



## Defending the Dead

*Sheila Connolly*

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From *New York Times* bestselling author Sheila Connolly!

Abby Kimball has slowly accepted her recently discovered ability to see the dead, but none of the harmless sightings she's experienced could have prepared her for the startling apparition of a centuries-old courtroom scene—where she locks eyes with a wicked and gleeful accuser. Thrown back more than three hundred years, Abby realizes she's been plunged into a mystery that has fascinated people throughout American history: the Salem witch trials.

With her boyfriend Ned at her side, Abby digs into the history of the events, researching the people and possible causes of that terrible time and her own connection to them—all the while going more deeply into her connection to Ned, both extraordinary and romantic.

As Abby witnesses more fragments from the events in Salem and struggles with the question of how such a nightmare could have come about, she's suddenly confronted with a pressing personal question: Were one or more of her ancestors among the accused? Unraveling the puzzling clues behind that question just might give Abby and Ned the answer to a very modern mystery of their own.

## About the Author:

Sheila Connolly is an Anthony and Agatha Award–nominated author who writes four bestselling cozy mystery series: the Museum Mysteries, the Orchard Mysteries, the County Cork Mysteries, and the Relatively Dead Mysteries. In addition, she has published *Once She Knew*, a romantic suspense; *Reunion with Death*, a traditional mystery set in Tuscany; and a number of short stories. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband and three cats and travels to Ireland as often as possible.

## Defending the Dead Details

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## From Reader Review Defending the Dead for online ebook

### Corinne says

Abby is obnoxious, self-centered, dishonest and has an anger problem. She feels that leaving things out is not lying to Ned. If she doesn't get the attention she requires, she gets angry. And when will Brad leave the storyline? After all, she is living with Ned! I guess that all of the above is the reason that she has no friends, except possibly the mother of the wimpy Ned.

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### Nicole says

This book left me with mixed emotions. I did not like the characters as much in this book as I did in the two previous books in this series. I have trouble admiring a woman who appears to go from one boyfriend to the next, moving in with them right away, and then allowing them to support her. She also allowed herself to be terminated from a job because the boss did not like her personally (I want put why as it would be a spoiler for the previous book). While I get it was to move the plot forward, what kind of message does this send? Also, the main character wants to reveal information that is none of her business and interferes with parents and their children. A sperm donor (which is all he was supposed to be) is just that, not a father. His mother therefore is not the Grandmother, and he has no say in how the child is raised as the child has a mother and a father.

Rant over. I liked the information about the Salem Witch trials.

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### Beth says

Great Series, my only issue with Sheila's writing is that it is sometimes overfilled with antagonistic language. For instance, unnecessarily starting every other sentence with "Look, ...." possibly that is a cultural phenomena of the North East? where ever that verbal habit comes from it routinely drops my normally high praise for her stories down a notch/star. So, for story itself a solid 4, but this one annoying habit really got to me this time ... ergo 3. And secondly she started another sentence with "I dont mean to ..." Most adults will tell you, that "I dont mean to..." translates to you mean exactly that thing, should have been edited out of the final draft.

Still overall, I enjoyed the story and would classify it, a goodread.

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### Deb says

This was kind of a fun excuse for the author to share all of her research and theories about what caused the Salem Witch Trials. Abby, the protagonist of this series, sees dead people. Not always, and certainly not continuously, and she can't talk to them. That last is important because it means she has to do a great deal of genealogical research, sometimes just to find out who the person she has "seen" actually was in life. Abby and her boyfriend Ned are restoring a Victorian house in Lexington, Massachusetts. The house backs on to a

cemetery and their relatives, the Reeds, are buried there in large numbers. Abby and Ned are both sensitive to the "ghosts" of these relatives and from time to time have been drawn into their stories, usually when strong emotion is involved. But this time, on a visit to Salem, Abby experiences bits of the 1692 witch trials through the eyes of her nine times removed great grandmother, Hannah Barton. Flash forward a couple of centuries and a Barton will marry a Reed, hence Abby's ability to see through Hannah's eyes. This novel wasn't heavy on plot, although I enjoyed the details of restoring the grand Victorian, but it was full of tidbits about the people and the place where the witch hunt took place. The theory Abby comes up with about why it happened makes plenty of sense from the perspective of a twenty-first century woman, but there are a lot of gaps in the historic record. I read this in two days.

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### **Christina says**

It was as if the author forgot book 2... things that had already happened didn't... the story was way too inconsistent with the last book. I'll not be continuing the series.

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### **Jeannie and Louis Rigod says**

I read this entire series on Kindle and tried to review it through that system and oops it did not take. I'm updating my reading list.

