



Celine: A novel

Peter Heller

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Celine: A novel

Peter Heller

Celine: A novel Peter Heller

From the best-selling author of *The Dog Stars* and *The Painter*, a luminous, masterful novel of suspense--the story of Celine, an elegant, aristocratic private eye who specializes in reuniting families, trying to make amends for a loss in her own past.

Working out of her jewel box of an apartment at the base of the Brooklyn Bridge, Celine has made a career of tracking down missing persons, and she has a better record at it than the FBI. But when a young woman, Gabriela, asks for her help, a world of mystery and sorrow opens up. Gabriela's father was a photographer who went missing on the border of Montana and Wyoming. He was assumed to have died from a grizzly mauling, but his body was never found. Now, as Celine and her partner head to Yellowstone National Park, investigating a trail gone cold, it becomes clear that they are being followed--that this is a case someone desperately wants to keep closed.

Combining the exquisite plotting and gorgeous evocation of nature that have become his hallmark, with a wildly engrossing story of family, privilege, and childhood loss, Peter Heller gives us his finest work to date.

Celine: A novel Details

Date : Published March 7th 2017 by Knopf

ISBN :

Author : Peter Heller

Format : Kindle Edition 352 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller

 [Download Celine: A novel ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Celine: A novel ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Celine: A novel Peter Heller

From Reader Review Celine: A novel for online ebook

Robin says

I've read all of Peter Heller's books and of course I couldn't wait to dive into his newest "Celine." As much as I couldn't wait to see what happened, Heller's writing is like a beautiful composition that unfolds in language as beautiful as the natural world his characters are immersed in. It's storytelling at its finest. I loved Celine - a bad-ass 60+ year old artist who is also a private investigator. Celine's spark and energy for life can at times be stalled by her emphysema but never wavers. I loved everything about this book and am confident this will solidify Peter Heller as a literary powerhouse of a novelist.

Linda says

"Like musicians who nod at each other before the final measures, they shared a long look that meant: That's all for now. This too shall be revealed."

Neither age, nor hacking emphysema, nor the footsteps of personal loss will shift the dog-eared determination of Celine Watkins. She and her husband/partner, Pete, have long ago set down roots near the Brooklyn Bridge. Celine is a crackerjack P.I. who has a better track record than the FBI in sniffing out the lost and waiting to be found.....be they standing upright or far under the ground.

A knock on her apartment door brings attention to a twenty year old missing person case. Gabriela's father, a successful photographer, went missing right on the border of Montana and Wyoming. All evidence points to a bear attack with the bear coming out far ahead. After all these years, Gabriela still believes that her father wasn't done in by this elusive bear. She hires Celine to hit the trail and bring to the surface any clues as to what actually happened.

Bundled up in a borrowed camper, Celine and Pete sift through Paul's last whereabouts and interview those people and law officials who may have a nugget or two of information lost from so many years ago. And add into the mix another complication: someone is following their every move. Were there more than bear tracks involved.....perhaps a dash of the human kind?

Peter Heller, once again, presents a novel deeply entrenched in the formation of complicated and much-below-the-surface characters. We are also up front and center to the crafted presentation of Celine herself. There are tall parallels here in regard to Celine's childhood and early adulthood. We come to realize what drives Celine to reunite families and to champion their causes. She is all too familiar with this bitter cup.

Heller is a fine-chiseled talent as evident in *The Dog Stars* and *The Painter* to which I ranked higher than *Celine*. I am of the opinion that *Celine* suffered a bit from the heavy weight of her backstory that webbed far too wide at times. Perhaps this was a story set-up for a future series that will involve Celine and Pete. Perhaps Heller wanted to unfold these petals so that there is clear sailing into a series. Truth be told, I'd buy my popcorn and front row it for another crack at Celine and her prowess as a crack shot investigator. Heller.....I'm whispering in your ear about now.

