



Murder In The Garden District

Greg Herren

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A leading candidate for the upcoming senatorial race and a scion of a Louisiana political dynasty is shot to death in his Garden District mansion, and the prime suspect is his much younger second wife with a checkered past. Detective Chanse MacLeod enters a world where nothing is as it seems, and uncovers the dark secrets of the state's first family—secrets someone is willing to kill to keep.

Greg Herren is the author of four previous novels in the Chanse MacLeod series. He lives in New Orleans.

Murder In The Garden District Details

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From Reader Review Murder In The Garden District for online ebook

Mark Macatee says

Best one yet. Great characters.

Daniel Mitton says

(Originally reviewed for Love Bytes Same Sex Book Reviews. 3.5 out of 5.0 stars)

I'm going to be honest right up front and tell you that this installment in the Chanse MacLeod stories didn't really do it for me. It was too much a political family, mainstream murder mystery for me. Although Chanse is still gay, there was very little mention of it in the story and the plot of the book made it almost negligible. And why would they put a picture of a young white guy in ropes on the cover? There isn't a character in the book (unless I missed it) that fits this person!

I also didn't like the continued references to Chanse's mother, and then not actually finding out what was up with the woman until almost at the end of the book, kind of as an after-thought, and then we got so few details that I felt cheated.

Finally, I didn't like the made up hurricane. I live on the Gulf Coast of Southwest Florida, and every storm that hits the northern coast of the Gulf either comes over our heads, or to the west of us in the Gulf. I'm not sure why Mr. Herren felt the need to make up a hurricane when we have so many real ones he could have used. He mentions Hurricane Gustav in his author's notes at the end. Why didn't he use that as the hurricane in the book?

OK, enough grumbling, on to the story. We're back with Chanse MacLeod for another mystery. The son of the Sheehan political dynasty has been shot and killed. His mother was found with the smoking gun, which she had just shot into the floor. If this sounds familiar, it is because it is if you've read the whole series. Think back to his murdered lover, Paul, finding a gun, picking it up and shooting it into the floor and then being charged with murder. This time the powder residue wasn't on the non-dominant hand like it was in Murder in the Rue St. Ann, but this time it was a society matron with the gun in her hand, so she wasn't charged. And then for Chanse to have never acknowledged the similarity was beyond odd.

Chanse is hired to find someone, anyone not related to the family, that could have committed the murder. But the stories from the witnesses don't jive, and to make matters worse, a bad guy, also from Murder in the Rue St. Ann, has shown up in New Orleans and is chasing Chanse for revenge.

I honestly never connected with this story at all. There were too many things that seemed jumbled together, and kind of retold with different characters. Although everything wrapped up nicely in the end, it is the first book of Mr. Herren's that I've counted down to 0% with more a feeling of relief rather than one of despair.

The writing is still far above average, and Mr. Herren doesn't write bad books. This one though, was not for me personally. Others might love it. I'm going to give it a 3.5 out of 5.0 stars. I liked it, it was above average, but I didn't love it. Stay tuned next week for my review of book six in the series.

Eric Gittins says

Interesting story

Ije the Devourer of Books says

The fifth book in the Chanse Macleod series and just as brilliant as the first four.

I think this is my favourite this time although I am sure I said that about book four. Each book is just fabulous with an excellent mystery and great characters.

Of course the main character Chanse Macleod is my favourite and I like him so much because he is very real, and very human. He isn't a super man or a brilliant PI, he is simply tireless in the way he investigates, examining every possibility and discounting nothing.

That's what I like so much about this series. Everything is plausible and realistic including Chanse and his personal life, his history and his emotions.

And the depiction of New Orleans is also realistic and brilliantly done. Whenever I read one of these books it awakens in me a deep need to visit New Orleans and to see things for myself. Of course the author lives in New Orleans and I am sure this is where the authenticity flows from.

I admire the way the author has described hurricane Katriona in previous books, and its devastating impact on the city and the long journey towards recovery. I think that touched me at an emotional level because we could see how everyday people suffered through that event.

All of this brought together with a great character, intriguing mystery and good writing just makes a fabulous series. I have two more to go and then two more from Scotty Bradley and then I hope there will be more for me to read.

I am a solid devotee to this series and quite confident that it will only get better. I would love to read a Scotty and Chanse combo.

Now that would be truly amazing!

Damian Serbu says

Greg writes wonderful mysteries that captivate you from the very beginning and keep the suspense going. The only disappoint is that I end up reading them too quickly because I can't put them down, and it's all over before you know it!

Nathan Burgoine says

I fear I'm going to repeat myself quite a bit, if you've read any of my previous reviews of the Chanse MacLeod mysteries, but with that warning in mind I'll first say MURDER IN THE GARDEN DISTRICT was a fantastic, confounding mystery with real bite. If you've not read any of the previous books, you owe it to yourself to start at the beginning.

Now for the parts where I'm repeating myself.