This series is beyond a favorite of mine. Please give it a read. I'm going to my 'cloud' and re-read them myself.

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### **Dianar9999 says**

The first book was OK, the second was a little repetitive and there were some annoying things but this book was really awful. It seems like the entire premise of book 3 was that book 2 never existed!! It's hard to explain without spoilers, but it's as if several big events from book 2 never happened. There is no continuity and it's as if someone different wrote this book - someone who only barely read book 2 years before. I will NOT be reading any more in this series.

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### **Karen Cleary says**

Probably more relevant to Americans, with the theories about what caused the Salem witch trials in the 18th century - though the explanation Abby/Sheila Connolly came up with seemed quite plausible to me. I'm finding Abby's character extremely irritating, however.

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### **Traci says**

In this installment of the Relatively Dead series, Abby has moved in with Ned. Since she lost her job at the

museum, she has more time on her hands. She decides to see if any of her relatives were part of the Salem Witch trials in 1692 and 1693.

Meanwhile she has to mend a broken relationship with Lindsey, the curator at the museum. Will she allow her to spend time with Elle, Lindsey's daughter? Oh, did I mention Elle has the same abilities to see ghosts of people from the past?

My Review: I enjoyed the historical aspect of the story. I was a little confused with the whole moving in with Ned and Elle but that was because I had only listened to part of the previous story. In order to get the whole picture, you need to read the stories in order. They build upon each other.

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### **Anne says**

Just as I mentioned in my review of Seeing the Dead, book 2 of this series, there is no mystery. Abby sees a ghost which indicates that an ancestor was in Salem at the time of the witch trials and the story is all about her genealogical research to find out more about her ancestors. On the way to finding those details out, we get lots and lots of page time about Abby working on Ned's house. May I never read about wallpaper in another book again! We also get page after page after page about what she is thinking about. Most times I'd like a little more about what characters are thinking, but we're beaten to boredom by it.

There's also a lot about Leslie (her former boss as you find out as the book opens) and her issues with Abby. I question the whole legality of what happened and wonder why Abby didn't do anything.

As in Seeing the Dead, the book just ends like walking into a wall.

I received my copy from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Joyce M. Tice says**

My own attraction to this series is the genealogy. It reminds me how exciting it is when you are new to it and how rapidly one can travel unexpected paths in the pursuit of ancestors. As with Abby's experience, it leads the person into elements of history that were not so interesting before finding a personal link. It's fun to be reminded of that initial enthusiasm and excitement.

I have read three of these in two days and really have to get something else done this weekend, or will I just head on into number four of the series? Probably the latter.

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### **Melanie says**

I have a lot of thoughts. First of all, a sperm donor is NOT the father and has absolutely no rights in the child life. The fact that the main character thinks that the mother of the sperm donor, the sperm donor, and her, the girlfriend of the sperm donor, should have access to the child is is troubling and dangerous. I am a biologist, and I am saying that biology has zero to do with parenting.

Second, she spends at least half of the book b-tching about the fact that she has no job, but does nothing

about it. By the way, she has a wrongful termination lawsuit ready and done because of why she was fired. However, she complains about how she needs a job and wants a job but does ZERO work towards getting a real job. She talks about wallpapers and asks for free stuff from her working boyfriend. I already had an issue with it during the last book, but now that she was just complaining about not having a job yet asking for a brand new kitchen from her boyfriend was just gross.

Third, she is so mean to her doormat boyfriend. She tells him to cook himself or clean himself after he has been at work all day making money to support her. No, I do not think women are there to serve or whatever, but the partner who stays at home should be responsible for more of the house work than the person who is outside of the home. My former boss' husband used to make the food, took care of the kids, and the home while she was at work because that was his contribution to the relationship. She barely asks about him, she only talks about herself. She yells at Ned for having an opinion, like she is a dictator, and I only added the tator part to be nice.

Fourth, she had absolutely no right to tell the sperm donor's mother about the child. She yells at Ned because he hasn't talked to his mom about this, but she shut it down when he asked about if she talked to her parents about it. The amount of double standards with this woman is ridiculous.

I hate her. I don't hate many fictional characters, but I hate her. She claims that witches don't exist, she even calls them crazy, but she sees dead people. Excuse me, but if you are seeing dead people then don't come for witches like that. I don't believe you can see dead people or in magical powers, but if someone were to tell me they believe in it, I'd be like, cool because it is not my place to judge. She thinks the word "hysterical" is offensive, but she's totally cool with blaming a slave women and using the word "Indian" for Native Americans. She even corrects someone saying "the politically correct term is accused witches", she brought in politically correct but was using the word "Indian" for people who are not from India. She talks about hostile "Indians" in this book because they were defending their land and themselves from the genocide that occurred.