Beverly says

A tough, aristocratic private investigator in her late 60s, can I get an "Amen!""? She takes no guff and backs down bikers. I loved this book and it has a good mystery too.

Kathy says

omg! I loved Dog Stars, I liked The Painter, but I am head over heels in love with Celine! She is the most fascinating character you will ever meet - I truly want Heller to continue her story, her mother's story, her son's story - I want more of everything! This is the most wonderful book - I will recommend, nay PUSH, it onto everyone I meet! Beautifully written - readers will simultaneously want to slow down and savor the language and speed up to see what comes next! Wonderful!

Emily says

I loved The Dog Stars and was lukewarm about The Painter. It was hard for me to really care about the protagonist of the latter, Jim Stegner, a swashbuckling tortured artist who is irresistible to younger women and lands in an unrealistic, drawn-out sequence of events that he could have easily avoided by being less of a dick. But I still loved pieces of Heller's writing. He truly excels at writing about the West and its landscapes.

So I was really excited to see that Heller wrote a novel about a woman (!), who is an aristocratic and fashionable detective (!!). Is there a conceit that could appeal to me more??!

Celine Watkins was a private eye. It was an odd vocation for someone in the Social Register who had grown up partly in Paris, partly in New York. She may have been the only PI on earth whose father had been a partner at Morgan's in France during the war. The only working PI who had come to New York City when she was seven and attended the Brearley School for girls on the Upper East Side, and then Sarah Lawrence. Where she studied art, and at twenty-one spent a year back in Paris, where she apprenticed with an expressionist and was proposed to by a duke.

That paragraph is an excellent character sketch and is, alas, the high point of Celine's character in this novel. Heller creates a larger-than-life character and then brings her into parody. Celine might have worked in a short story, where there wouldn't have been time to get to the caricature:

Celine wore large glasses in dark tortoiseshell. They were a bit like Jackie O's sunglasses but bigger, even more of a statement. She didn't mean them to be, she shied from anything show-offy, but she had an innate and inarguable sense of style.

I mean, what? This is shoved into a paragraph of dialogue for no discernible reason. To prove how incredible Celine is, Heller keeps reaching backwards into her past to pull out anecdotes like celebrities helping her check her gun at airports, but these get more unbelievable as the book goes on and, unfortunately, are far more interesting than the plot, which is a tortured excuse for a mystery that *also* veers into pure fantasy. It's fantastical, and not in a good way. I almost gave up for good when, on a tangent from the main plot, Celine stares down an entire biker gang in a bar.

The other characters are either equally overdeveloped or underdeveloped. Pete is *not only* a Maine fisherman, but a Communist who served in Vietnam who's full of hidden skills. Celine's son, Hank, exists only to drive around America, asking questions about his amazing mother. He doesn't exist outside of their relationship. Gabriela is the poor virtuous waif. And, for some reason, Heller switches back and forth between different third-person perspectives, instead of sticking with Celine.

While writing a female protagonist is certainly a step in the right direction - a step away from Jim Stegner, which is all that matters - my guess is that Heller went so large with Celine because he truly doesn't know how to write women. I was chugging along quite happily until I got to this description of Paul Lamont's wife, Amana, midway through the book: (view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

I'm sorry, what? This is a man who, we are told, (view spoiler). And, we are told, (view spoiler). This simply does not work. I started groaning when I read that paragraph and had to take a break after I finished it. This isn't a step in the right direction - this is Jim Stegner trying to writing a book from a woman's perspective and feeling very pleased with himself. I don't know. This felt wrong. And after reading that, then one starts to wonder, (view spoiler) WOMEN, amirite?

This book was bad. I do not recommend it. The Dog Stars seems to have been some kind of fluke.

Cheri says

"Celine had inherited the mantle of a family who had come on the first boat and worked hard and made good, and often the mantle chafed, and she was happiest when she took it off and tossed it on a hook with her beret."

