The tension is built up nicely as the plot thickens, I caught myself gasping 'Oh, my gosh' several times.

Nonetheless, my issue lay with the ending and the romance element in this book.

I personally don't need any romance in crime thriller/mystery books, I even think such romance elements could potentially make a book reduced down to be unnecessarily cheesy and overdramatic and I must say it was the case with this book.

As I said, the tension and suspense was built up really nicely. I liked how the villain was finally revealed and the explanations made a total sense. I am satisfied with that.

That said, the climax was utterly underwhelming and anticlimactic in my book. Alex's frantic search for Laurie (out of his love for Laurie) could be favored by many readers and it could be said that was what the chase of the murderer even more suspenseful and thrilling, but it actually had an adverse effect on me, making me feel detached from the plot and I couldn't emotionally attached to the story any more.

As I really enjoyed following the book up until the very end, this book certainly won't be my last Mary Higgins Clark, yet if this series keeps this way, I might not pick up the next book. I'm in two minds about it.

Barbara says

New York based Laurie Moran produces a television show called 'Under Suspicion', a reality show that highlights cold cases. The program brings together people who were involved with the victim, questions them, and perhaps sheds new light on (or even solves) the case. Laurie's new project involves the murder of Susan Dempsey, a beautiful young coed/aspiring actress whose body was found in Los Angeles twenty years ago - a crime dubbed 'The Cinderella Murder.' Laurie has great empathy for crime victims and their families because her own husband was murdered a few years previously.

With the encouragement of Susan's mother, Rosemary, Laurie makes her way to L.A. with her production team, her young son Timmy, her ex-cop father (Timmy's babysitter), and attorney Alex Buckley - who's excellent at questioning the would-be suspects. At the time of the crime the police questioned Susan's boyfriend, a movie director, a couple of roommates, a lab partner, and so on. Laurie lines up these people to be on the show.

It seems that almost everyone who was in Susan's orbit has something to hide, however, and the shenanigans of some of these people lead to further murders and assaults. Thus, it seems like everyone who knew Susan or is involved with making the TV program is in danger. All this leads to a not-quite-satisfying but rather dramatic climax.

For me a big problem with the book involves the behavior of some characters. One character hides a secret for twenty years that most people would reveal in twenty seconds, another uses a super-elaborate surveillance system when just participating in the TV show would be much easier. This kind of thing makes the plot feel manipulative and unrealistic. That said, the book contains a nice array of interesting characters, has a tiny drop of romance (for readers who like that kind of thing), and is a quick easy read.

I'd mildly recommend the book to mystery fans.

You can follow my reviews at <http://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot.com/>

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

I love this author! I have read all of her books and she never has disappointed me. This one is an awesome mystery and had me guessing to the very end who the murderer was going to be. I loved the characters. This book had a really good plot. I didn't guess the murderer and it was a surprise. It's really hard to write a review because it would give the book away.

Laurie produces a TV show called Under Suspicion, she wants to do this so that she can find out the killer of a girl that dies. During the show she listens while other people talk who were roommates of the girl who died. A lot of clues are popping left and right and the killer is revealed. It gets very suspenseful near the end of the story. The last seventy pages is a good thrill ride that keeps you guessing.

My favorite characters are Laurie and Leo.

The only reason I didn't give it five stars is because I wouldn't want to reread it, only because I don't usually reread books, and I don't see this as a life changing book. I have changed the way that I rate books.

Malinda says

Reading a Mary Higgins Clark book is like comfort food. You always know what to expect because each of her books have the basic story- Successful, tallish slender woman (because her life is too complicated to find food interesting) who is currently single. Each time she meets a tall and equally successful and handsome man who will help save the day right before the murderer strikes. This being said, I have read every single one of her books and I will be one sad woman when she stops writing. However, because this book was based on a repeat character, I felt like it was even more repetitive and uninteresting.

Brenda says

Laurie Moran's television program "Under Suspicion" had debuted with huge success. Their very first show had caused a cold case to be solved; a murder which had dogged the police since it had happened. So now Laurie was set to run another; with the approval of her boss Brett, and the help of her assistants, Jerry and Grace, she started on her investigation of the Cinderella Murder. Twenty years previously, nineteen year old UCLA student and only daughter of Jack and Rosemary, Susan Dempsey had been viciously murdered. Her killer had never been found, and Jack had passed away three years previously, having never discovered his daughter's killer. Now Rosemary was desperate for answers.

Laurie had recently known tragedy herself and now her son, nine year old Timmie and her dad Joe were her life. She juggled her intense workload with her family commitments well, but still she was extremely grateful to her dad for his dedication and care of Timmie. Joe was a retired policeman and kept a close eye on his daughter and grandson. His cop radar was always working.

