



Delivering Death: A Novel

Julie Kramer

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From the author of *Stalking Susan* comes the latest installment in the “compulsively readable” (WCCO-TV) bestselling *Riley Spartz* thriller series, featuring a smart, sassy, and always entertaining TV reporter as she matches wits with a media-savvy killer.

The most appealing mystery heroine since Janet Evanovich’s Stephanie Plum, TV reporter Riley Spartz is a star investigative journalist for Channel 3—and no stranger to the seedier side of her hometown. But when she receives a package of smelly human teeth in the mail at work, she’s quickly embroiled in a homicide investigation that spirals into one of the odder cases the Minneapolis police force has ever seen. Though the cops try to keep certain grisly details quiet, this murder has a strange twist—it seems that the killer wants the crime publicized.

Is it a revenge killing, or something more? Riley’s investigation takes her inside a lucrative identity theft ring that links low-life crooks like now-dead Leon Akume to white-collar opportunists like once-wealthy Jack Clemens. Despite a prime motive for murder, Jack also has the ultimate alibi: he’s behind bars. While Riley pushes to keep the homicide in the news, her boss is convinced that coverage of the Mall of America’s unique version of a royal wedding is key to the station winning ratings. As the stakes continue to rise for her job and her life, Riley must outwit the killer in a trap that could leave yet another person dead...

An irresistible suspense novel that will keep readers turning pages until the stunning conclusion, *Delivering Death* brings the humor, intrigue, and twists and turns Julie Kramer’s fans have been waiting for.

Delivering Death: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review Delivering Death: A Novel for online ebook

Glennie says

I really enjoyed this series. Sorry that it is finished.

Benjamin Sobieck says

In Delivering Death, TV investigative journalist Riley Spartz (a little art imitating reality) receives a package full of teeth. Whom they belong to, and how they relate to a well-known Minnesota fraudster serving time in prison (loosely based on either Denny Hecker or Tom Petters, I suspect), makes for a fast-paced A plot.

Still, much of the novel focuses elsewhere. The B plots involve other stories Spartz chases, a mass marriage at the Mall of America, missing dogs, an ex she must turn to as a source and a TV news director sacrificing quality for cheap entertainment during sweeps.

Much as she likely did in real life, Kramer balances each without losing the reader. The writing is crisp, the chapters quick and the plot deceptively smart. Kramer lobs a few softball homeruns for readers to run the bases with, but clears the floor with a couple bombshells no one will see coming.

However, as my old journalism mentor would say, the "story is done when it's done." I thought the story ended when the A plot wrapped up, but the book kept going for a jaunt to the Mall of America. It felt tacked on to fill pages, but forgivable in light of Delivering Death's other strengths.

One other point, this time about nuts and bolts writing. Delivering Death shifts between first and third person points of view. That's something I pull in my WIP crime novel, and hadn't seen it done before now. Honestly, I was worried that format would throw off would-be readers. But seeing Kramer pull it off so effortlessly - sometimes even within a single chapter - is enough verification to me.

Kramer made a fan out of me with Delivering Death. I can't wait to dive into her other novels. She's my kind of crime writer. You'd do well to be her kind of crime reader.

Judith Starkston says

Another page-turning, alternately funny and bone-chilling mystery from Julie Kramer. Riley Spartz, investigative journalist for Channel 3 in Minneapolis is still sparring with her intellectually stunted, over-sexed boss while trying to keep her career afloat. Then there's her ex-fiancé who she's not so sure should stay exed, except he seems to be awfully tight with his attractive new boss so there seems no hope there. Misery does love Riley, but you won't be miserable reading as Riley's dry, cynical humor carries a twisty plot that will keep you guessing. Perhaps I should have opened with "tooth-aching" instead of bone-chilling because that's the clue that starts Riley off on her lethal investigation—the arrival of human teeth in an envelope. Were they taken out while someone was alive? What on earth do they mean? Someone less brave (or less in need of a story) might have left it up to the police to sort out, but Riley plows right through a mass-marriage, a mortuary and any number of other gruesome settings to get things uncovered. Her

persistence might get her killed—or someone else she cares about.

Alisha Tarran says

TV reporter Riley Spartz is an investigative journalist for Channel 3. When she receives a package from an unknown sender containing human teeth she becomes involved in a homicide investigation of a recent prison inmate who was released. But it quickly becomes apparent he snitched on a current inmate for fraud...who's not the actual inmate. The criminal is actually hiding out in the city, but he needs a painting that contains secret information to his offshore accounts...and Riley bought it at an auction while working the story.

Riley fights to keep the strange case in the news, but her boss is determined the Mall Of America's unique wedding ceremony of over 100 couples as extra's for a movie, is more important to winning ratings. Riley must outwit the killer and fight her ignorant boss every step of the way. Not to mention a petty anchor reporter.

The book was very fast paced, and full of action, moving quickly from scene to scene and sprinkled liberally with plot twists that most of the time, you don't see coming, and others that mean your suspicions are confirmed.

The book was fairly gripping until the last couple of chapters. I felt the last couple of chapters revealing the true killer were very rushed and not very well written. Up until that point the book had been perfectly paced.