Celine begins one year and one day after the Twin Towers fell, filling the air with ashes, and despair. That May, her younger sister died, followed in July, her sister Bobby, the eldest followed. And now the Towers. Three months. Loss upon loss upon loss.

"Lying in bed that night while she cried silently beside him, Pete realized that Bobby was the North Tower and Mimi the South. And of course the collapsing buildings were much more than that, too. They were a burning message that a certain world had passed. Her sisters had been the last of the family she'd been born into. Celine's inner and outer world mirrored each other."

Celine Watkins is 68 years old, a Private Investigator who specializes in locating those people who manage to avoid being found, adoption-related quests to reunite birth families. So when Gabriella Ambrosio Lamont, approaches her to find her father, Paul or find out the truth behind her father's reported death, she eagerly

accepts the challenge. Her husband, Pete, is her partner in their PI business, her “Watson,” and it doesn’t take too long for this search to have them following trails that lead them to Yosemite and surrounding areas. This is where Peter Heller shines. If you’ve read his *The Dog Stars*, which I loved, or *The Painter*, you’ll know his ability to paint a landscape with words is masterful, words which will transport you there, taking it all in. Heller continues to reveal the scenic beauty with the touch of an artist.

Pete is the kind of guy who doesn’t get flustered too easily, and it’s a good thing because Celine is a woman who seemingly has no fear and is somewhat of a scene-stealer.

They’re both in their later years, Celine has emphysema, which plays a role, and her behavior can sometimes add a precarious nature to situations. Pete is by nature a go with the flow kind of guy, but it’s a dynamic that only comes with spending a lifetime knowing how the other works, anticipating what comes next. Poised to leap into action should the need arise, but trusting his partner implicitly.

His insights into the emotions of these characters make it feel as though he really knows his characters. And, indeed he does. The character of Celine is based on his mother, Caroline “Caro” Watkins Heller, who died over two years ago, and Pete is based on her husband, Lowell P. Beveridge, who goes by “Pete”. Many of these seemingly unbelievable situations are based on real stories of their adventures in locating people. The son in *Celine*, is based on Heller, himself, Celine’s sisters are also based on her real sisters. A lovely way to keep his mother close to him. A loving tribute to her, to a well-lived life. A tribute to families.

A very personal story, he knows of what he writes, and it shows. He wants the reader to come away knowing and loving these characters as much as he does the people they were drawn from. I loved this more in idea than in practice, there were some moments I felt he could have pulled back on some unnecessary details and we would still have felt the essence of love with which these characters were crafted.

Heller’s “*The Dog Stars*” is one a favourite of mine, “*The Painter*” I loved, as well.

There’s a lot to love about *Celine*, a little fairy-tale the father tells his daughter, a scene involving a brokenhearted teenage girl, and Pete’s reflection on his wife afterward. The gorgeous scenery! Childhood memories revisited. Musings on travel, the American pursuit of happiness. A mystery to solve. A daughter who wants to find her father. It all works, and it’s all conveyed with Heller’s lovely prose.

Erica says

[

This is really three stories crammed into one and they don't go together well.

There's the domestic fiction portion, the son-looks-back-on-his-life-with-his-mother portion, and the mystery-solving portion. The common thr

Carol says

The Hook - Having read, heard and enjoyed Peter Heller before, this is a natural for me. I will get to see him once again when I attend Booktopia 2017 in Manchester, Vermont.

The Line - *"Celine always rooted for the weak, the dispossessed, the children, for the ones who had no means or power: the strays and homeless, the hapless and addicted, the forlorn, the remorseful, the broken."*

The Sinker - Celine represents all the best of Heller's writing style, knowledge and expertise. His passages that describe the wilds, nature, fishing, hunting, painting, and the beauty of a photograph, are stellar. His characters are often rough-edged and Celine, the protagonist in this story that is her namesake, is no different. A PI, who mostly deals in reuniting birth parents and their birth children, Celine is a woman to heed. Somewhere there's a past that we are only getting a glimpse of, one in which she learned to shoot, to fight, to become a strong, and self-sufficient woman. Her ability to read people and honed instincts make her perfect for her job though the heartache she sometimes deals with can take their toll. A recovering alcoholic with emphysema, one who takes many risks, she has little to lose, in her own words *"I am already dead."* Celine's Watson, Pa or Pete, a man of few words, adds depth, wisdom, and peace to her strength.

