



## Web of Deceit

*Katherine Howell*

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When paramedics Jane and Alex encounter a man refusing to get out of his crashed car with bystanders saying he deliberately drove into a pole, it looks like a desperate cry for help. His frantic claim that someone is out to get him adds to their thinking that he is delusional. Later that day he is found dead under a train in what might be a suicide, but Jane is no longer so sure...Detective Ella Marconi shares Jane's doubts, which are only compounded when the case becomes increasingly tangled. Then, just when she thinks she's closing in on the right person, a shocking turn of events puts more people in danger and might just see the killer slip through her hands.

## Web of Deceit Details

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Author : Katherine Howell

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## From Reader Review Web of Deceit for online ebook

### Sharon says

Paramedics Jane and Alex attend the scene of a man who has crashed his car against a pole, but on closer inspection Jane and Alex soon discover the man has locked himself in and refuses to get out of the car. With a lot of talking and attempting to calm the man down eventually they are able to get the man out of the car. Although the man doesn't seem to be injured, he seems to be anxious, shaken and rather scared. The mans name is Marko and he doesn't have much to say only that someone is after him.

Nearing the end of their shift and after dropping Marko at the hospital Jane and Alex receive their next emergency call out to the Town Hall railway station. On arrival both Jane and Alex are shocked at the scene that they see before them. Someone it seems has been hit by a train. Jane and Alex soon realize it's the man they got out of the car earlier on in the day, Marko Meixner. It was seeming like a suicide, but no one could be certain.

As soon as Detective Ella Marconi and her partner, Detective Murray Shakespeare arrive at the scene they immediately begin interviewing witnesses. As time passes and Ella digs further into Marko's history, it appears there is more to this investigation than she first thought. What really did happen to Marko?

Aussie author Katherine Howell has written another riveting, fast paced novel, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Highly recommended.

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### CatBookMom says

This author's books were mentioned in the Aussie Readers group, and this was the only book I could find via my library's OverDrive collection. It was quite good, kept my interest, even though there's a great deal of jumping between the paramedics' stories (drama for each of them) and the homicide detectives' story.

BTW, somewhere I read a review that said this (or another of this author's books) were rather like a TV drama, in the way things jump from one story line to another. This is a very good description. You do need to pay attention.

Sadly, I didn't like this enough to want to buy more of this author's books from Amazon US, or from Audible.

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### Carolyn says

This was another excellent crime novel from Katherine Howell, possibly her best so far in this series. Featuring Detective Ella Marconi and her partner Murray and paramedics Jane and Alex, the author carefully builds her tangled web of lies and deceit into a complex mystery building up to a final explosive scene.

It all starts when Jane and Alex are called out to a minor accident where a man claiming to be followed has run the car he was driving into a pole. Fearing he has a psychiatric problem they leave him at hospital for assessment only to be called out later in the day to a fatality at a train station where he is the body under the train. Suspecting foul play, Ella must now try to discover who was responsible.

One of the reasons I enjoy these novels is that each of the characters has a distinct life with problems of their own. Ella's relationship with Callum has cooled somewhat and she is keen to see more of him. Jane is dealing with her ex's jealous new wife and seeing a man, a celebrity who wants to keep their relationship secret. Alex is a single Dad recently traumatized from attending an accident involving the death of a young girl. That his own teenage daughter, Mia, has recently become difficult and uncommunicative doesn't help. Some of these stories also become entangled in Ms Howell's web leading to unexpected twists and turns in the story as it gathers momentum and suspense.

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## **Li'l Owl says**

Preview:

When paramedics Jane and Alex encounter a man refusing to get out of his crashed car with bystanders saying he deliberately drove into a pole, it looks like a desperate cry for help. His frantic claim that someone is out to get him adds to their thinking that he is delusional. Later that day he is found dead under a train in what might be a suicide, but Jane is no longer so sure...Detective Ella Marconi shares Jane's doubts, which are only compounded when the case becomes increasingly tangled. Then, just when she thinks she's closing in on the right person, a shocking turn of events puts more people in danger and might just see the killer slip through her hands.