Getting to know the past players in the Cinderella Murder case was a challenge, but one that Laurie and her team were prepared for. Digging deeply to learn it all could uncover facts the police had missed long ago. That's what Laurie hoped anyway. When host of "Under Suspicion", lawyer Alex Buckley joined the team as they travelled to California, they had no idea that danger was following them all the way. Would Laurie and her team discover Susan's killer? Would Rosemary know closure after all this time?

The Cinderella Murder is a fabulous start to a new series by two highly successful writers, Mary Higgins Clark and Alafair Burke; my opinion – they have a winning combination! A fabulous thriller with a rocketing pace, loads of tension and suspense to keep you enthralled right the way through. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, and will be looking for the next in the series – hopefully not too far away. Highly recommended.

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for my copy to read and review.

Palomablue says

A very dull, lackluster mystery, almost as if it was written by a well-programmed computer. I can't believe that either author was very interested in the story, and I had a hard time finding anything human, interesting, or even suspenseful in it. I love good mysteries, and often have a hard time putting them down. Not this one.

Elaine says

I really liked the format of The Cinderella Murder. TV producer Laurie Moran is putting together an edition of Under Suspicion, a show where she intends to bring together witnesses of the unsolved murder of Susan Dempsey, to try and find additional clues and maybe solve the case. It made quite a refreshing change from detective/investigative journalist/lawyer stories. Whilst this is the second in the series, it really doesn't matter if you haven't read the first book, because everything you need to know about Laurie and her background and family is explained, and in a nice way; one that doesn't make you feel as if you are being "info dumped".

Set in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, the story really does twist and turn as the characters come together for the show recording and as we heard from them all I was constantly changing my mind as to who was guilty. Matters get even trickier for Laurie when it becomes apparent that someone is trying to stop her making the show. The question is who and why.

There are quite a lot of characters in the story and as it progressed I did feel as if I connected with some more than others. On the whole though, this was a book that I thoroughly enjoyed reading – it was suspenseful, well paced and really kept my interest throughout. Many thanks to the publishers for the review copy.

Carolyn says

I really liked the approach taken by the writers of basing this crime story as an episode of a reality TV show investigating cold cases. Producer Laurie Moran had a big success with her pilot program and now has the green light to go ahead with an episode on the 20y old murder of beautiful, talented college student, Susan Dempsey. Susan had been on her way to the house of a famous movie director to audition for a part in his new film, however instead her body was found with one shoe missing in a park near his home. There were several unanswered questions at the time. Why was her car found back at the college? How did her room mate manage to get to the Director's so quickly after Susan failed to show up and get the part? Was her boyfriend somehow connected to her death?

Laurie is successful in rounding up Susan's family, her room mates, boyfriend, the movie director, and a college friend and a college professor who she worked for. One of them at least knows more than they are saying but which one is guilty?

With the help of handsome lawyer Alex Buckley, Laurie is able to discover much of what went on that night. The tension and suspense builds gradually as the stories of all involved unfold, culminating in a thrilling ending. Great read! I really loved the combination of these two writers and look forward the next episode in this series.

With thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for a copy of this book to review.

Ali Murat says

Kitab?n sonlar? kitab?n geneline oranla daha iyiydi. Bir ara 2 y?ld?z diye dü?ündüm; ama 1 y?ld?zdan fazlas?na elim gitmedi.

Rosie says

This is the first book I have read by Mary Higgins Clark and Alafair Burke. I quite liked this one. It was different, easy to read and get into. The book is centred around Laurie Moran, who is producing a reality TV show called "Under Suspicion". The show hopes to bring new evidence to light and help solve previously unsolved cases. I really liked all of the characters, particularly Laurie and her Father, Leo, and son, Timmy. I did question some of the deductions made from the clues, and thought at times it was a bit far fetched. Overall it was quite an enjoyable read and I will read the next one which should be out next month! I will definitely read more of both authors. My rating is more like 3.5 stars but I rounded it up to 4.

Karin Slaughter says

FANTASTIC! Two of my most favorite writers in the world doing what they do best. Highly recommend!

Michelle says

The Cinderella Murder is a fast-paced, enjoyable read. This should not come as a surprise as it is written by leading lady mystery authors Mary Higgins Clark and Alafair Burke. Laurie Moran is a television producer whose show *Under Suspicion* investigates cold case files in order to expose the killer. In this episode she is looking into the case of Susan Dempsey who disappeared 20 years ago while heading out to an acting audition. There are many viable suspects and quirky characters and just enough plot twists to keep you guessing. Although this is the first book in the series that I have read, I foresee more *Under Suspicion* titles in my future.