When a young woman approaches Celine to get to the bottom of the disappearance of her father, an award-winning photographer who went missing in Yellowstone over twenty years ago, she accepts the assignment with trepidation.

I found Celine somewhat uneven. Celine is aching in its tale of love and loss but there were times I was confused in the flow of the mystery. I enjoyed the story when Heller was on his game in passages like this:

"It was that time of day, or night, that happens only a few weeks a year at a certain hour in certain parts of the American West. The sun sets behind mountains but the cloudless sky that is more than cloudless, it is lens clear—clear as the clearest water—holds the light entirely, holds it in a bowl of pale blue as f reluctant to let it go. The light refines the edges of the ridges to something honed and the muted colors of the pines on the slopes, the sage-roughened fields, the houses in the valley—the colors pulse with the pleasure of release, as if they know that within the hour they too will rest."

Or in this description of a photograph:

"It could begin in the tilt of her head, the angle, the light tension it put on the neck so that she seemed at once poised and relaxed, the way a violin can look—or a bird. Celine thought of the great blue heron in Baboo's cattails, just below the porch. How the bird would stand, it seemed for hours, neck stretched over the shallows in effortless balance, between stillness and strike. Because the strike would inevitably come. Celine used to think that if eternity was anywhere it was somehow contained in the attitude of this bird. Everything the heron had done, and would do, and was so now so perfectly not doing, was contained in her bearing. And so Amana. As she tipped her head she was both bowing to time—there is no mercy there, that is clear—but she was also gathering herself, her focus, for something that went beyond acceptance. She had acted and she would act, and there would be love in the action, and imagination. In whatever she did. That was also clear."

Celine is a quirky character with a story to tell, one that might not be finished. If so, I'm willing to go along for the ride.

Pat says

4 stars

Celine is the type of person I would love to meet and know. She works as a private investigator and only accepts a handful of cases. Her primary focus is reuniting family members. In this novel a daughter believes that her father did not die years ago from a grizzly bear attack and hires Celine to find out the truth - or at least evidence of his demise. This leads Celine and her husband on an adventure to uncover the truth.

Based on Peter Heller's Mom.

Donna says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I'm going to dare call it a comfort read even though it's a literary work of fiction about loss, revolving around a mystery that was written by an author known for grittier work. So if you're looking for something intense like Heller's previous book, *The Painter*, you might be disappointed. But if you enjoy dry humor, beautifully descriptive writing, and characters you can care about who are fascinating, well-developed, and play off one another like instruments in a finely tuned orchestra, this might fit the bill.

But before I go on, I want to mention that this book is also based on real people, including the main character who was closely fashioned after the author's mother, Caroline Watkins Heller. Heller's mother was an amazing woman, known and loved by many, who passed away two years ago. This book is a tribute to her and was a way for the author to spend another year with his beloved mother. Some of the anecdotes in this book that seem unbelievable or for entertainment's sake truly happened, though the case Celine worked on in this story was completely fictional. I'm including two links at the end of my review that contain minor spoilers, but they will give you more information about the inspiration for this book and Heller's mother. After reading the articles, I appreciated this book even more than before. But for now, back to my review.

This story takes place a year after 9/11 and begins in New York where Celine Watkins, 68, suffering the effects of emphysema, works as a private detective. Her husband, Pete, hailing from Maine and a man of few words, assists her in cases that involve reuniting families torn apart for various reasons. It is Celine's mission to bring families together or bring her clients closure if it isn't possible to reunite. This mission stems from the nature of Celine's own childhood and from a secret in her past, the repercussions reverberating in her and passed along to her son. It spurs her on to do her best for those who hire her, though she often works pro bono.