The 6th novel in the *Detective Ella Marconi* series, *Web of Deceit*, once again showcases all of Katherine Howell's trademarks in yet another brilliantly written novel! She has a masterful ability to draw you in with larger than life characters, seamlessly combining several individual story lines, without losing the reader in the process, all the while keeping the tension sky high from beginning to end.

Detective Ella Marconi and her partner Murry Shakespeare continue to fight to find the truth of what happened to Marko Meixner before he was found dead under the wheels of a train. They aren't willing to accept the easy answer and feel that this case may, in fact, be a homicide, despite their boss who is determined to conclude that the death is a suicide, and who continually tries to derail (no pun intended) the investigation at every turn. I personally wanted to reach in among the pages and throttle Ella's boss throughout the book!

To make matters worse, Ella is trying to keep a new relationship moving forward but it's not going so smoothly either.

Paramedics, Jane and Alex, each add additional elements of suspense with both separate and combined stories of their own.

Jane is involved in a new relationship which seems to be going well until she finds out he's been less than truthful with her. Then she becomes suspicious that he's somehow tangled up with her ex-husband's jealous wife who's threats against her are becoming more and more violent.

Alex is struggling with his rebellious teenage daughter who's actions are making him increasingly fearful for her safety. He's also trying to come to terms with some personal demons stemming from a past case that

ended in tragedy.

I highly recommend the *Detective Ella Marconi* series by Aussie author Katherine Howell. As in all the previous novels she continues to submerge readers with electrically charged entertainment, complete with tricky twists and turns, a plot that speeds along like a runaway train at a nerve wracking pace, before it all comes to a screeching halt with a completely unforeseen finale!

I can't wait to read the seventh novel, Deserving Death.

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### **Jenny says**

Web of Deceit is book six of Detective Ella Marconi Series by Katherine Howell. Web of Deceit is about Detective Ella Marconi investigation into the death of Marko Meixner. Everyone assume that Marko Meixner committed suicide. However, Detective Ella Marconi and paramedic Jane Koutoufides did not believe that. Web of Deceit follows Detective Ella Marconi investigation into finding out who killed Marko Meixner intertwine with Jane Koutoufides and Alex Churchill private lives. Also, the readers of Web of Deceit will be sad with the conclusion of this book.

Web of Deceit is the second book I have read of Katherine Howell, and I find them easy to become involved with the characters and the story. Katherine Howell does an excellent job in portraying her characters.

Readers of Web of Deceit will learn about issues that can affect law enforcement investigation into a case. Also, readers of Web of Deceit will learn about the problems of having teenage kids from the parent perspective. Web of Deceit highlights the importance of communication and not take things at face value.

I recommend this book.

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### **Karen Brooks says**

I don't know why I do this to myself. Every time I pick up a Katherine Howell book, my fate is sealed. For the next how ever many hours, I will barely eat, sleep or blink until I finish the story. And don't try talking to me while I have my nose in the novel – I am unable and have no desire to hold a conversation let alone compose a coherent response to a question – I simply have to know what happens next. Call me a glutton for punishment or someone who just knows a wonderful book when she opens one – maybe both ?

Now, imagine this is how I have responded to all Howell's Ella Marconi novels and then multiply that reaction a hundredfold with the latest in the series, Web of Deceit. This book is an emotional, psychological and narrative time bomb that ticks away, putting you on the edge of your seat and making it impossible to leave the gritty, complex and marvellously tangled world and crimes that Howell has woven.

Web of Deceit opens with two paramedics, Jane and Alex, being called to an accident where a vehicle has hit a pole. No speed is involved and the driver has no injuries yet, he refuses to leave the car. Terrified, convinced someone is following and "out to get" him, it takes a great deal of persuasion to get him to exit. When, later that night, Jane and Alex are called to an apparent suicide at a train station and recognise the victim, events are set in motion that draw in both the paramedics, their families and, of course, detective Ella Marconi and her partner Murray as well.

