



## Dead or Alive

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On the day she plans to divorce him, Meg O'Hara's husband Robin--a handsome British intelligence agent--disappears, and Meg is left to find out whether he is alive or dead. Reissue.

## Dead or Alive Details

Date : Published November 1st 1994 by Warner Books (NY) (first published 1936)

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Author : Patricia Wentworth

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## From Reader Review Dead or Alive for online ebook

### **Andrea Instone says**

I simply love her crime novels with a bit of romantic and dark rooms and secrets - they are delightfully oldfashioned. She takes her time with descriptions and thoughts and makes you feel for the protagonists. When I read PW I almost always see the novel in pictures; something with Cary Grant and Joan Bennet in it.

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### **Sep says**

Poor Meg O'Hara! Not only did she choose a bounder for a husband, not only is he missing - presumed dead, but now, when she wants to get him legally declared dead, messages keep appearing from him claiming to still be alive. There was a likely body, but this book, written in 1936, does not have access to DNA test, blood types, or (apparently) dental records. It is part of a short series that Wentworth wrote involving a shadowy secret service run by Garret and Smith. The villain has a connection to The Vulture, a master criminal who met his just end in a previous book.

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### **Ryan says**

Robin O'Hara never deserved his wife, Meg. He was unfaithful and involved in work that was just a little bit dangerous. When Meg reaches her limits and wants a divorce, Robin disappears and is presumed dead. Shortly after, Meg starts receiving messages that give her the idea that Robin may not be dead after all. When former beau, Bill Coverdale, comes back to London he is intent on winning Meg for himself. He just has to deal with her fears about her missing husband, a crazy group of kidnappers, and save her from having her body dumped into a remote lake, never to be seen again.

For some odd reason, it took me forever to read this book. I would pick it up, read a few pages, then put it down again. I'm not sure if it was the book, or if it was I wasn't in the mood to read it. Actually I'm not sure if I was in the mood to read anything other than gay romance, when I picked this book up. I was convinced I would like it, so I kept slogging through, never giving up on Bill and Meg.

About half way through, I started to get into the rhythm of the book. I was able to relax and allow myself to truly enjoy the author's writing and her characterization. It wasn't the most complex of mysteries, and a astute reader can figure it out midway through, but it was still engaging and interesting. And maybe if I hadn't halfway fallen in love with Bill, I wouldn't have enjoyed it as much as I did, but he is one of the most interesting characters to come along in Golden Age mysteries.

Not even sure I could fully explain my affection for him, at least not to the extent he deserves. He's a man's man; masculine, self assure, reliable, and sexy as can be. But he is still what I would consider a man of today, not the typical man of the era. He is vulnerable, in touch with his emotional side, and isn't afraid to put a woman's needs before his own.

This was only the second Patricia Wentworth mystery that I had read, the first being Miss Silver Comes to Stay. When I picked this one up, I wasn't aware that it wasn't going to be a Miss Silver mystery, and it was

nice to see another side of her writing. I think I have one or two more of her books waiting around to be read, and I'm looking forward to it.

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## A.M. says

Bill Coverdale is in a major pickle. He's been in love with his friend Meg for a long time but then she marries his old school friend, Robin O'Hara, and Bill just knows she's unhappy.

He had stayed her friend for ten years , and then she had married Robin O'Hara . That meant she was going to want a friend very badly some day . (Kindle Locations 136-137).

Ouch...

He takes himself off overseas and by the time he returns, Robin has disappeared. He took some spy job for the Foreign Office a year ago, and is missing presumed (but not yet declared) dead. Problem is, his widow doesn't believe he's dead. She's been left some very weird messages telling her he's still alive.

Bill clenched his hands . Meg wouldn't talk if he let fly . If she didn't talk , he couldn't help her . But to sit there and hear her blame herself because that swine O'Hara had been a disappointed fortune - hunter took every bit of his self - control . (Kindle Locations 267-269).

And when Bill tries to help her out somebody takes potshots at him. It's just not right.

There is an envelope of stuff O'Hara left at the bank with special instructions not to give it to anyone but him, unless he's officially dead and then to give it to his widow. But Meg still believes her husband is alive so she won't go to the lawyer.

[I used to be a lawyer and if I remember my Common law correctly, it takes SEVEN years to declare someone dead without a body, and if they had a body it'd be a done deal. So the biggest problem here, is she won't be able to get her lawyer to declare him dead after just one year missing.]

Ah, okay... Garrett has some X-rays of the found body and evidently O'Hara broke his leg in a distinctive way. It matches.

Bill is getting very nervous about Meg, who has gone off to stay with her odd uncle. But it all feels queer. For a 'Frank Garrett mystery' he's not doing much sleuthing. Frank Garrett is the Head of Intelligence for the Foreign Office.

Bill keeps coming to his office and filling him in but he usually just argues against Bill's suggestions. Get it together Frank! Before poor Meg is killed.

Meanwhile, Meg is very sus about her uncle's new house. It's on an island, she rarely sees him, his old staff were dismissed, and there's no phone. What she doesn't know is her mail is being tampered with and someone sent a telegram from her to Bill to tell him to back off.