One day, Celine receives a phone call from Gabriella Ambrosio Lamont concerning the woman's father who disappeared twenty years earlier, the supposed victim of a grizzly bear attack near the border of Wyoming and Montana. Gabriella has never believed in the findings at the scene and has hopes her father might still be alive somewhere. She'd like him to know he's a grandfather, and perhaps find a way to mend old wounds and begin again as the family they might have been. Celine, having suffered several losses recently and weakened from emphysema, is on the brink of hanging it up when she sees in this case the spark she might need to light a fire under her. But there is more to this case than meets the eye and more at stake than

reuniting a daughter and her father. And there is more to lose than some sleep over its disturbing details. Celine and her husband, armed with sketchy bits of information, her son's camper, and a store of firearms, set off for Montana soon after, come what may come their way.

This is a slower paced story which only serves it well, allowing the reader to really get to know these characters and spend time savoring them and their interactions. Celine is not your average P.I. She comes from a privileged background and can charm the shirt off of or onto any hardened criminal, if she chooses. Whip-smart and intuitive, she has a better success rate in solving cases than the FBI. She wears designer scarves and packs heat. I could go on and on, but I'll leave the rest for you to discover when reading this book. Her husband, steadfast and steady, and practical to a fault, stands by her side or is on standby, as needed. Their banter made me laugh out loud on more than one occasion. They also touched my heart, as did Celine's son, Hank, a character based on the author himself.

I can't recommend this book enough. If you'd like to settle back and read an excellent story about family and loss conveyed with wonderful writing about good people whom you wish you knew in real life, come take a look at this book.

Favorite lines:

She had no patience for a bad liar. A good liar, on the other hand, was someone to learn from.

Pursuing fun is exhausting. Having fun is just fun.

As promised, two links:

Interview with Peter Heller

<http://www.vaildaily.com/entertainmen...>

More on Caroline Watkins Heller

<http://www.brooklyneagle.com/articles...>

Trish says

Peter Heller is completely his own man, his work unlike anyone else's. Almost everything we love about a Peter Heller novel is here in spades: descriptions so fresh we can smell the creek water, glimpses of people so painterly a photograph would ruin the image, a manly strength and confidence that gives his main character a tiny swagger when confronting mother bears, bad-ass motorcyclists, or CIA operatives with orders where their hearts used to be.

Heller places a woman at the helm of the story this time, and his Celine is exceptional. She is too big a character to describe here; Heller allows her depths to unfurl slowly, each mention of her like fine dining--surprising, unusual, uniquely satisfying. She is too daring a character to be created out of whole cloth, so she must be modeled on someone Heller has bulked up for the occasion. One feels slightly jealous such a character exists outside of our experience.

Celine is a private investigator. She works with her husband, Peter, who hails from Maine and says "ai-yuh"

to indicate agreement. "My Watson," Celine suggests, "or I may be his Watson, but nobody knows because he doesn't say much." Celine doesn't do infidelity or corporate intrigue, the usual PI work. She looks for missing children, missing parents, or helps those who are desperate or destitute. Her focus makes us wonder what got her into the 'family' business exclusively.

This felt to me to be the most personal of Heller's novels. The Penguin Random House website tells us

Born and raised in New York, Heller attended high school in Vermont and Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Winner of the Michener fellowship, he received an MFA in both fiction and poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

He is writing what he knows, and we are there, listening to his voice, sense of humor, and perceptions when Celine and Peter sit around a daytime campfire outside the shack of L.B. Chicksaw Chillingsworth, the tracker. It's maybe not as plausible as Heller makes it seem, but is warming, interesting, and plausible enough.

