



## **Nearer Home: A Nola Céspedes Mystery**

*Joy Castro*

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Alors que la Nouvelle-Orléans s'éveille et qu'elle fait son jogging dans un parc, la journaliste du Times-Picayune Nola Céspedes se retrouve au beau milieu d'une scène de crime. Et elle connaît la victime de ce meurtre : il s'agit de Judith Taffner, son ancienne professeure de journalisme. Nola décide de mener sa propre enquête. Taffner s'intéressait de près à des affaires sensibles, dont celle d'un vieil homme noir abattu par la police dans des circonstances douteuses : est-ce là ce qui a provoqué sa perte ? Et quel rapport avec les actes de vente de chevaux pur-sang trouvés en sa possession ? Alors que les meurtres se multiplient, l'enquête de la jeune journaliste la fera remonter jusqu'à la plus haute société de Louisiane. Dans une ville scarifiée par les stigmates de Katrina, la vie humaine ne vaut pas cher...

## **Nearer Home: A Nola Céspedes Mystery Details**

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Author : Joy Castro

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## **From Reader Review Nearer Home: A Nola Céspedes Mystery for online ebook**

### **Kerry Hennigan says**

Nearer Home is a tale of murder and too many coincidences, and journalist Nola Cespedes is too close to all of them.

When Nola discovers the body of her former journalism professor she realises she has a scoop on her hands - first on the scene, and a chance to take everything in, as grim as it is, before the police arrive.

But as she looks for a motive for the murder, Nola uncovers a couple of stories the dead woman was working on herself - stories that may have resulted in her own tragic demise. Nola begins her own investigation, hoping it will lead to her professor's murderer.

Set against the backdrop of New Orleans post-Katrina, the settings are atmospheric - both evocative and menacing, depending on what part of the city Nola is visiting.

As a reader knowing little about the culture, currents and undercurrents of New Orleans, I found this aspect of Joy Castro's novel fascinating. Nola's personal story is equally as fascinating as the murder she is investigating, and we meet her young friend from the Big Brother/Big Sister program and her mother (albeit briefly). I instantly fell in love with Nola's sensitive, soothing mother.

Towards the end I began to suspect the culprit (or culprits... not wanting to give anything away) but by then the book was almost done, and I was duly satisfied with the journey.

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### **Annie says**

A most excellent 5 star read!

loved the book from the first page!

Even though it is book #2 in the series I had no trouble at all figuring out what was going on.

I will still read the first book in this wonderful series "Hell or High Water"

Nola Cespedes is a Crime reporter living in post Katrina New Orleans, working for the Times Picayune Newspaper and nursing physical and psychological hurts from years gone by.

One morning as she is jogging in Audubon park she comes across a dead body, and not just any dead body but her former journalism professor at Tulane, Dr. Judith Taffner.

Nola is not convinced that the dead woman was killed by a serial killer as the Police suspect and so she decides to do a little investigating on her own.

She soon discovers Dr. Taffner was involved with two very serious stories that would shock even the NOPD and could have lead to her death.

Needing more information she seeks the help of Dr. Taffner's husband who she almost becomes involved with, complicating her investigation and the relationship with the man that she has been seeing.

Nola is smart and spunky just the kind of gal I would like to meet and hang out with.

I loved the characters, the story, the setting and the way the author writes, taking me right back to the New Orleans I love and where I once lived.

A great story and easily one of my new favorite authors.

I won this on goodreads for a fair and honest review

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### **Sheila Ehlinger says**

Should be 3.5 stars but I love New Orleans !

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### **Bibliophile says**

Not quite as engaging as the first Nola Céspedes mystery, but well worth a read if you're already familiar with her (if not, start with Hell or High Water). There's not a whole lot of development for Nola in this book, but it's a good, solid mystery. I'm hoping there will be a third installment, because I really want to know what happens to this plucky reporter (and her mini-me protégé).

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### **Renee says**

This book was excellent....it kept your attention. I would recommend this book. It was a great mystery. First time that I have read this author but I will look for more books by her. I received this book from Goodreads.

