



Strachey's Folly

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Strachey's visit to a showing of the AIDS quilt in Washington, D.C. turns up a panel for a man ho is not dead...yet.

In Washington, D.C. to view the AIDS quilt, gay P.I. Donald Strachey, his lover Timmy, and a friend discover a panel for an ex-lover of their friend. The trouble is that the ex-lover isn't dead. When their friend barely survives a vicious attack, Strachey concludes that someone has a deadly secret -- one that he or she will kill to protect.

"Stevenson's mysteries are among the wittiest and most politically pointed around today". -- The Washington Post on Chain of Fools

Strachey's Folly Details

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Author : Richard Stevenson

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From Reader Review Strachey's Folly for online ebook

Joe Scholes says

This was the 7th in the Donald Strachey gay detective series. As far as plot goes, this one is about as good as the previous ones, which is to say - light. One improvement is the change of scenery for this novel, which has its roots in Washington D.C. rather than Albany, NY. There is still a homophobic police officer involved, to give Strachey someone upon whom to practice his "bait and wit" routine. There are the usual contingent of colorful characters, although many of them exhibit a similar sarcastic yet witty repartee; no novel should have that many clever conversationalists.

Stevenson has a knack for a witty turn of phrase in his narrative, thankfully not quite as soaked in sarcasm as most of his jaded characters. I caught myself smiling or chuckling quietly at the understated humor throughout the book.

I have two books left to read in this series, and then will find myself waiting for the author's next installment.

Montana says

The new MLR Press editions, at least the ebook versions, have a disappointing number of typographical problems, both minor and major.

Also, some of Don's actions in this particular book in the series stretch my suspension of disbelief some. (No spoilers, but I'm talking about his professional actions, not his personal ones.)

Teresa says

He tried for epic and got, instead, 'wandered off the reservation.' The reading is good, I enjoyed the tale (really liked Strachey's reaction to how it played out) but...it got away from him a bit. There were too many characters, and I started to care less about the main ones.

Adam Dunn says

Easily the worst of the series so far, very difficult to get through. Dated American politics combine with no murder to create confusion. Too many questions, not enough answers. I want to continue the series but I think I need a break after this.

Josh says

The most astonishing thing about this one is there is no murder, but Stevenson still manages to write an

engrossing and engaging detective story.

Carvedwood says

I would have given this book four stars, which is my normal rating for this series, except that the plot made me feel as if I were slogging through it instead of enjoying it. This isn't Richard Stevenson's fault, though. The plot has all the earmarks of the rest of the series - humor, convolutions, good characterizations - it's just that I don't enjoy conspiracies as much as I enjoy individual human follies.

Paul says

Okay, how can you not love a book that starts at the Names Project Memorial Quilt display on the D.C. mall in 1996 (yes, I was there) where our heroes and their friend see a panel for someone they know is not dead, and several hours later, someone tries to kill them. Very satisfying story (FYI - the panel is a McGuffin...).

Neet says

This is the 7th book in the Don Strachey mysteries and one of my least favorites. In this mystery we find our intrepid PI taking a vacation in Washington, DC with Tim. Tim and Don are staying at Tim's old Peace Corps friend's home, and decide to see the AIDS panel on the mall. Maynard notices the name of an ex-lover, who is very much alive. Maynard saw the man several weeks ago in Mexico, and though the man ignored him and ran, Maynard knows it was him. After speaking to the person who is in charge of the exhibit, the gang heads to eat and then heads home. While going through his mail, Maynard discovers a letter from his ex, Jim Suter, apologizing for his behavior. Suter explains he's in big trouble and he pleads with Maynard not to let anyone know he's in Mexico, especially the police. Things get stranger when Jim's panel is vandalized. Maynard decides to call the woman that heads the exhibit and ask her not to give his name to the police. While getting the information, shots ring out and Maynard is found bleeding and unconscious. Maynard is rushed to the hospital in very critical condition. Enter the police detective investigating the shooting, the disgustingly racist and homophobic Ray Craig. The less I say this Neanderthal the better. I just will say that this man is inept and stupid, and Don shows him to be that. Tim wants to hire Don to see not only to find out who shot Maynard, and to attempt to find Suter. We also learn that Jim Suter was a notorious for using and emotionally abusing a string of men. He was a great lover and a horrible person. The mystery was a bit confusing and as I said not the best that I've read from this author. I love the series, but this book isn't one of the best.