Determined to prove the suicide was in fact a murder, Ella finds herself up against a new, number crunching boss for whom over-time and even lateral thinking around a case, appears to be an anathema. Combined with demands from her family and cutting her teeth on a promising new but frail relationship, Ella has to work against the odds to bring justice to the dead man.

Parallel to and interwoven with Ella's dogged investigation is the story of Alex and Jane both of whom have their own lives and problems. As these are played out in ugly and complex glory, they find that the sinister warnings and fear of the man in the car may not have been the product of a deluded mind after all and, in fact, are simply a prelude to an all too real and terrifying series of events....

What I particularly love about Howell's novels, apart from the tight and utterly believable plotting is the way she portrays her characters. They are never two-dimensional but fully rounded personalities whose motivation, while you might not always understand or approve (which makes you anxious for them) makes sense. She gives them back-stories and rich, interesting lives, even when they are quite ordinary, demonstrating their strengths, weaknesses, self-doubt, mistakes and hubris and the consequences of all of these.

Howell also has this marvellous ability to not only bring the paramedics' work to life, but to show their humanity and the stress and strain under which they work as well. There's a specific scene about halfway through the novel that is so heart wrenching and heart-warming, the words were swimming all over the page and it was a while before I could compose myself and move on. Kudos to Howell that in the middle of a grisly investigation, where tension is mounting, she could include such a scene and without missing a beat. On the contrary, it adds another layer to the tale and the characters.

Similarly, the way relationships are constructed and deconstructed in the tale rings so true – both professional and personal. There are characters you love and champion but whose actions you sometimes question – just as in real life. There are also those you loathe and others who arouse a visceral fear, the type that makes the hair on your body stand to attention and your heart race that little bit faster.

Reading isn't just about the eyes and mind, not when you're in the hands of a master – and Howell is undoubtedly that. She plays with all the readers' senses making the act of reading almost as exhausting and exhilarating as Marconi's investigation.

Full of twists and turns, always narratively dependable but never, ever predictable, *Web of Deceit* will keep you captivated until the very last line. It's as if you're riding in an ambulance, the siren wailing, and someone else is driving, their foot increasing the pressure on the accelerator as you're taken on a ride, replete with running red lights, dodging cars and pedestrians; one you'll never forget or regret.

Completely enthralling, *Web of Deceit* places Howell right up there with the absolute finest in the genre. Even among such luminaries, she shines.

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### **Phryne says**

Another really enjoyable book from Katherine Howell. I stayed awake until after midnight determined not to put it down until I had finished it. As usual Detective Ella Marconi's story is paralleled with that of a female ambulance officer. In this case they are both suffering from disappointment in their romantic lives and are both handling it in quite strong minded ways, although it was nice to see Ella at least make some forward progress by the end. A really good read - recommended to anyone who enjoys a light, comfortable thriller.

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### **Brenda says**

When paramedics Jane and Alex arrived in their ambulance, the man whose car was jammed up against a pole seemed to be trapped. But it turned out he had locked himself in, and was refusing to get out. Witnesses had tried to talk to him, but he seemed terrified, uninjured but badly frightened. After they had managed to talk him into the ambulance, and were headed for the hospital, Marko Meixner wouldn't tell them anything, other than to say he was being followed, that someone was out to get him. He was frantic, but seemed delusional.

An emergency call to Town Hall railway station at the end of their shift had Alex and Jane heading out again. Peak hour commuters were rushing to their destinations, but when Jane and Alex arrived at the scene, horror sent chills down their spines. A person had been hit by the train which was stopped in the station, and on checking the body, they discovered it to be their patient from earlier in the day, Marko Meixner. It looked like suicide, but Jane wasn't so sure. She remembered the terror in Marko's eyes earlier in the day...

When Detective Ella Marconi arrived on the scene with her partner Detective Murray Shakespeare, they began the task of interviewing witnesses. On learning of Marko's history, she also was doubtful about the verdict of suicide. The investigation deepened, becoming a confusing tangle of strange events, of clues which didn't gel and a frustration which grew with each passing day. Ella's budget conscious boss was holding them back with his abrupt ways, and rigid nine-to-five attitude, until she thought she would explode.