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### **Kimberly says**

I enjoyed reading "Nearer Home". It started out with an incredibly well crafted, beautifully lyrical opening and then became more standard fare mystery story with lots of good complications to the plot, keeping you guessing as to who-dunnit. My one criticism is that some of it felt a little contrived in terms of Nola's character with her relationship with her lover and as a big sister to a girl in the Big Brother/Big Sister program. It does make her likable and complicated at the same time, but it doesn't unfold in what feels like a natural progression of the story but as a something thought out in the outline ahead of time, and Castro is plugging it in as planned.

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### **Julie says**

Again, I liked the story Nola was investigating, but she herself is kind of an asshole.

She's unethical, self-destructive, uses people and then complains about their feelings for her, claims to want a normal life and "one man" when she complains how after a YEAR her defacto boyfriend's affection is "too much".

I know it makes for a compelling character to have them know their issues and shortcomings, but when they purposefully and continually choose them over and over again, it gets old fast. "I know I shouldn't do this but..."Then don't.

I guess kudos to being able to write a character I dislike but still keep the story itself interesting.

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### **Catherine says**

This review is based on an ARC I received from Goodreads.

Nola Cespedes is an investigative journalist for the Times-Picayune in New Orleans. During an early morning jog, she discovers the body of a former professor who was clearly the victim of a violent death. This is the start of a deep crime investigation, which spans many layers of individuals throughout New Orleans.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. Nola is an interesting character. One of my favorite things about Nola is that she is imperfect. I don't know if I'd like her if she were my neighbor, but I really enjoy the character. Her flaws made her more realistic to me as I read the book, and I found her to be a refreshing character.

Overall, the plot was pretty good. I don't want to give away any spoilers, but I did find it hard to believe that Nola was first on the scene at a couple of murders. In a city the size of New Orleans, I found this a bit implausible. It's what gave this book 4 stars instead of 5 for me.

The author does a fantastic job describing the settings within the book. I've been to New Orleans several times, and I felt she really captures the nuances of the city as I remember them and as I had experienced them as a visitor. I felt transported there while I was reading.

One of the strongest features of this book for me was the pacing. The author writes the story at a pace that was quick enough to keep me engaged, but slows down enough to be wonderfully descriptive. It was a perfect pace for me.

Overall, a very enjoyable crime mystery. I look forward to reading other books by this author.

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### **Faye Rapoport DesPres says**

Joy Castro's latest crime thriller, *NEARER HOME*, is the second in the Nola Céspedes series. This time the protagonist, a 28-year-old Latina reporter at the Times-Picayune newspaper in New Orleans, is the first person to come across the body of a murdered journalism professor on a local jogging path. The search for the professor's murderer takes her from homes in the Lower Ninth Ward to the spacious horse ranch of a U.S. Senator, and what she unearths leads her into personal dangers she doesn't expect. Readers will re-discover some of the familiar friends who people Nola's life but will also be challenged to examine some political issues not focused on in the first novel. As always I was absorbed in Castro's work from the first page, and as a writer I appreciated and learned from her talent for detail and poetic yet piercing prose. Castro also seems to have tightened the structure of her novels since her debut thriller; this second effort moves at a quicker pace with fewer narrative tangents. I read every book Joy Castro writes, and I'm never disappointed.

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### **S.G. says**

Stay with me for a moment. There are a few things that irk me when I read - coming in mid-series; characters

who speak in a language I don't; stories set in New Orleans. Why do they irk me? Who knows? But *Nearer Home* has all of these elements and I loved the book.

Castro's writing is hypnotic and her New Orleans is far from the bougainvillea draped cliches so often associated with the city. I don't know how many of the characters came from the previous book but, with very few exceptions, the cast was easy to follow. For me, the murder mystery was entertaining enough but it took a backseat to the really well done internal headspaces Castro handled.

I highly recommend *Nearer Home* and I will definitely read more of her books.

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### **Amy Lignor says**

Irony at its finest, a perfectly beautiful morning turns into a nightmare...

During her early morning run through Audubon Park in New Orleans, Nola Cespedes discovers the dead body of a former professor of hers along the path. The victim, Dr. Judith Taffner, was a professor in the journalism department at Tulane University. And Nola now works as an investigative journalist for the *Times-Picayune* newspaper.

