



Shall We Not Revenge

D.M. Pirrone

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In early 1872, while Chicago is still smoldering from the Great Fire, Irish detective Frank Hanley is assigned the case of a murdered Jewish rabbi. His investigation proves difficult when the neighborhood's Yiddish-speaking residents are reluctant to talk. But when the rabbi's headstrong daughter, Rivka, unexpectedly offers to help Hanley find her father's killer, the detective receives much more than the break he was looking for. Their pursuit of the truth draws Rivka and Hanley closer together and leads them to a relief organization run by the city's movers and shakers. Along the way, they uncover a web of political corruption, crooked cops, and well-buried ties to two notorious Irish thugs from Hanley's past. Even after he is kicked off the case, stripped of his badge, and thrown in jail, Hanley refuses to quit. With a personal vendetta to settle for an innocent life lost, he is determined to expose a complicated criminal scheme, not only for his own sake, but for Rivka's as well.

Shall We Not Revenge Details

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From Reader Review Shall We Not Revenge for online ebook

Ronan O'Driscoll says

Diverting Historical Fiction

Tightly plotted murder mystery that wears its meticulous research lightly. The two main characters are wonderfully described and leave me anticipating the sequel.

Margaret1358 Joyce says

This is a skillfully presented kind of historical morality play, with 3 interwoven sets of ethical codes going on: the murderer's, the religious Jews, and the cops--respectively--raw sociopathic self-interest, love of neighbor, and the search for truth and justice according to the law. Set in 1872 Chicago just after the great fire which destroyed most of the city, this tale presents us with a plot that is a little meatier and more thought-provoking than your average crime thriller. It is a fascinating read.

Apallant says

I thought this book did a wonderful job of describing what it was like to live in Chicago just after the great fire. I loved the main characters in the book and it was a well done mystery!

Charlene Wexler says

Good mystery and history of Chicago after the fire

Good mystery and history of Chicago after the fire. Good understanding of the different ethnic groups living and working together. Well written. Good descriptions.

Sarah says

My re-visit to the historical mystery genre with this book was a great re-introduction. I don't read the genre often, but love it when I get such a juicy work to enjoy. This book pleases on most fronts, only falling slightly in a few areas. It's still good enough to make me want to read more historical mysteries!

The author cuts no corners in setting her scene and exploring intriguing aspects of her historical setting and events. Devastated and corrupt Chicago comes to vivid life as it tries to re-build after the Great Fire of 1871. Charred remains, rubble, and the destitute situation of many Chicago inhabitants makes the reader viscerally live the devastation and horror.

I also loved how the author explored the complex system of police work and the aid given to the poor in the era. Seeing how personal interests and politics played such a big part in both was fascinating to explore, if not completely unexpected. After all, this is the beginning era of organized crime and Tammany Hall-like politics.

I loved the characters through which the story is explored. Frank and Rivka are strong leads, both somewhat embittered from life's tragedies and pain. They're both trying to find their places in the world, Frank as a police detective in a system rife with favoritism and corruption and Rivka as a woman who yearns for something more than a standard woman's place in that world.

I do wish, though, that more time might have been spent on Rivka's side of the tale. She wasn't abandoned nor ignored in any fashion. Yet, far more page time and emphasis was placed on Frank and his police work. While this may make sense in the sense that this is a mystery/police procedural story, Rivka, I felt, could have added far more to the investigative side than she did. I missed seeing her more in this regard.

As far as the mystery itself goes, I felt the overall story was strong. I really enjoyed that the investigative portion wasn't all "he said/she said" as I've seen in other historical mysteries before. It probably helped that the story took place in a time where physical evidence was getting more weight in police work. We got to explore how a paper trail, stray hairs, the physical presence of blood, and boot prints all played a part in convicting the right parties of any crimes.

I do have to say though that I wasn't surprised at the responsible parties. From the weight that was placed on Frank's past and those involved with that, I could see where the finger was pointed very early on. There wasn't that much surprise or twist in the murderer's identity. That's not always a bad thing, but I felt somewhat disappointed this time.

A strong story with great historical details and characters, this mystery pleases on many fronts. I liked the attention to detail and evident time that the author put into this work. While not perfect, it's still an excellent example of the historical mystery genre. I've learned that the sequel to this book is actually due out in only a few weeks. So I'm eagerly awaiting the next book in this series and getting the chance to run the streets of 1870s Chicago with Rivka and Frank again.

Tim Chapman says

I just finished *Shall We Not Revenge* and I miss it already. This is one of those rare novels that transports you to a place and time in history (in this case 1870s Chicago, right after the Great Fire) with such skill that you can easily imagine that's the way it really was. It also gives us two wonderful characters, Rivka, the daughter of a murdered Rabbi and Detective Frank Hanley, the Irish cop assigned to the case. These two unlikely allies are thwarted in their investigations by a colorful array of deadly thugs, crooked cops, and cultural bias. To say I liked this book is an understatement. I'm looking forward to reading more from this imaginative author.