In the meantime both Alex and Jane were having problems of their own in their personal lives, Alex with his fourteen year old daughter Mia, and Jane with her ex-husband Steve and his new wife Deb.

The intense and gripping plot was fast paced and full of suspense. The extreme twist at the end had me literally gasping out loud...I most certainly didn't expect it! Once again, Katherine Howell has proven to be a master at her game. I can't wait for the next one!

Highly recommended.

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### **Deb Bodinnar says**

Well what can I say??? Another brilliant piece of writing by one of our talented and amazing Aussie female authors. Of course... one character in particular is outstanding!! \*cough cough\*  
Love the way it all came together...not going to say any more coz I don't want to spoil it for others. GET THIS BOOK.....

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### **Shelleyræ at Book'd Out says**

Once I started Web of Deceit I couldn't put it down, which led to a very late night given I had intended, at midnight, to read only a chapter or two before getting some sleep. I really should have known better as I always find Howell's series to be compulsive page turners, packed with intrigue, action and excitement.

Web of Deceit opens as Sydney paramedics Jane and Alex attend a minor car accident. The driver, Marko Meixner, blames the incident on a stalker and even though his almost incoherent ravings suggest a

psychiatric disorder, Jane wonders if there might be some truth in what he is saying. Unfortunately there is little more they can do other than deliver him to the local hospital and notify the staff of their concerns. The incident is quickly forgotten as they continue on with their day, Alex's mind is on his rebellious teenage daughter and Jane is simply eager for their shift to finish so she can rendezvous with her secret lover. Nearing the end of shift, Jane and Alex are annoyed when they are called to extricate a body from under a city train, but when they identify the corpse as the morning's patient, Jane feels compelled to share her concerns with the on scene detective, Ella Marconi and her partner. Now it is up to the detectives to determine if Marko fell, pushed or jumped in front of the train, dragging them into a tangled web of secrets, lies and violence.

While Ella and Murray follow paper trails, badger unreliable and reluctant witnesses and try to avoid the censure of their penny pinching captain, they become convinced that Marko was in fact murdered. Their prime suspect is a newly released parolee who was incarcerated after Marko testified against him for murder more than a decade previously, but they can't easily dismiss Marko's boss and his partner, who have been siphoning the company's funds. As always I love the realism Howell injects into the police procedure - mountains of paperwork, petty office politics, leads that don't pan out and the sheer leg work to solve a case.

Detective Ella Marconi is the anchor of this series, but in each book Howell introduces a new paramedic team that are integral to the plot, ensuring the series never goes stale and the installments work well as stand alone novels. The paramedics contribute their own subplots as Howell skillfully weaves the personal and professional stories of each character into the main storyline, often with surprising crossover. In *Web of Deceit*, Jane is dealing with her ex-husband's crazed wife and her new lover's secret identity while Alex is struggling with PTSD and a recalcitrant daughter. Both are fully realised, complex and likeable characters.

The patients, victims and perpetrators are also of interest in the story. Rarely is any character, even the villain, a convenient stereotype. Howell demonstrates insight into the emotions and motivations of each - a wronged wife, a frightened girlfriend, a frantic father, heightening the tension by connecting the reader with characters that feel familiar.

*Web of Deceit* is Katherine's sixth novel, and I think has edged out the others in the series as my favourite by the slimmest of margins. Fast paced, slick and utterly absorbing this is a fabulous read which I recommend without reserve.

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### **Sally906 says**

Katherine Howell is one of my "must buy as soon as a new book" comes out authors. I can guarantee that if you pick up any of her books you will not be able to put it down until you are heaving and panting for breath at the end. Errrr, no not that ... get your mind out of the gutter – this is a mystery. And it is a damn good mystery with twists and turns and a feeling that it is all building up to something, but you're not sure what.