Nola quickly finds herself embroiled in a case that causes her sadness, because of the fact that the professor is dead; but also excitement, because of her nose for news. After giving her statement to the police, Nola wants to discover the professor's killer as soon as possible, and heads for the victim's office at Tulane. Managing to break in, she finds a flash drive that the victim has left behind.

Nola becomes more and more convinced that Dr. Taffner's death was more than a bit shady and, as she doesn't have a whole lot of faith in the New Orleans Police Department, Nola involves herself even more deeply than she should.

Visiting the home of the deceased is just the first step to get material for her story, as Nola becomes a veritable super-snoop. On the flash drive she confiscates, Nola finds that Dr. Taffner had been working on a couple of stories that were beyond shocking. As Nola tries to figure out the case, another murder takes place that seems to be related at the New Orleans Jazz Fest. Soon, Nola realizes that this killer may just be coming after her.

Filled with detailed writing that shows the reader every path and every doorstep in the amazingly unique city of New Orleans, this writer has done a great job of bringing the reader into each and every scene. (Honestly, you can smell the New Orleans cuisine in the air). With a tough main character who is not at all charming but gets the job done, readers will be beguiled by this exceptionally good mystery. (Amy Lignor written for Suspense Mag)

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### **Maryellen Woodside says**

I had the pleasure of meeting Joy Castro at last year's Southwest Florida Reading Festival. She is an inspiring speaker, in addition to being a great writer. "*Nearer Home*" is her second Nola Cespedes mystery. Nola, a

writer for the Times-Picayune, is out for a run and stumbles across a body. She knows the woman, one of her professors from Tulane. Nola sets out to get a story, and ends up putting herself in jeopardy. A page-turner!

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### **Barbra says**

Joy Castro continues the story of Nola, a crime reporter who seems to constantly battle against herself. On the surface, Nola seems to have an ideal life - a great job, a mother who adores her, great friends, and now a boyfriend. But somehow, she can't seem to allow herself to enjoy happiness and continually makes choices that could jeopardize her life and the people in it. I was not a huge fan of Castro's first book starring Nola (Hell or High Water) but I could not put this one down. I found Nola to be a much more likeable character. Unlike book 1 where it seemed her personal struggles left her with little more than hostility and resentment, book 2 begins to show Nola's underlying compassion for others. I am definitely looking forward to a third Nola book from Joy Castro!

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### **Aaron (Typographical Era) says**

When we parted ways with Times-Picayune crime reporter Nola Céspedes at the end of Joy Castro's masterfully executed debut piece of literary crime fiction Hell or High Water, she was most certainly NOT in a good mental state. While researching an in-depth piece about the shocking number of sexual predators that managed to slip through the cracks immediately after Hurricane Katrina wrought its devastation upon New Orleans, Nola came face to face with some of the most threatening and intimidating individuals that the city had to offer. In the process of finishing the article that she hoped would help to propel her career forward, she was forced to come face to face with some long buried personal demons of her own. When her two worlds ultimately overlapped and collided, things did not end well.

Nearer Home picks up roughly one year later and surprisingly finds most every area of Nola's life to be on the upswing. With the help of a professional she's slowly working towards a place of mental stability. She's left her roommate behind and moved out of her shared apartment and into a swanky condo that's three times as large. For the first time in a long time she's got herself a steady, faithful boyfriend that absolutely adores her. And yes, she even got that promotion at work that she so desperately wanted. Why then, does she seem so damn unhappy and why does she continue to make such dangerous, irresponsible decisions?

READ MORE:

<http://www.typographicalera.com/neare...>

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### **Gwen says**

This is the second book in the Nola Cespedes series. Nola is a crime reporter for a newspaper in New Orleans. While out jogging one morning she discovers her former university professor's body. Nola begins to investigate and discovers that her professor was working on a couple of stories that may have gotten her killed. We see a lot of development in this book with Nola and her little sister (sister as in the organization Big Sisters) as Nola seems to be developing some maternal instincts.

Overall, I didn't enjoy this book as much as I did the first one in the series, Hell or High Water (four stars out

of five). I don't think the mystery was as interesting and I was disappointed that the author didn't give a lot of description of well-known and not as well-known landmarks and locations in New Orleans other than she mentioned Lake Pontchartrain several times. I give this book three stars out of five.

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