



Silent Fear

Katherine Howell

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On a searing summer's day paramedic Holly Garland rushes to an emergency to find a man collapsed with a bullet wound in the back of his head, CPR being performed by two bystanders, and her long-estranged brother Seth watching it all unfold.

Seth claims to be the dying man's best friend, but Holly knows better than to believe anything he says and fears that his re-appearance will reveal the bleak secrets of her past – secrets which both her fiancé Norris and her colleagues have no idea exist, and which if exposed could cause her to lose everything.

Detective Ella Marconi suspects Seth too, but she's also sure the dead man's wife is lying, and the deceased's boss seems just too helpful. But then a shocking double homicide related to the case makes Ella realise that her investigations are getting closer to the killer, but also increasing the risk of an even higher body count.

Silent Fear Details

Date : Published February 1st 2012 by Pan Macmillan Australia

ISBN : 9781742610726

Author : Katherine Howell

Format : Paperback 416 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Cultural, Australia

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From Reader Review Silent Fear for online ebook

Linda Joy says

Light, listen while you work sort of reading... homegrown, Sydney setting, homicide. Didn't have to turn pages.
audio.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

Silent Fear is the fifth novel by Australian crime fiction writer Katherine Howell featuring Detective Ella Marconi and, as with the other installments in the series, it is a page turning blend of police procedural, action and suspense.

Paramedic Holly Garland is shocked to find her estranged brother, Seth, standing over the body on a routine call out for a collapse, while two bystanders perform clumsy CPR on the man. When she discovers that her patient has been shot, she is certain her brother is somehow involved and is determined to keep her distance, wary of the secrets he keeps.

Detective Ella Marconi finds Seth suspicious as well, there is something the dead man's friends are hiding and she is determined to find out what it is, especially when an innocent man is brutally executed and the ring of conspirators begins to weaken.

Howell's Detective Ella Marconi series is distinguished by the inclusion of a paramedic as a major character in each book. In this instance, paramedic Holly Garland's own secrets become tangled in mystery surrounding her deceased patient, with devastating consequences. Howell skillfully weaves Holly's personal and professional story into the main plot, both which are potentially at risk from the past that has come back to haunt her. Her brother, Seth, becomes an omen of doom when a close friend comes under investigation for overtime rorts, a colleague is harassing her and she is fighting with her partner.

Solving the mystery of Paul Fowler's death is the priority for Detective Ella Marconi but as in any investigation there are uncooperative witnesses, false starts and leads that go nowhere. Trying to trace the shooters movements after the fact, there is a car lurking on a suburban street, another that screams out of a parking lot, bystanders who supply false names and addresses and objects dropped from a bridge. I really appreciate the level of realism Howell uses within her books. Her officers wade through paperwork, follow up on tips, interview people and piece together their case methodically rather than relying on improbable coincidence or lucky guesses. Marconi suspects a conspiracy but is surprised when their investigation leads them from the suburbs of Sydney to the seedy city streets of drugs, prostitution and vicious turf wars. The plot is layered and well paced with the author parceling out information judiciously, maintaining mystery and tension. The conclusion is tense and exciting though, realistically, not as neatly tied up in the way crime authors often seem compelled to do.

Howell's police officers are not just cops, while things for Ella are relatively calm in this installment, aside from a sleazy and smug colleague getting on her nerves, she does invest herself in this case. Ella doesn't like being made a fool of and makes one of the suspects a personal enemy. Her partner on the case is concerned for his father who is recovering from a stabbing. His distraction affects the case somewhat though as it ends up the two cases are tangentially linked. This is probably the only aspect of the plot I thought was entirely too convenient.

Exciting, authentic and a great read I enjoyed Silent Fear and read it in one sitting, unwilling to put it down. Silent Fear is a page turner, and just as the sticker warns on the cover,(as one of the 50 books highlighted in Australia's National Year of Reading program), it's "A book You Can't Put Down".