I found Riley a sparkly character, but I also found her kind of irritating among with a whole host of irritating and very petty characters that just served to annoy me. I have to admire her determination though. Much of the book was set in the news room, a unique insight into an environment not many people get to see and how that career path works which I found intriguing.

I found the ending not only rushed as I have said, but also kind of very cheesy with the whole wedding thing, and the Hollywood publicity couple, and Riley. I just found the ending rushed, poorly written and very cheesy, a bit anti-climatic as it seemed to be building up to something bigger. The ending was very disappointing to me and let the book down in my opinion, cementing its position at 3 stars and a "meh".

Carly says

Faced with a long bike ride and nothing to listen to, I picked up an audiobook of Delivering Death from my library on a whim. I wasn't disappointed. Delivering Death is a fun little cozy with a likable protagonist and an engaging, if rather facile, plot.

For me, the most interesting part was Kramer's portrayal of TV journalism. The protagonist, Riley, is an investigative reporter for a television channel. As I don't tend to watch much TV, let alone news, I've never thought much of -- or about -- TV journalism, and the minimal opinions I have were probably shaped by the plethora of newspaper journalists who go on to write fiction. Newspaper journalists seem to be uniform in their scorn for their television counterparts; they tend to portray TV journalists as always going for facile visual retakes on the news that their hardworking counterparts unearthed. Perhaps surprisingly, I don't think

this book really changed my opinions much. TV journalism does indeed seem to be as much about acting as it is about investigation. Riley spends a lot of time trying to find props and images to support her news rather than the facts of the news itself. At several points, the necessity of photogenic reporters is discussed, as well as the issue of Riley's "advancing" age (she's somewhere around 30, so obviously she's already passed the peak of her career.)

I also really enjoyed Riley's trips back to her hometown. Kramer does a wonderful job in capturing small town life, with the added bonus that I now know (a) how to pronounce "Hormel" correctly, and (b) that somewhere in its origins, Spam really does contain actual meat.

Less engaging to me were some of the secondary characters, including Riley's ex-flame, who dumped her because she had the temerity to kiss another man during a previous breakup. Can anyone say "creepy control freak"? Even so, I found his antics in the ending rather amusing.

Overall, I definitely enjoyed the book and will be on the lookout for more of the series.

Cross-posted on BookLikes

Nancy says

I am not sure how I feel about this being the last Riley Spartz book. This series has been a love hate relationship for me. I tend to become invested in series, and cannot walk away, even if I do not like them and yet I am saddened when they end. I know, it makes no sense, but now I can leave knowing that I have finished what Julie Kramer had started.

As an investigative reporter, Riley Spartz has had her share of interesting stories, but when an envelope shows up on her desk with human teeth, her research goes into over drive and darn near gets her killed. This is all in addition to the on goings at the Mall of America where two very different stories are playing out and both will involve Riley running into her ex-fiancé Nick Garnett. There is also a piece of artwork won at auction that has hidden messages, a man in prison is impersonating another, and all of this will be leading Riley down a dangerous path.

Where the teeth came from is a bit twisty, and by the end of the book, seemed like an "oops, guess I need to get back to that" moment, yet the author seems to have pulled the impossible together with only a few, "oh, ok" moments.

There is a great deal going on in this book and Julie Kramer has to pull it all together by the end so Riley can have her chance at the happily ever after that she has been after since book number one where you learned of the death of her first husband. Will I miss Riley – that is hard to say, but I am glad that the series ended where it did.

Derek says

I knew what I was getting into when I started reading this, so I guess I can't fault the novel too much for

delivering exactly as advertised. It's your typical mystery novel, this time set in Minneapolis and starring a crafty TV reporter who gets pulled into a murder involving a...who cares? Ultimately, if you are looking for your standard mystery novel that hits all the necessary notes that it's supposed to and doesn't really break any new ground, this is an ok way to pass the time.

Marlene says

I've read all of Julie Kramer's Riley Spartz novels and they continue to deliver a great story and entertaining characters.

Nancy says

Julie Kramer is "Delivering Death" in a masterful new book!

Julie Kramer is back with a delightful alliterative titled new book featuring Riley Spartz, investigative reporter for Channel 3. Riley receives a package in the mail, and so begins the fast paced road for Riley to travel, through a murder investigation, white collar crime and a group wedding set to take place in the oddest of places, the Mall of America. In a mix of danger, office politics, unresolved love and the art world, this page turner gives us all the twists, turns and surprises we expect in a Julie Kramer novel. First time readers can enjoy a look into the television world and the dangers of being a reporter today, and long time readers can revel in another romp in Riley's world. Julie delivers everything you have come to expect, suspense, danger, character depth and a backdrop that real people live in, and make you want to visit over and over! Well done, Bravo!!! Add this author to your list of favorites today.....she is one of mine!

Tess Mertens-Johnson says

The author Julie Kramer was a writer for the The I Team, a Twin Cities based investigative reporting team. She writes great mystery.

Riley Sparks is an investigator who receives a package of human teeth. This take her on a road to find who they belong(ed) to and if they are alive.