The detail that 68-yr-old Celine has emphysema from a former four-pack-a-day habit added something to this story. It added realism: we often read stories of talented investigators who are strong, clever, and attractive. We don't often see the limitations under which most folks labor. This handicapping serves the imagination of readers: Celine is closer to readers' world and all the more admirable for it. A protagonist with a flaw makes for more interesting pursuits. Besides, her skill set with a pistol is enviable and more than makes up for not being able to run away from bad guys.

The attention Heller lavishes on guns is not so much indulgent as generous. He is able to impart a bit of his fascination to us, his readers, particularly if we know a bit about the pieces he describes. He is entirely correct in observing that, as precision instruments, they are gorgeous pieces of work, and he shares cleaning, oiling, and polishing techniques as though we were sitting beside him, watching him work. Being able to shoot well seems a communicative skill useful in today's world, able to make points that words simply can't.

My favorite character by far was the rarely-speaking Pete, or Pa, as Celine often called him. Celine and Peter had a fierce bonding going on, so thoughtful are they of one another. Pete's intensity of care was entirely necessary to someone with Celine's health history, for she experienced terrible moments of not being able to breathe, and Heller was able to convey to us Pete's desperation to find help. My least favorite character was Gabriella, a character Heller wasn't as successful in fleshing out. He almost got there, but I never had a sense of her as an adult woman with a child of her own rather than as a teen who had lost her father.

The standout difference between this book and Heller's earlier works, each of which have been different from one another in terms of genre-type, is that this book is longer. The length did not improve the experience for this reader. The novel could have been pared further, words rearranged for elegance or streamlining, but Heller's work this time doesn't strain. There is something to be said for not taking oneself too seriously. Regardless, I thought this a wonderful mystery/thriller and would gladly enter into conversation with Heller again. His painterly attention to detail, fulsome imagination, and his locales are hard to pass up.

I listened to the audio of this book, read by Kimberly Farr and produced by Penguin Random House Audio. Farr managed some of Maine's language peculiarities, though she added a Katherine Hepburn-like upper class drawl to Pete that became endearing only eventually. He was IV-educated after all, so perhaps he could claim the blue blood accent. Celine came through perfectly, as Heller had intended.

Turns out Celine is modeled on Heller's mother. Another GR reviewer, Donna, posted two links to stories about his muse on this novel.

Julie Christine says

I'm just going to lay this straight out. About three-quarters of the way in, the date current to the story is referenced. It's 2002. I nearly threw *Celine* at the wall. By this point, Celine, a septuagenarian private eye, and her husband have been making extensive use of their smartphones and combing Yellowstone for wifi hotspots as they sleuth the whereabouts of a National Geographic photographer allegedly killed by a grizzly bear decades before.

We were still using flip phones and BlackBerry in 2002; wifi hotspots weren't widespread at Starbucks until 2010, much less at scrappy diners deep in the Wyoming wilderness in 2002. These kinds of anachronisms, particularly from a writer as accomplished as Heller, make me stabby.

Okay, then. Got that off my chest. Glaring editorial/authorial error notwithstanding, this was a deeply enjoyable read. The title character, Celine, is a cross between James Bond and Katherine Hepburn, an East Coast elite with weapons training who eschewed the traditional path of her social milieu to solve mysteries. She's married to Pete, a taciturn Down Easter with a tender heart. Celine pursues the cases the FBI won't or has lost interest in, including the one at the center of this novel.

Three decades earlier, a beautiful woman, beloved of her husband and young daughter, was washed out to sea. Then tragedy befell her bereft husband, too. He was dragged into the forest by a rampaging grizzly, never to be seen again. Or was he? His daughter Gabriela, now an adult, believes he is still alive and hires Celine to track him down. Soon it becomes clear that this is more than a case of a grief-stricken widower with a death wish or rotten luck. International intrigue. Politicians with dirty secrets. Covert ops. All of this demands considerable suspension of disbelief, as well as tolerance of the tropes (Celine has a Tragic Past, of course; she's Beautiful, of course) and missteps (there's a loving son determined to solve the mystery of his mother, a subplot that drags and distracts, and an Ivy League-educated backwoods tracker improbably named Elbie Chicksaw who is more caricature than character). But if you give yourself up to Heller's lovely writing, you can forgive just about anything.