Laura says

This book definitely didn't show Strachey at his best, which I mostly didn't mind, because he is only human after all, nor did it show the series at its best, but I guess in a way it made me value the previous books in the series more.

I think the suspense of the mystery was good, but it was too difficult for me to get through this book to truly

enjoy any of it. It felt like the old political intricacies and some other details were just too difficult for me to fully grasp the story and they hindered the smooth reading process, thus making reading the book feel like a chore.

Richard says

This is an average entry in the Strachey series-enjoyable enough, but Stevenson is capable of much better. Overall, it's forgettable.

For a change of pace, though there is violence, this is a conspiracy/political thriller rather than the typical murder mystery Stevenson usually writes. Unfortunately, the resulting effort is amateurish and full of clichés.

For starters, the plot is kicked off by Strachey and Timmy viewing the AIDS quilt in Washington DC with a friend who finds a panel for someone they know to be very much alive. All the characters treat this as some huge thing, even to the point of calling the media. Then said media thinks the story is interesting enough for print. Maybe we are just too far away from that period, but in 2017 it doesn't ring true that anyone would care this much. I can't imagine anyone would be that interested in what could be a simple error or a case of someone with the same name or any other of a 1000 banal explanations.

Other problems include the cliché of arch criminals with terminally stupid henchmen. Seriously at one point, two of these henchmen are supposed to be guarding someone for a big drug lord. The hostage simply gets up while the men are playing dominoes and goes swimming where he talks to Strachey for a good five/ten minutes, and then they just swim away. In all that time, the henchman never even look up to see what their prisoner is up to. All righty then...

In the end, it's a fast, entertaining enough read, but it doesn't hang together if you give it two seconds thought. Most of the other books have managed to entertain AND have a believable plot. Stevenson's first attempt at political thriller doesn't.

Jane says

Confusing plot is confusing. The set-up is nicely built and while I had no troubles following the how, I just didn't understand the why. What's the point? Also, Donald Strachey is not a very good detective, is he? To be so gullible, but I think that, the being not a very good detective, is a point to his favor. It's definitely a different Donald Strachey than what I'd imagined him to be, from what little I've seen him in the movie version, having skimmed through it (which, btw, I had this epiphany that my attention can be focused longer with books than with film and television mediums. Obvious, but still, epiphany). And I find I like Timothy, Donald's (romantic) partner, more than I thought I would.

Gilliam says

Not quite four stars due to the author's bad habit of interrupting his narrative for a bout of politicking (not

that I disagree with the author's politics, just its ungainly delivery; Don and Timothy often end up looking and sounding like spokespersons for ACT UP staging a sit in rather than just two gay guys caught up in a murder mystery which intersects institutional homophobia in Washington, D.C.). Otherwise, Stevenson once again excels at surrounding Don with a bevy of amusing, sympathetic and unlikeable characters which allows Don the opportunity to further explore his acerbic side, much to the reader's amusement.

Karen says

I love Stevenson's author's notes to the ebooks in this series. We get a glimpse of his "looking back" thoughts on the times and on his choices as a writer. In Strachey's Folly, Donald and Timmy go to Washington and are caught up in a miasma of political and sexual intrigue. Towards the end of this tale, one of the characters describes Donald as "one of the smuggest men I have ever known." I'd have to say he's right on in this case, even though Strachey slightly redeems himself by being self-aware, if in retrospect.

This ebook still has formatting and typo "issues" (don't think I'll be able to use that term again without something of a smirk), but is much better than the others in the series to this point. It's a shame that this hasn't been fixed. The series deserves more respect.

Brian McGarrigle says

Fun story

Fun detective story and thoughtful political critique. The characters are fun and well written. This story really kept me interested.

Antonella says

[the one so disrespectful of the Memorial Quilt that she makes a fake panel just to smoke out Jim Suter, (hide spoiler)]