Michelle Cox says

This is a wonderfully-written historical mystery set just after the great Chicago fire. I loved the details of

what the city was like following that catastrophe, especially as not much has been written about that tumultuous period. Pirrone writes vivid descriptions that convey the scene without slowing the reader down. The mystery was well thought-out and plotted, keeping me guessing as I went along. But my favorite aspect of the book, of course, was the wonderful dynamic between Irish Catholic detective, Hanley, and the murder victim's daughter, Rivka, an orthodox Jew. I suspect their relationship may evolve with each book. I hope so, anyway! I learned so much about Chicago and loved coming back to this story each night. So sad it ended, but I can't wait to begin the next in the series!! Wonderful read.

Christopher Gerrib says

This book has been sitting on my to-be-read pile for a long time. That's a shame, actually, because it's a wonderful read. Set a few months after the Great Chicago Fire, in the cold winter with many Chicagoans homeless, this book is a mystery. A Chicago rabbi is killed in his temple, and his daughter and an Irish cop with a mob past are tasked with investigating. Very interesting and well-done.

Sallie Dunn says

This was I interesting tale, but not especially well written, it did give an insight into immigrant Irish culture as well as a poor community of Hasidic Jews following the great fire in Chicago in 1871. I did not think the story flowed as well as it might have.

Eileen Iciek says

An entertaining mystery set shortly after the great Chicago fire. An Irish-American detective searches for the murderer of and motive for the murder of a beloved Jewish rabbi, aided by the rabbi's daughter. The novel shed light on the life of Chicago in the late 19th century - and how the city's corruption issues far predate the Mayor Daley era.

The book held my interest, had believable characters, and an compelling plot. The biggest shortcomings for this book are its cover (it looks like it came from a bombed out German city (not just my opinion)) and the title, which is a quote from the Merchant of Venice. The novel is more engaging than the title, and more interesting than the cover.

If you have ever lived in Chicago and want a clue about how things got the way they are today, you will enjoy this novel.

Jane says

Where I got the book: freebie at a conference. The publisher is a friend of mine (how's that for going deep on the disclosure?)

Shall We Not Revenge is a murder mystery set in the Chicago winter of 1872. Only three months since the

great fire destroyed much of the downtown, Chicago is still struggling to rebuild itself and many families have been left destitute, living in the holes that were once basements. The Relief and Aid Society is receiving a fortune in donations to help them, but it's obvious that its patrician directors are very selective about whom they help, basing their decisions on their own notions of who is and isn't "deserving."

Detective Frank Hanley, an Irishman who has escaped a shady past, investigates the murder of an orthodox rabbi and begins to suspect that this noble-hearted man's death might have something to do with the distribution of aid. He and the Rabbi's daughter, Rivka, become allies in the search for justice in spite of the limitations imposed on Rivka by her traditional culture.

I really liked this one. First and foremost, the writing's excellent—polished and assured, and intelligent throughout. I couldn't find any faults with the research—I occasionally felt the characters sounded a little too modern, but by the late nineteenth century people could be surprisingly modern in their speech patterns and mindset, particularly in an urban environment. And the fictional murder was very cleverly worked into the Chicago of 1872 with its organized crime (small compared to its 20th century fame, but nevertheless significant), its ethnic communities and the whole post-fire aid situation. The story had the solidity of something that might actually have happened, although the author's note gives a clear account of where fact meets fiction.

The attention to the details of the Orthodox Jewish community of the day is fascinating, although I often wished Rivka had more freedom of action. She is a strong, interesting character who really didn't have enough to do in the novel, leaving Hanley to carry most of the action—and I found him less interesting than Rivka. I also wanted the pacing to pick up speed a bit in places—this is what I'd call a thoughtful mystery, which is odd because I can recall quite a few scenes of violence and drama. It's just that the overall effect, for me, was one of thoughtfulness.

With writing like that, I hope that D.M. Pirrone will write more books set in Chicago. Recommended.

Rebecca says

An interesting historical mystery. I almost dropped it in the forward which seemed gratuitously violent but the rest of the book is not like this.

Katie says

initially good, but it got tedious, so I ditched it. May be because I thought it would be more of a historical fiction piece than a mystery.

Heather Hutchins says

Such a good book! I cannot put it down. I want to know what happens next.

I'll probably be up all night reading this one!

Love the ending. Love the characters. Love the setting.

Just one question: when can I buy the next one?

Francesca says

Simply, I loved it.