Mary says

This is the first of this series I have read and I found it hard to put down. While Ella Marconi is the lead character in the series and is well drawn, Holly the ambulance person, survivor of child abuse and the worst of it's awful and predictable outcomes, is the secondary character in this novel and is wonderfully drawn. Her dilemmas at first repel us, and then, when we fully understand them, break our hearts. Two strong women characters who both like, love and respect men while struggling with to manage the various negative effects of paternalism and sexism (both are being harassed) - you've got to love a book like that!

Not that this book is written about the gender wars. It's a really strong police/detective story that completely holds your attention and has some twists in it that you'd never expect at the start. Katherine Howell does a brilliant job of building tension and atmosphere.

Highly recommended.

Jenny says

Silent Fear is book 5 in the Ella Marconi Series by Katherine Howell. Paramedic Holly Garland attended a collapse of a young man at Beaman Park and realising he died from a gunshot to back of head Detective Ella Marconi and her partner Murray Shakespeare became involved. However, when Detective Ella Marconi and Murray Shakespeare started to investigate into the death of Paul Fowler, it became clear that it was not a simple murder enquiry. The readers of Silent Fear will continue to follow the twist and turns of Detective Ella Marconi and her partner Murry Shakespeare investigation to see what happens.

I enjoy reading Silent Fear. I love the way Katherine Howell portrayal of Ella Marconi and the way she interacts with other characters. Silent Fear is well written and researched by Katherine Howell. I was engaged in the plot of Silent Fear from the first page and the way she incorporated the twist and turns in the book.

The readers of Silent Fear will learn about corruption in the Ambulance Service. Also, the readers of Silent Fear will learn about how drugs and family violence can destroy a family. Silent Fear highlights for the readers the role and procedures of the Ambulance Service and how they cooperate with law enforcement.

I recommend this book.

Diane says

#5 of her Detective Ella Marconi series, and chock full of angst at every turn :)

Again Det. Ella shares center stage with a paramedic, this time the paramedic has a "past" that really wouldn't sit all that well with patients.

Fast start to this book and a very good read. From attending to a person who has collapsed and they think is heat or heart attack only to find out the victim was shot in the back of the neck and a "good Samaritan" performing CPR slightly (or would that be) majorly wrong. Then seeing that a long lost (and one who hoped would stay lost) brother. Then report back to the ambulance clinic and low and behold and old "client" happens to be a new paramedic. Oh what a tangled web we weave.

I liked this book in a lot of directions - a dumb, jerk of a cop who continuously harasses Ella until she finally grows a pair, and the mysteries that keep forming until you can put them together towards the end.

4 solid stars and a good thumbs up - really couldn't give 5 stars although I thought I might - will let other readers decide that fate :)

Sally906 says

What can I say this is the fifth book in the series and Katherine Howell just keeps on getting better. Silent Fear drew me in from the first page and did not let me go until I had finished. It was unputdownable! It opens on a stinking hot December day in Sydney, paramedic Holly and her partner are sent to a suspected heart attack victim in a park, when they arrive they discover the victim has been shot in the head. Detective Ella Marconi returns to take part in the investigation, but this is more Holly's story this time, a woman with a hidden past who has to find the strength to bring the past into the present and become a stronger person for it. Katherine worked as a Sydney paramedic herself so she knows her stuff, Silent Fear is a fast paced thriller with several sub-plots going on complete with twists and turns as the stories intersect briefly and then part again. Thank GOODNESS she is already working on the next book!

Brenda says

Detective Ella Marconi gets involved in her next case after paramedics Holly and Joe are called to the scene of a man who had collapsed whilst he and his friends were kicking a football around one blisteringly hot Saturday. On their arrival, two bystanders were doing their best to apply CPR to the man, but Holly could see that they were too late. Their CPR efforts weren't the best, but at least they were trying. To her horror, she saw her estranged brother, Seth, standing with some other men, obviously friends of the deceased. She immediately had her suspicions about Seth...nothing good could come from him being at the scene. Suddenly Holly finds a bullet wound at the back of the man's head, and Joe steps to one side to call the police.