There are many twists and turns and some romance. A great page turned – loved it

Jean says

Delivering Death by Julie Kramer is the sixth in the Riley Spartz series and left me wanting to read the seventh, which to my knowledge, hasn't been written yet. After reading heart-pounding, sleep-depriving thrillers, a little lighter fare was just what I needed. That's not to say that this is a cozy mystery, because it's not. Spartz is a no-nonsense investigative reporter who takes her job seriously. Very seriously.

She receives a strange package in the mail at the television station one day, and she soon becomes involved

in a bizarre murder case. The package contained human teeth, and Riley is once again battling the police, her boss, and her ex-fiancé as she tries to dig up the truth.

Besides the local flavor that I always enjoy in Kramer's books, there are the usual supporting characters: photographer Malik, computer whiz Xiong, and her on-and-off fiancé Nick Garrett, with whom she has a running game of name that movie where they throw out movie quotes to each other. Having read all six of Kramer's Spartz novels, I think I finally like Riley now, even though she finds ways to irritate her boss and her coworkers. TV news is a competitive business, after all.

I found this mystery to have the usual twists and turns; I was more baffled by this one than by her previous books. My heart didn't miss any beats, and I'm pretty sure that I slept just fine, but Delivering Death was mystifying, fun, and entertaining.

If I could, I would give it 3-1/2 stars.

Louise Pledge says

I love, love, love the Riley Spartz books! I admire Riley a lot for her spunk and stick-to-it-iveness! Most likely traits that her creator has, also. Since we haven't had a new RS addition for awhile, I really hope there will be more coming up!

Jovdb says

A light hearted mystery involving tv news reporter Riley Spartz investigating multiple stories.

After receiving a gruesome package in the mail, Riley takes it to the police and the mystery begins. To whom do these teeth belong? What does a convicted felon's death and a rich con man have in common and how do they connect to the teeth?

As usual, Riley follows her instincts, gets into trouble, argues with her nasty boss, Bryce, and has an interesting relationship with Nick.

Annie says

a most excellent 5 star read, review to come...:)

Let me just start out by saying if you have never read a Riley Spartz book, you are really missing out. Every paragraph in Julie's books are funny and filled with her dry wit, one liners and local insider jokes that make you chuckle and laugh out loud the whole way through the book. Sometimes the Joke is on Riley but, the best jokes are when Riley turns the tables on the bad guy and gets the story all in one fell... scoop.

Wonderful to see the characters in all The Riley Spartz books back again, Riley's on again/off again ex-fiancé Nick Garrett as well as her always loyal photographer Malik, computer sleuth Xiong, her always fun parents and her news director and sexual twerp Bryce. Another favorite part in the books is the delightful

back and forth Riley & Nick do with movie quotes they throw to each other such as... Riley to Nick "you don't even know how much you'll miss me" ... Nick to Riley "Shirley MacLaine, terms of endearment, 1983" there are many more of these scattered throughout all the books and they will make you smile and try to guess the answer every time.

Riley Spartz is a TV investigative journalist for channel 3 news in the Twin cities MN area. One day she opens her mail at the station and finds a set of loose teeth, newly pulled with no note or explanation. This sets Riley off all over the cities looking for who, what, where, they done it and why they sent them to her? I love to ride along with Riley in our hometown as she sets off hunting down the story, knowing where she is and who she's really talking about is part of the fun! Riley and her mouth frequently get her into trouble but her quick wit usually gets her out, sometimes with the help of her ex Nick. Since channel 3 is really about channel 4, WCCO in the twin cities, I will read you one of the comments from WCCO ... "From the author of Stalking Susan comes the latest installment in the compulsively readable best selling Riley Spartz thriller series, featuring a smart, sassy and always entertaining TV reporter as she matches wits with a media savvy killer." This is spot on Riley!

This is one of the funniest, best mystery series out there and that reason alone would keep me coming back but the great stories, humor, characters, issues and having it be local is enough to keep me reading about Riley as long as Julie will write about her!

There are lots of stories going on for channel 3 news this time around... the teeth sent to Riley & Saint Apollonia to protect them, missing dogs, animal & environmental issues, the FBI & Nick, a large fish painting & off shore accounts, bomb scares, weddings and movie stars at MOA, funeral homes & coffins, greedy & ruthless business people, high school reunions, lost and then found again love, you name it and Riley was covering it.

I received this book because I have a BIG MOUTH, hehehehe.... since reading the first Riley Spartz book years ago, I have been hooked & blabbing about them and I'll continue to do so!

Silverblue says

The story starts good but declines and loses momentum very quickly. It starts with a number of teeth sent to a TV investigative reporter and what she does to investigate to solve the mystery.

Unfortunately, the story's mystery loses momentum very quickly. It becomes about the inner workings of the TV station - the jealousy, the competition, management incompetency blah blah... the inner workings of a TV station run by arrogant host and incompetent management plus the love life of the investigative journalist herself. It feels like it was written very quickly without well prepared and intricate plot. As you read along it is obvious what to anticipate in the story and the ending.