*WEB OF DECEIT* is Katherine's sixth novel and Detective Ella Marconi is back; she appears in each of the books however the paramedic team that the mystery focuses on and around changes. Katherine has a talent for being able to combine both the personal and professional lives of each of the main characters and always there is a cross over where you least expect it. The two paramedics in this tale are Jane who is dealing with her ex-husbands deranged second wife; and single dad Alex who is suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress after a rescue gone wrong and dealing with a rebellious teenage daughter. I really related to Alex's struggle

with his troublesome daughter, and while I wasn't a single parent when I struggled with mine, I think Katherine handled the scenario so well that I found myself nodding at Alex's responses often. I always seem to find one character in her books which personally speaks to me.

Each character, both major and minor, appears in the book for a reason, not one is superfluous to the story. One of the characters in the book is a very nasty person – but who was it? Tension ran high both in the book and in me until all was revealed and the world was temporarily safe once again, well at least until book seven. *WEB OF DECEIT* is a fast-paced, edge of the seat story that will have the reader totally engrossed.

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### **Ruth Wykes says**

There are people who think Australian women crime writers are somehow inferior to their international counterparts. My challenge to them is simple: read Katherine Howell. I picked up her first book, *Frantic*, a few years ago and was intrigued. It is Howell's style to tell a story through two sets of eyes; her Sydney homicide detective, Ella Marconi and the paramedics who invariably open the stories. The author is a former paramedic herself, so she brings a gritty, realistic tension to those scenes that I've never seen done by another author.

*Web of Deceit* is the sixth novel in the Ella Marconi series, and it's a ripper. The plot moves at a cracking place, intertwined with enough subplots and backstories to keep us edgy and entertained. In the true spirit of all good storytellers, Howell captures us, dares us to go on this journey with her, and has us turning page after page as, wide-eyed we ask ourselves: "And THEN what happened?"

*Web of Deceit* is a great read for everyone who loves crime. You don't need to have read any of her earlier books to pick up and run with this story - or to enjoy it.

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### **Alex Cantone says**

Just couldn't get to grips with this one. Started well: man fell / pushed in front of a train, boss tries to hang himself after menacing calls, but then it got bogged down in the emotional baggage of police inspector and ambo. After 170 pages I gave it away.

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### **Diane says**

I liked this book, but for some reason I struggled with my reading time. My focus was not on this book the way it should have been.

The story line was good and the characters lived up to their standings, and there was just enough angst - maybe a bit too much, where the over 35's were acting like 16 year olds - just my feeling. From snipers, to impersonators, to kidnappers - lots going on in this book :)

I do recommend this book, and give it 4 stars and a thumbs up.

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## **Helen McKenna says**

Initially it seems like just another routine call out for busy Sydney paramedics Jane and Alex - a single vehicle car accident with only minor injuries. Although sympathetic towards the victim (who claims to have been chased by a stalker), it appears he has some kind of psychological problem and the pair can only deliver him to hospital before continuing onto their next call. It is not until several hours later when they are called to a fatal train accident that they realise it is the same victim and this time he is dead. Although they have many issues of their own to deal with, Jane and Alex can't help but be drawn into the web of intrigue the accident leaves behind.

Detective Ella Marconi makes her sixth appearance in Katherine Howell's series, when she and partner Murray are assigned the case. Facing the uphill task of trying to determine whether the victim Marko was pushed or jumped himself, Jane shares her earlier experience with Ella. Determined that it won't simply be written off as a suicide, Ella pushes any necessary boundaries to find the truth.

Woven into the storyline are Alex and Jane's own personal tribulations. Alex's teenage daughter Mia is undergoing a rebellious phase that is causing him a great deal of stress and Jane is battling to break ties with her ex (whose current wife has taken to harassing her, believing she and Steve are having an affair). Tensions on all fronts combines and builds as Ella and Murray do their very best to uncover the truth.

It is always refreshing to read a crime novel set in an Australian city and Katherine Howell's books have the added bonus of combining the amazing work paramedics do into the storyline. It is a combination that works well and in this case it certainly adds another layer to a suspenseful and riveting plot.

Web of Deceit certainly lives up to its name. It is a fabulous read that kept me engaged from start to finish.

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