As the investigation commences, Ella has her suspicions about Seth, who declares he is the dead man, Paul Fowler's best friend. Trina, Paul's wife, seems to have secrets as well, and Ella feels she is lying. The friends who were kicking the football around seem to be trying to jeopardise the investigation plus Paul's boss is too helpful...what is going on?

Holly wants her past to stay in the past, and is worried Seth will cause her fiancé, Norris, to discover things about Holly that she has never told him. Her work colleagues have no idea about Holly's bleak past as well, and she wants it to stay that way.

Suddenly a brutal double murder occurs, and Ella realizes they are getting closer to finding out the truth. But will they be able to find the killer before the body count rises?

I love the incredible pace of Howell's novels, the passion and devotion of Detective Ella Marconi, the fact that she is a very likeable character, plus the weaving of the paramedics' lives into each new case.

Highly recommended.

Graham Crawford says

I haven't read this writer before, and a friend passed *Silent Fear* to me with the comment - pretty light weight but fun. And she basically right - good ol' page turner crime fic. Realistic characters and there was an interesting subtext of sexual harassment of women in the workplace - and how to handle it. I thought I would be more delighted by reading a story set in my home city, but that part of the novel actually irritated me. It seemed that every third paragraph had to mention a different suburb's name. These characters covered more territory in one day than my entire 20 years plus living in Sydney. And in spite of all the place name dropping I didn't get any sense of the local colours. That was a small gripe with an otherwise well constructed work.

I was a little reluctant to get another book out in this series because it seems they all feature the detective pairing up with a different paramedic, and that sounded like it could get monotonous but the other books seem to rate highly with Goodreads reviewer so I will give her another go.

Sharon says

Paramedic, Holly Garland and her partner, Joe are called out to an emergency involving a young man who has collapsed. Arriving at the scene they quickly learn the young man and his friends had been playing a bit of football even though it was an extremely hot day. Two people who were passing by when the young man collapsed started CPR, but Holly could see it was being done incorrectly and assists straight away. Then Holly discovers a bullet wound at the back of the victim's head which is when, Joe is required to call the police. Looking around at the crowd of onlookers, Holly suddenly recognizes a face in the crowd and instantly feels on edge. Holly hasn't had contact with her brother, Seth for twelve years and this was the last place she thought she'd run into him.

Detective Ella Maroconi is leading the investigation and not long after she has arrived at the scene she quickly learns that, Seth is the victim, Paul Fowler's best friend. Although Seth is quite upset and shocked about his friend dying it is, Holly who has her suspicions about Seth. As Ella digs deeper and collects more information about, Paul she quickly discovers that not all is as it seems.

Holly wants nothing to do with her brother, but once her fiancé, Norris finds out that he's in the area he tries to encourage Holly to have contact with him. Holly's past is not one she wants to share with, Norris and up to date she's been able to hide it from him, but she's worried that, Seth will start talking and it's the last thing she needs right now. Seth tries to convince, Holly that he has changed and what he did and how he lived his life all those years ago are behind him, but Holly is not convinced and just wants her brother out of her life.

Will Holly change her mind and can Ella find out who shot Paul before the shooter strikes again?

This is the fifth book in the Detective Ella Maroconi series and I've enjoyed each and everyone of them so far and I'm looking forward to reading the next one. Aussie author, Katherine Howell really knows how to get the readers attention right from the start all the way to the very end. A fast paced read with an intriguing plot which I have no hesitation in HIGHLY recommending.

Karen says

It's odd, the things that can occur to you when you're reading books. In the case of SILENT FEAR I just could not stop thinking how glad I was to be a reader and not a writer. Honestly, how do these people come up with such consistently good characters and excellent plots? Howell makes her life that little bit more difficult by always bringing in a Paramedic thread, mostly with new characters each book, weaving what happens to them on the job into the plot of an excellent crime fiction / police procedural book. Even allowing for a background as a paramedic, I've no idea how she consistently builds these plots, creates these characters and writes these tremendous books!

In SILENT FEAR the connection between paramedic Holly and the police investigation into the shooting death of Paul Fowler is multi-faceted. She's one of the crew called when he collapses in a park, only to discover a bullet wound. Another connection is her estranged brother Seth, best friend of Paul, on the scene in the park when the shooting occurred. Things get even more complicated once her background starts to reveal, and her fiancé gets involved.