First, if there's one single thing that drives me crazy in the mystery world, it's the lack of lasting effect. In many a mystery novel, the protagonist can be stabbed, stumble over six bodies, lose two lovers and get shot, but in the next book he's up and at 'em, with no lasting effects and a smile on his face. Greg Herren avoids this completely. Chanse MacLeod has history and scars; losses echo and reverberate with a realistic impact throughout the story. Nor is Chanse paralyzed or completely hobbled - he has a realism that I want to highlight, because it's so easy to miss, and so difficult to write. Similarly, the other characters also grow. No one is a cardboard cut-out, and I catch myself wanting more information about Chanse's friends, as well.

Second, New Orleans is a living, breathing character in the series. Her face - pre and post Katrina - is deftly drawn, and you feel the heat right with the characters, all of whom deliver a realistic performance, right down to the patois.

Third, I never catch the bad guy before Chanse. I'll figure parts out, have suspicions turn out to be slightly correct, but I'm always left with a satisfied reading experience. Mystery to me is all about trying to figure it out along side the protagonist, and I love it when I realize the clues were all there, and I misinterpreted. I never feel swindled - nothing is the last minute absolute necessary piece of information, without which you didn't have a hope of figuring out the whodunnit.

In this particular book, Herren delves into the political machinations of the powerful in New Orleans, and a murder that lands Chanse a case where the money is too good and the motivation too sketchy. Untangling the web of the powerful is difficult, and to add to the drama, the recovering New Orleans is seeing another storm forming and bearing down upon her.

The tension is strong, the characters great, and the mystery superb. Go. Buy. Read.

Swhite says

one of the silliest murder mysteries i have ever read. people running around in the rain, etc....just silly. no substance in my humble opion.

Jimmy says

Chanse finds himself trapped in a dangerous game of New Orleans high society politics gone deadly wrong, where secrets are kept within the family and taken to the grave. Wendell Sheehan is found dead by his

powerful and influential mother, Cordelia and abused wife, Janna, (a woman from a poor family). Chanse is hired to prove that it was someone else responsible for Wendell's death, not Cordelia, because no Sheehan will spend one night in jail. Evidence goes missing from the police station. (view spoiler)Without the help of Abby, Chanse would not be able to solve this one on his own. She is a true delight to the novel. Everyone's emotional walls come crumbling down with the devastating approach of Ginevra, and some may never return. (I did miss the love and sex that is normally found in most of the Big Easy novels I've read. But, this book did not need it!) Chanse will have to come to terms with his mother, and hopefully move on into the next romantic relationship chapter of his life.

Jon says

6.0 Stars! Reading one of Greg Herren's Chanse MacLeod mysteries is akin to curling up in bed with knees tucked beneath the covers and sipping a cup of hot cocoa. In other words – for me at least – reading a book in this series is like a homecoming, comfortable, homely...and, incredibly addictive. Herren's #5 entry in the series of six mysteries thus far has become one of my favorites. I read this one out of sequence since I had to wait until *Murder In The Garden District* was released in ebook format. Mr. Herren explained to me last year that he was waiting for the rights to revert back to him to get the title re-released as an ebook. I read *Murder in the Irish Channel* December last year and the first in the series, *Murder In The Rue Dauphine* last March (again waiting for the novel to be released via ebook).

Reading the Chanse MacLeod mysteries out of order is not a problem; each novel stands on its own, however, reading them sequentially, the reader gets a real good feel of the personal challenges each of the main characters, Chanse MacLeod and Venus Casanova, face throughout their trials and tribulations – indeed growth – from excitement, to setbacks, to heartache and of course, the wrath of mother nature.

In *Murder In The Garden District*, we learn right away former cop, private eye Chanse MacLeod is hired to investigate the murder of a leading candidate in an upcoming senatorial race. The man was a scion of Louisiana's political world, loathed by many, with a very young wife, long held secrets and a grand-dame matriarch mother determined to keep the family name untarnished at any cost, regardless of breaking any laws. Sound familiar?

The premise may seem familiar to many a mystery lover, but *Murder In The Garden District* is anything but a mirror image of those novels which fail to provide the right balance of deft mystery with the realistic, personal side of the protagonist. Herren succeeds in offering us a tightly drawn mystery, with a thrilling backstory driving the angst and excitement of the last twenty odd pages or so. My favorite portion of the story however centers on yet another monster hurricane unleashed by mother nature and headed straight for New Orleans not a year or two after the devastating killer, Katrina. Here is where Herren reveals the true art of writing, the inherit gift of personal insight, the chilling anguish and fear brought about by yet another storm.

New Orleans becomes a character all of its own in this fifth installment of the private eye, Chanse MacLeod series, making *Murder In The Garden District* more than worth the read. Considering the political climate today with highly contested local, regional and national elections across the country, Garden is timely as Herren delves into the political arena of conspiracy, money and power in New Orleans., all framed within a murder under interesting circumstances in which MacLeod must steer clear of implicating a member of the family as killer and pin the murder on someone else.

J.D. says

This series has gotten progressively better since the first book. I'm glad I stuck with them. There's a difference between a "gay book" and a book with gay characters and that's how I've perceived the books in this series to have grown and changed. I'm a little sad there's only one left now. It's time for another visit to New Orleans.