The author completely forgot about the second book in this one. She also has a different book series in which she demonizes the Brits because of how they treated the Irish, but treats/talks about actual slaves and Native Americans so poorly. Honestly, I don't think I can keep reading these books, and I'm going to need to step away from the other series of books this author writes, at least for a while. She is so careful about her own history, and feels so personal about her ancestors but some of us don't have the luxury of knowing where our people came from, because our ancestors were brought here on slave ships after they were kidnapped from their homes. I am cool with people looking for their ancestors and everything, like sure! Be proud of your heritage, but she was just so dismissive of Native Americans and in the last book she made the slave who escaped to freedom an alcoholic, it just doesn't sit well with me.

People might think I am oversensitive because of it, but no one is as oversensitive as the main character over the word "hysteria" or someone suggesting she get a job.

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### **Constance Maloney says**

I enjoyed the novelty of the story line in the first book in this series, and the relationships developed between the Abby and the other characters. The 2nd book became tedious in sections, when several pages were dedicated to Abby's scattered, ever -roaming and often repeating thoughts. There is a reason that we do not always share every single random thought with those around us - they are boring to anyone else but

ourselves. I have now stopped reading mid-way through the 3rd book - I cannot take any more of Abby's constantly blathering thought process.

Her relationship with Ned has evolved into two long, tedious and repeating events: she asks him something about the unique situations they experience, and he answers that he does not know. She gets irrationally angry upon discovering something he has not previously shared with her, then she forgives him. She also has to prod him to complete any sort of goals in his personal life - he has also become a one dimensional character, who cannot stand up against her sometimes irrational behavior.

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### **Hilary (A Wytch's Book Review) says**

Abby has lost her job and her rental house (but the latter isn't important as she has moved in with Nat), she is currently spending her days renovating the house and doing more Genealogy research. The latter brings her to Salem and the infamous Witch Trials, she soon realises that an ancestor of hers was there in the court (and later at the hangings!). As well as this Ellie (her previous boss's daughter) is determined to see her even though her Mother doesn't like the idea (Leslie is finding it hard to realise that Ellie, Abby and Nat can see ghosts). Abby needs to sort all of this out in order to get some peace of mind.

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### **Kristina says**

I just finished reading Defending the Dead by Sheila Connolly. It is the third book in the Relatively Dead series. Abby Kimball is currently out of a job, but is using the time to fix up the house where she lives with her boyfriend Ned Newhall. He purchased a lovely old Victorian that needs a lot of work. Abby and Ned share a gift. They can see the dead. Well, only deceased people who are ancestors. It seems that they have to be a lineal ancestor. Abby only discovered her gift when she moved into the area and took a tour of an older home. Abby can see them, sometimes even talk to them, or see scenes from the past play out front her ancestor's point of view. Ned has had the gift since he was young, but he suppressed it (actually, outright ignoring it). Ned's mother, Sarah, has the gift, but she did not embrace it either. Now, though, they have someone else to consider. Ellie has the gift. Ellie is Ned's biological daughter. Ned's ex-fiance, married a nice man, George, who cannot have children. Ned was the donor for both of their children (they have a young son named Peter).

Leslie has not taken the news of Ellie's gift very well. Leslie was also Abby's boss at the museum, but she fired Abby (I personally do not think that it is fair or legal). Abby has too much time on her hands to think. Abby is working on the house, but it leaves her mind keeps whirling. Abby wants to find out more about her gift and decides that Salem and the witch trials would be a place to start. Wants Abby gets started, she gets drawn into the history and she wants to know why witch trials happened.

One day Abby gets a call and it is Ellie. She took a bus to get to Abby. Ellie misses Abby because she is the only person who understands what she sees and hears. This makes Leslie realize that she has to let Ellie see Abby. Ellie and Abby get together one day a week during the summer. The other days Abby is researching the witch trials and her family lineage. Will Leslie understand Ellie's gift? What will be the outcome of Abby's research into her Salem ancestors and the witch trials? Will Ned actually do any work on the house?

Defending the Dead is a good book, but I did not enjoy it as much as the previous two books. I do not understand why the characters never embraced their wonderful gift nor Leslie's attitude toward Abby. This book is also very heavy on the history (I do not mind, but some people might feel bogged down by it). I give Defending the Dead 4 out of 5 stars. I enjoy reading Sheila Connolly's books. I read all her series (Orchard Mystery Series, Museum Mystery series, the County Cork Mystery series, and the Relatively Dead Mystery series).

I received a complimentary copy of this book from NetGalley and Beyond the Page Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

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