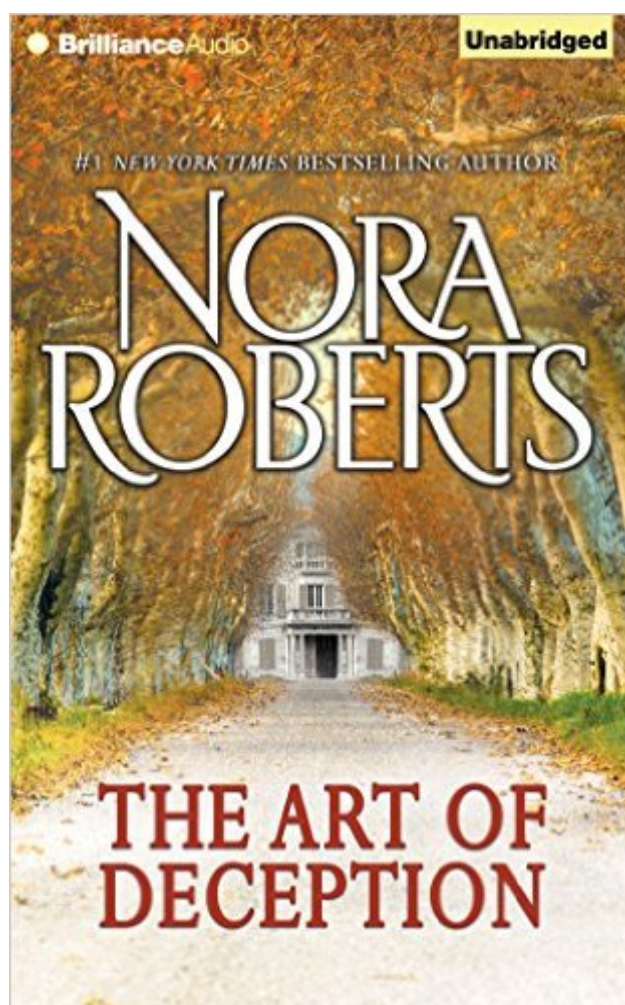


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The Art Of Deception



Synopsis

From #1 New York Times bestselling author Nora Roberts comes a classic tale about the promises we dare to keep to those we dare to love! He has supposedly come to her father's estate looking for respite. But Kirby Fairchild can't shake the feeling that handsome Adam Haines isn't quite the man he pretends to be. She couldn't be sure. But what she does know without a doubt is that as the days and nights wear on, the attraction she feels for this man is only growing stronger.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lou Boldt is third banana in "The Art of Deception" and psychologist Daphne Matthews takes over the lead with studly Jack LaMoia in the co-starring role. This freshens up a series that was running on fumes. Lou's troubles (wife with cancer, guilt ridden affair with Daphne, job dissatisfaction) were taking on the proportions of Job and becoming tiresome. A troubled young woman is tossed off the Aurora Bridge. Lou is investigating the disappearance of two local women, one of whom is a personal friend and takes on a request from Mama Lu to investigate the "accidental" death of her cousin, Billy Chen. Daphne is up to her elbows in charity work at a local woman's shelter and trying to turn the life of a pregnant client around. All of these threads lead to the Seattle Underground, a city below the city, buried over more than 100 years ago. Mr. Pearson excels on two levels: his characterizations are sharp and interesting. Via Daphne, Pearson gives us an in-depth look at suspects Lanny Neal, Ferrell Walker, and Nathan Priar. He keeps them in our face, and they are always lurking (sometimes literally) at the edges of our thoughts. Secondly, the locale. Pearson is magnificent in putting us in Seattle; you feel you should be reading holding an umbrella. And then

the underground---the decay, the sickening odors and terrain, the sense of claustrophobia, the occasional dusty shop window untouched in 100 years reflecting your surprised image, the very real sense of an imminent cave in, and LaMoia's comment that graveyards are over their heads. This is an excellent read with a smash of a finale and Pearson ties up the threads as neatly as an expert tailor. I could have done with a little less of Daphne's interior monologues.

The latest novel in Ridley Pearson's 'Lou Boldt' series really isn't about Lou Boldt. Instead, the focus shifts to Daphne Matthews and John LaMoia in 'The Art of Deception'. Matthews' personal life is a mess. She fills all her free time with police and charity work. At the novel opens, she is consumed with caring for runaway girls at a local women's shelter. She checks up on a witness as a favor to LaMoia, and suddenly finds herself being stalked not only by the witness, but by a deputy from the sheriff's office. LaMoia, after an intervention by Boldt and Matthews, has kicked an addiction to pills. Still working for Boldt, LaMoia gets drawn into the investigation of a couple missing women assigned to his former 'Sarge'. In addition, he finds himself looking after Matthews once she starts having run-ins with the witness she interviewed. Boldt has reluctantly taken a promotion to Lieutenant in order to fulfill a promise to his family that he would be safer on the job. However, he gets involved in a case when a family friend turns up missing. An old informant, Mama Lu, further involves him by asking him to look further into the 'accidental' drowning of an Asian man that perhaps isn't so accidental after all. 'Art of Deception' is quite possibly Pearson's best novel yet. First, the clues are easily grasped. Much more so than in previous novels. They rely less on forensic evidence, which is interesting, but at times overwhelming in past novels. Second, there are multiple suspects. Pearson introduces nearly all of them early on and keeps your attention on them. He builds a sound case for each one. Third, the setting is incredibly interesting. The Seattle Underground is almost a character in itself.

Police psychologist (or " profiler") Daphne Mathews has a long history in these exciting Seattle stories, and with Police Lt. Boldt, her mentor, idol, and more. Here she finally takes front center stage, with Boldt usually far in the background, and that ain't good. One thing that becomes clear is that Daphne is not only a bold, if erroneous, profiler, but is personally a bundle of boiling insecurities and anxieties in all directions. Here she seems like a caricatured throwback to pre-feminist women who stereotypically fall apart under pressure. I found this offensive, and maddening because it's not clear why she's suddenly folded into gibbering paranoia. While she tries to deceive her prime suspect into revealing himself, he is tying her up in his own unsuspected web of masterful

deceptions. The authorial tactic of personally involving the hero in criminal attacks is a cheap way for an author to ratchet up tension in his story without the effort of creating another victim from whole cloth-but you also know he won't eliminate a central series character. This tactic also tends to turn a "good, clean" mystery into an hysterical horror story-the reason I don't read Patricia Cornwall's Kay Scarpetta series anymore. Sorry, you might not have the same dislike. What's neat is that even with a suspect in hand early, there are more surprises. And Pearson has again researched obscure facts about the city of Seattle that provide vital sidelights. There are two suspects chased into a fascinating Underground historic city (who knew?)-but how Boldt decides between the two eerie suspects is still a mystery to me.

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