



Happy Never After

Kathy Hogan Trocheck

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Since retiring from the Atlanta Police Department, Callahan Garrity is really cleaning up with her House Mouse housecleaning company -- especially since she added "crime investigation" to the list of services offered.

Callahan agrees to locate the missing member of the popular '60s girl group, the VelvetTeens, and she doesn't have to search long. Deloras Carter, the a.w.o.l. singer, is found passed out drunk by a swimming pool near the dead body of the trio's former producer. The smoking gun in Deloras's hand suggests that the VelvetTeens won't be reuniting for a comeback tour anytime in the near future ... unless Callahan and her "Mice" can spotlight -- and survive -- a different killer act.

Happy Never After Details

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Author : Kathy Hogan Trocheck

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jd says

The 4th book in the series, for some reason I had thought it was the 2nd and read it immediately after the first. With that noted,

I did enjoy the characters a lot more this round, maybe from familiarity with them from the first book, but they all seemed more engaging, save for one glaring cheater, gonna have to find out what happened in their relationship during books 2-3 because it seemed not only out of character but what he said to Callahan was really out of line? at one point and I am done with him because of it. (Hopefully Callahan is too)...

Enjoyed the plot of this mystery, didn't find the language used vulgar or unnecessary--it's just how people talk? Maybe I'm used to worse IRL and in other books because it didn't even register as something that could be an issue until I read other people's reviews talking about it. I have 2 major gripes about this book, both of which was shared by the first novel:

It goes from 0-60 once you find out who the murderer is, and not in a good way, in a internet meme "that escalated quickly" way that leaves you kind of shocked and wondering if the editor was demanding the final copy NOW and the author just wrote every terrible thing that could possibly happen, done!

And, once you are halfway through or in the last 3rd of the book, any other mysteries or loose ended suspects remain that way, possibly with a mention at the very end of the book. It's particularly egregious here because in this case, it was the initial mystery Callahan was hired to solve. LITERALLY NO MENTION of the missing Delores starting about halfway through, and no description or effort indicated to find her until the VERY end, in a couple of paragraphs that were like, oh yeah btw totally found her, she was here doing this. Like ????? really? It feels like even that was stuck in there because there was probably an advance reader who was like, sooooo.... reunion? Delores? where? what? Callahan solving that in addition to the murder is something I would have liked to read, on her followup for it, could have her dealing with some of her demons in the aftermath of everything that happened, but maybe that would have made the book too long? Dunno.

But! am now definitely invested in Callahan as a character and will try to now read the rest in order. :D

Gwen Menz says

Meh couldn't get into this story at all. I guess I didn't realize it was #4 in the series... I marked it "read" but never got past page 50.

Patty says

I enjoy these mysteries - fast paced, places I know, and not too deep - perfect poolside read.

I had to laugh at this one....the book was written in the late 1990s and Callahan makes a comment about how

the 80s as it was the decade that gave us Donald Trump. If Callahan could comment now! Just had to laugh out loud!

Tgordon says

I just read three of these books in two days. They are highly entertaining. I love love love Callahan, the main character. The other ever present cast in these books her mom, boyfriend, and her employees are just as much fun. She always seem to be able to solve the crime while almost always getting hr self killed! My only hold out on 5 scores is the ever present GD word. I'm no prude and will pop them out with the best of them however that one is off limits and sends me to prayers when I hear it. Other than that these are fun fun books.

Charlyn says

(So, not only does the blurb on the back of the book have the plot wrong, the name of a character is spelled wrong, too.) Callahan is initially hired to look for Delores, the missing member of the VelvetTeens who is needed so the former trio can work on a movie about their career and maybe stage a comeback. Instead, Callahan finds Rita, another member, passed out drunk with a gun in her hand, the gun that killed the VelvetTeens' former manager. Callahan's focus now shifts to find the real murderer. Along the way, she also needs to discover why her boyfriend, Mac, keeps visiting his ex-wife. This book keeps the pace of others in the series.