Can they both trust their instincts, sort out the mystery, and be together?

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This reminded me a lot of the Thirty Nine Steps.

Meg is a lot pathetic at the beginning. But she's been gaslighted. She believes she's so useless that she won't harass her uncle for a loan, she won't go to the lawyer and wind up Robin's estate, and she certainly won't go into the Foreign Office and demand they declare their own spy dead. She trusts people past the point where they've actually tried to kill her.

But when she does get it together, she's pretty brave; it just happens too slowly for modern readers.

Although I am still a little confused about the bad guy motivation, beyond the bank envelope. \*shrugs\*

3 stars

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### **Eric says**

I found this curiously flat and rather unexciting. I skip read large chunks in order to get to the end.

As I have come to find with mystery/thrillers of this type from the 1930's the pace is all off-too slow to start with, then a breakneck ending.

The hero (was he modelled to an extent on the author's second husband?) and heroine, Bill and Meg, are just slightly too slow to be altogether convincing.

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### **Robyn says**

Early Bird Books Deal | Good thing my expectations were low; one of the worst "heroines" I've ever read! | No real mystery, the solution was obvious from the first moment that a particular character was introduced. The female lead was literally starving herself rather than accept a small loan from a man who loved her and whom she'd known all her life. She also refused to go to a lawyer and get money that was hers by right, because somebody poked holes in a leaf and left it for her to find. I'm not kidding. Very little personality and basically no gumption. Really a two-star book, but I've read enough by this author that I knew what I was getting myself in for, and was just looking for a very light fluffy read with a bit of "suspense"--such as it is.

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### **Katie Hilton says**

A delightful mystery by Patricia Wentworth. It's not in the Miss Silver series, but it's a good read.

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### **Katherine P says**

Patricia Wentworth never fails to deliver a fun old fashioned but not dated mystery. I missed Miss Silver but Meg and Bill were fun main characters. I was glad Meg did use her brain instead of just ringing her hands and being helpless. Nice twists at the end.

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### **Christopher Roden says**

I'm reviewing the Open Road Media Kindle edition of this good old-fashioned thriller/mystery from Patricia Wentworth.

When Bill Coverdale returns from a year in South America, he seeks out his old love, Meg O'Hara, who had turned him over and married Robin O'Hara, a man she barely knew. But Robin is now missing, presumed dead, although no positive identification has been made of his drowned body. Meg seems to be in straitened circumstances, and receiving no help from her uncle, Professor Henry Postlethwaite, who is seemingly wholly occupied with writing a book - and cannot be disturbed or diverted in any way.

The mystery deepens when Meg's apartment is invaded, and she is left messages purporting to come from the dead Robin. And then there is the mysterious parcel that Robin left with his bank, with instructions that it was to be opened by his wife only on proof of his death.

The main action moves to Ledstow, where Professor Postlethwaite has purchased a large house with an island - an island to which he has seemingly moved his base of operations and where he is holed up writing. The house and staff is run by the mysterious and mousey Miss Cannock, who seems to do everything in her power to protect the Professor from any interruptions.

This is a fast moving and enjoyable thriller. It's the first Patricia Wentworth that I've read, and I was impressed by the style and content.

Thanks to Open Road Media and Net Galley for providing the ARC.

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### **Dee says**

Meg O'Hara has told her husband Robin she wants a divorce. He was not happy with her announcement and told her he would let her know when he was ready to divorce her. The next day, he disappeared. A body and Robins empty wallet were found in the river. A year later, with no proof Robin was the man found in the river, Meg is still struggling with his death. She wants to be free. A life long friend Bill Coverdale moves back to London and is hoping to win Meg's attention since he has loved her since she was 15. Meg starts receiving clues that point to Robin being alive. Bill and Meg are now working together to find out if Robin is really Dead or Alive. Lots of plots that will keep you wondering. A great old fashion mystery that is set back in the day where DNA was not available to help unravel the mystery.

I would like to thank NetGalley and Open Road Integrated Media for the advanced copy. I did have a hard time getting interested at first. Half way thru that changed. Very interesting book.

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### **Heather Culley says**

It keeps you reading. Strong female characters EVERYwhere.

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### **Cate says**

Fun read! However, I read this one out of order as a stand-alone, and it would have made more sense if I'd read a few of the previous books that this one references.

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**Nancy says**

This is a rip-roaring, good old-fashioned murder mystery. It was a tonic for me to pick it up after a few more serious books.

I am new to this series by Patricia Wentworth , but she's produced a light and lively "cozy" mystery with a touch of evil, a touch of romance, and great entertainment value.

Net galley provided me with a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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**Betty says**

Vintage Patricia Wentworth. Always a pleasure to read to this lady's work.

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**Jessica says**

Super book, lovely characters. Wouldn't have minded running off with Bill myself. I've only given it four rather than five as the pacing felt a little off. A bit too slow to start and then from about half way through it seemed to go a million miles an hour and i felt a bit worn out by the time i got to the end! haha

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