



Book of the Dead (Kay Scarpetta, No 15)

By Patricia Cornwell



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Kay Scarpetta is starting over with a unique private forensic pathology practice in Charleston, South Carolina. And the death of a sixteen-year-old tennis star will usher in a string of murders more baffling—and terrifying—than any that have come before.



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Book of the Dead (Kay Scarpetta, No 15) By Patricia Cornwell Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Bestseller Cornwell's 15th novel to feature Dr. Kay Scarpetta (after 2005's *Predator*) delivers her trademark grisly crime scenes, but lacks the coherence and emotional resonance of earlier books. Soon after relocating to Charleston, S.C., to launch a private forensics lab, Scarpetta is asked to consult on the murder of U.S. tennis star Drew Martin, whose mutilated body was found in Rome. Contradictory evidence leaves Scarpetta, the Italian carabinieri and Scarpetta's lover, forensic psychologist Benton Wesley, stumped. But when she discovers unsettling connections between Martin's murder, the body of an unidentified South Carolina boy and her old nemesis, the maniacal psychiatrist Dr. Marilyn Self, Scarpetta encounters a killer as deadly as any she's ever faced. With her recent switch from first- to third-person narration, Cornwell loses what once made her series so compelling: a window into the mind of a strong, intelligent woman holding her own in a profession dominated by men. Here, the abrupt shifts in point of view slow the momentum, and the reader flounders in excessive forensic minutiae.

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From [Booklist](#)

It's hard to fault Cornwell for trying to redeem herself after missing the mark with her last few Kay Scarpetta novels, but this new one won't do the trick. The frosty forensic pathologist and her entourage remain as annoyingly self-absorbed and screwed up as ever, and their emotional baggage once again gets in the way of the story. A lengthy, vivid scene during which a young tennis star is slowly and brutally tortured sets up the mystery, which unfolds in artless leaps, mostly through halting dialogue and occasional forays into the mind of the killer. Once again Cornwell trots out venal characters from previous Scarpetta books; prominent here is psycho-bitch teleshrink Dr. Self (*Predator*, 2005), who is hoarding information about what turns out to be a string of loosely related murders. Then there's Scarpetta's longtime investigator, Pete Marino, foulmouthed and crude but tolerated, who reveals true ugliness in what may be the best scene in the book. As to forensic detail, it seems right up to the minute, and Scarpetta uses it often in her search for the killer, all the while trying to preserve balance in her personal life. Only for diehard Cornwell fans, of whom there are still many, despite the author's continued slump. Zvirin, Stephanie

Review

If Michelin rated mysteries, this would get three stars. "Book of the Dead" by Patricia Cornwell. Charles Dickens would be impressed with both characters in this book and their names, e.g. Dr. Marilyn Self, a malignantly conniving deranged TV psychiatrist. The tales heroine, Kay Scarpetta, is a private forensic pathologist grappling with the murder of a famous teenage American tennis champ in Rome. At the same time she has to deal with the murder of a malnourished and badly beaten child. Scarpettas relations with her colleagues, not to mention those with her significant other, are tumultuous and tangled. All these characters have varying levels of unredeeming traits.

What a walloping, riveting mix of mystery, adventure and psychology, author Cornell certainly is skilled at dissecting the not always attractive innards of human nature.

"Forbes Magazine"

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