In Holly, Howell has again created a very interesting, fleshed out and realistic character. Her story is cleverly woven into the ongoing police investigation, ensuring that the reader gets a real chance to connect with her, whilst never feeling that the book is wandering off the point. Readers have had the earlier books in the series to really get to know Detective Ella Marconi, the lead voice in the detective group investigating Fowler's death. Marconi does seem to be getting an easier time in SILENT FEAR than she has in the earlier books. Aside from a bit of grief from a slimy new colleague, which she's handling, and her partner's worry and lack of communication, her ongoing relationship with her parents is considerably simpler (in this book they are cruising around New Zealand making lots of ship to shore calls to keep in touch), so everything's pretty smooth on the Marconi front. There is, however, a great cast of supporting police - male and female - with a good, solid combination of angst and normality in the entire group, leading to more than a sneaking hope that there could be an ensemble building.

One of the things that Howell does particularly well is to balance the personal and the professional, the paramedic and the cop lines. At no point do you feel the action wandering, or stalling, or wading around in uninteresting waters. There's no misdirection or padding in any of these books, and markedly so in SILENT FEAR. The story clipped along at a good pace, the author's not been afraid to cause her characters some serious angst, and it's possible for a reader to get a strong feeling of connection. The only downside, and a very very minor one at that, seemed to be the drawing together of a couple of plot lines that didn't quite work - perhaps because it seemed to be unnecessary?

But seriously, the only real downside to SILENT FEAR is that you're going to have to be prepared before you start. It's flagged as "A Book You Can't Put Down", and they mean that. Emphatically.

Helene Young says

Silent Fear is another page turner from Katherine Howell. Detective Ella Marconi is back at work unravelling a complex crime involving brothels, drugs, and murder. Holly, a paramedic, provides the other point of view for the story. It's a good contrast between the conflicted paramedic and the dedicated detective.

As usual the cast of characters is large, interesting and oh so real. The suspects are linked by spidery connections that gradually pull together for the ending. Ms Howell's stories are less of a 'who dunnit' and more of the 'why dunnit' which suits me as I'm not adverse to reading the end of a book before the beginning!

She digs deep into her characters' motivations and the human psyche, and that makes for strong characterisation. Along with snappy dialogue, a solid plot and plenty of action, Silent Fear kept me reading long after I should have been asleep.

I read this as part of the AWWC 2012.

Phrynne says

A very enjoyable book and a fast, easy read but for me it did not quite have the edge that her other books have had. I was a little uncomfortable with some of the dialogue ringing untrue and the way her men are divided into the really good and the really bad. However this is a teeny tiny criticism matched against the excellence of her story telling and the way it is paced. Not a book you can just read a little and then put down. I was happy to see a little light coming into Ella's love life and hope this develops in the next book which I have waiting ready to read.

Marina Finlayson says

This is not a genre I usually read, but I really enjoyed this very engaging detective fiction set in Sydney. I picked it up only meaning to read a little but couldn't put it down, after a very fast start where paramedic Holly arrives at a young man's collapse, expecting a cardiac arrest, only to find he's been shot in the back of the neck. On top of that her very shady brother, who she hasn't seen in 12 years, is on the scene, and she just knows he's got something to do with whatever is going on.

It's up to Detective Ella Marconi to figure out what that is, and following along as she uncovers the clues and the secrets of Holly's life are revealed is a thrilling ride. This is the fifth in a series featuring Detective Marconi, and she's a strong, likeable character. It wasn't a problem to start out of order, but I'm now keen to go back and read the others in the series!

Li'l Owl says

Paramedics Holly and Joe are called to the scene of a possible cardiac arrest of a 29 year old male. The day is scorching hot but is that enough to have caused someone so young to collapse? During their efforts to save him, Holly discovers a bullet wound to the back of his neck and she knows that he never had a chance. Seth, who claims to be the dead mans best friend, is standing nearby watching it all unfold.