Marleen says

On a hunch I picked this book out of a bargain bin not knowing what to expect. It turned out this was an easy and entertaining read about a former Atlanta cop named Callahan Garrity, who quit the force and started running a cleaning service with her mother from their house, while doing some private detecting on the side. This is actually the 4th book in the series, but I didn't feel like I missed out on prior history with these characters. Callahan accepts to search for Delores, the long lost sister of one of her acquaintances, who was part of a trio of singers in the sixties, called the Velveteens, who have been offered a chance at a comeback. I must say that having recently enjoyed "20 Feet from Stardom" the documentary, I fell into the story right away; I better understood how so many female singers and acts were financially taken advantage of in the old days. The case gets more complicated when the trio's star producer is found dead in his pool house and one of the trio is holding the smoking gun, literally.

I liked all the characters in this story; there was an ordinariness about them that spoke to me. They were also quirky and brave. I enjoyed the sense of family and friendship that was at the centre of it all.

I look forward to reading more books in this series.

Alex says

This is a Mary Kay Andrews book. She is writing as Trocheck.

Michelle Elizabeth says

I had no idea that Mary Kay Andrews wrote a mystery series under a different name. I saw this book at the used bookstore and nabbed it. It was fun, fast moving and chock full of interesting characters. If you are looking for the usual summer romance, well good luck.

Pat Beard says

I am loving this more gritty, salty, not-quite-so-cozy series.

Leane says

I really enjoyed this story.

I don't know why I hesitated on reading this one. It was really good.

Book Concierge says

Digital audio book narrated by Hillary Huber.

From the book jacket: In this fourth installment of the Callahan Garrity series, the South's favorite cleaning lady/sleuth immerses herself in the world of sixties girl groups and nineties rap groups to hunt the killer of a suave, self-serving record producer.

My reactions:

I like this mystery series. It's a little edgier than a traditional cozy, because Callahan is a former Atlanta Police Officer, but it has many of the classic elements of a cozy: an "amateur" sleuth, a regular cast of characters surrounding the main character's life/business (in this case, her mother and the other maids of her house-cleaning business), and murder that happens (mostly) off the page. We also have a love interest that is getting complicated. Callahan, however is NOT an amateur – she's a licensed private investigator, and can carry a gun (and shoot it). She's also intelligent, determined and usually gets herself out of a jam rather than wait around for help.

I really enjoyed the premise in this installment, especially as I was a teenager in the era of the sixties girl groups. There were plenty of references to that era that kept me entertained and enough plot twists and red herrings to keep me interested. And ... I did NOT guess the perpetrator until the reveal.

Hilary Huber does a fine job of narrating the audio version. She has good pacing, clear diction, and the skill to give the many characters distinct voices, making it easy for the listener to distinguish who is speaking. I particularly love how she voices the elderly Easterbrooks: Baby and Sister.

Amanda says

Each book in the series seems to improve a little, though it is still a pretty generic murder mystery. The main character is likable, and doesn't try to always be the superhero/damsel in distress, and she definitely isn't perfect, which makes her a little more relatable.

stacey says

Living the series

The series is something I wasn't expecting but very pleased. Callahan and her merry band are a good story that I can't wait for the next book.

L8blmr says

When I read that this Callahan Garrity story was going to be about a singing group from the sixties and the music industry in Georgia, I thought it just might be my favorite in the series so far. However, it occurred to me about halfway through the book that I really do not like Callahan that much (nor her mother Edna, as a matter of fact). Therefore, I had to rely on the mystery and the locales I might recognize to keep me reading and neither of those factors met my expectations this time around. I am hoping that Callahan's personality takes a turn for the better in the second half of this series and that the mysteries are a little less plodding and predictable. There is still plenty here to like, and I am hoping that maybe this book is the one weak link.

Wanda says

Callahan Garrity is asked to help find the third member of an old girl group. One of the members is the ex of a friend of hers. One member is a drunk and she ends up accused of murdering their former recording exec. Story centers around the music industry.

Callahan starts working on the murder case and gets her House Mouse employees and her mother involved in searching for clues. There are lots of people who didn't like the victim and she has lots of motives to evaluate. She is having boyfriend problems which is adding to her stress levels. She gets into some dangerous situations and nearly gets killed.

Fast paced, lots of drama, southern charm, references to "oldies" music.