"Dusk was moving over the water with a stillness that turned half the world to glass. The wall of mountains had gone to shadow as had the reflections at their feet. In the stillness the rings of rising trout appeared like raindrops. Slowly, in silence, the dark water tilted away from the remaining daylight. Celine stepped down from the truck and stretched and walked to the water, smelling its coldness and the scent of someone's cooking fire.... She thought that peace reigned in the world—might reign. But only where love had no ferocity. Where there was the love between mothers and fathers and children there would be no peace."

Heller is at his best when describing the nature he knows and loves so deeply. He obviously adores Celine, which makes her irresistible to the reader. Despite the unevenness of the plotting, *Celine* is a read to get lost in.

Jill says

Peter Heller has a knack for taking a specific literary genre and placing his own unique spin on it. In *Dog Stars*, a postapocalyptic tale, he literally blew me away with his elegiac spin that elevated this to one of my favorite contemporary books. Again in *The Painter*, he takes the framework of a contemporary Western and provides a satisfying and nuanced look at an artist and fly fisherman capable of revenge and redemption.

This time, he tackles the private eye genre with the most unlikely of PIs: a 67-year-old fashionista from a privileged background named Celine. A heavy smoker, now suffering from emphysema, Celine is haunted by two pivotal past losses, which drive her to help track down long-missing persons. She becomes intrigued when Gabriela, a young woman from her alma mater, asks for her help in finding her father, a world-famous photographer named Paul Lamont. Years ago, the photographer was presumed dead from a grizzly mauling, but the body wasn't found and the pieces of the story don't add up.

Celine and her husband and PI partner Pete head out to Yellowstone to investigate a trail gone cold but really, the novel is just as much an exploration of Celine's inner landscape than the mountains in which Paul Lamont's secret is hidden. As in the past, Peter Heller renders gorgeous word-pictures of the glory of nature and integrates themes of loss and redemption. For the reader, the book is about the journey, not the destination.

Those literary readers who enjoy a new twist on the detective genre will particularly enjoy this book. One curiosity: the author persists in describing Celine and her husband as elderly and a step from the grave (various bit players refer to her as "old woman") – so much so that I had to look back to make sure she wasn't nearing 80. In addition, Celine is not a character that is prone to introspection, and those who gravitate to such characters may be a tad put-off. Still, Peter Heller remains a writer to reckon with. There are hints that we have not seen the last of Celine and that the author intends to revisit her in a future book.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Once again Heller presents us with a very interesting character. Céline, late sixties, uses oxygen for her emphysema, is a PI, specializing in uniting families, finding the missing. Why she does so is explained by her back story, and it is also why she agrees to take on a new case. A father missing for over twenty years, Paul a famed wildlife photographer, said to have been mauled and dragged by a grizzly outside of Yellowstone. No body, however, has ever been found.

Her character, as much as I liked her, was sometimes a little too unbelievable, or maybe over the top. I actually found the character of her husband Pete to be the more realistic portrayal. This book was entertaining but not without flaws, the writing not as gritty, not as edgy as in *The Painter*. His descriptions of the Fall foliage in the park though were beautiful and definitely one of the strengths in this novel. Heller always does such a fantastic job in his settings.

Went to a 3.5 because I felt the ending was too pat, too unrealistic. There was so much I liked about this one,

the descriptions, the wonderful writing, the steady pacing but there were also things I missed that I found in his first two novels. Almost felt like this could be a screenplay, can see it played out, a bit unrealistic and larger than life, ending and all. Definitely though consider this well worth reading, there is much to like and Céline is a very novel character.

ARC from Knopf publishing.

Elisa says

I'm clearly in the minority here, but there is way, way too much character information through endless flashbacks, and not nearly enough present day plot. I'm halfway through, and it's losing me fast