Detective Ella Marconi is called in to investigate the homicide of the young man, who has now been identified as Paul Fowler. When Ella questions Holly, Holly reveals that Seth is her long-estranged brother and doesn't hesitate to point the finger at him as being involved with the young man's death but won't elaborate more about why that may be.

Holly knows better than to believe anything Seth says and fears that his reappearance will reveal the dark secrets of her past, ones she is afraid that if brought to light could cause her to lose everything she holds dear.

As the investigation progresses, Ella finds that Fowler's life is anything but straight forward and her list of suspects is growing. At the top of her list is Seth, but she's also sure that the dead man's soon to be ex-wife is lying, and Fowler's boss seems to be just a little too helpful for her liking. Then, when Ella gets closer to identifying the killer, a shocking double homicide occurs and she realizes that her investigations may cause the body count to rise higher still.

Silent Fear is the 5th book in the *Detective Ella Marconi* series and there's never a break in the action especially in this audio book format.

Katherine Howell knows precisely how to write the personalities of each character in a way that they are still full of life and as fresh as ever. When the author's vivid words are combined with individual voices created by narrator Caroline Lee, the book explodes into 3-D for the ears.

I can feel my heart pounding along with Ella and Holly as the suspense ratchets up and I have to remember to breathe. Then there's Kyle, Holly's paramedic coworker, who is so creepy that it made my skin crawl every time he was on scene, so to speak. And John, Ella's fellow police officer, who is so incredibly obnoxious and annoying that I wanted to reach out and slap him upside the head every chance I got! Oh! If only! Caroline Lee gets my blood boiling, gives me goose bumps, makes my eyes well up with tears, whatever emotion or feeling Katherine Howell wants the reader to feel I felt it. If these two wanted me to get excited about the ingredients from a jar of spaghetti sauce they could do it!

So now I'm on to book 6, Web of Deceit. I'm sure it will be great too but since it's in hardback format I'll have to work a little harder to conjure up the voices myself. *sigh*

Karen Brooks says

Katherine Howell's latest novel in the Ella Marconi series, Silent Fear is utterly gripping, atmospheric and unputdownable.

Opening on a sultry Sydney day close to Christmas, the kind where skin sticks to leather and flies adhere to skin, paramedic Holly is summoned, along with her partner, to what appears to be a collapse at a nearby football ground. Only, when she arrives, the young victim hasn't fainted from heatstroke as first suspected but been shot in the head. Discovering that her estranged brother is not only a witness, but a friend of the

deceased, Holly senses that her carefully ordered world is about to fall apart. So does detective Ella Marconi who, on arrival at the scene with her distracted partner Murray, recognises that what she's now investigating is a professional hit with all the sinister connotations that evokes. The deeper Ella digs into this case, the more those involved are not who or what they seem and the truth proves to be more elusive than the killer. Howell has this wonderful ability to create mood and place. As you read, you're there in Sydney, sweltering in the heat, longing for the traffic to move again, for the wind to blow across your fevered brow. The splash of raindrops, the relief provided by cool drinks, coughing air-conditioners and the distant sounds of water is visceral. The evasions, lies and egos of the various characters that Ella (and Holly) endures, just adds to the sense of oppression and the simmering tensions between those who should be allies. The plot is so tightly woven, clutching you by the neck and dragging you into the ominous motivations of the seemingly innocent and certainly desperate. Each scene builds on the last until the climax explodes. Characters are superbly drawn. You invest heavily in the central characters and anxiety runs high as their intentions are questioned and their hard-earned lives challenged. As usual, Ella is a believable, strong and reliable character that drives the narrative with her ethical approach to not only detective work, but people as well. Holly is a complex, deep woman who having lost everything once, stands to do so again. Alas, redemption and moral fortitude don't always prevent tragedy from unfolding. Howell does not flinch from making the hard calls in that regard either, remaining faithful to the narrative and creating a story that is impossible to tear yourself away from. I lost three nights' good sleep reading this book and it's been worth every heavy-lidded day since and yawn since. What a writer! What a book! Can't wait for the next one...
