



Playing God

Kate Flora

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On an icy February night, the body of Steven Pleasant, a prominent Portland, Maine physician, grows cold in his parked Mercedes. All signs point to a john killed by a disgruntled hooker: his pants are unzipped, wallet is gone, and the good doctor has a reputation for entertaining girls in his car.

But the deeper Detective Sergeant Joe Burgess digs, the muddier the case becomes. While juggling hookers, wives, ex-wives, fathers, stepfathers, dealers and doctors, a nurse on Pleasant's staff suggests another angle—disgruntled patients.

Now, ensconced in the darkness of a sleeping hospital, Burgess comes face-to-face with ghosts from his past and must decide what being a detective really means.

Playing God Details

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Author : Kate Flora

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From Reader Review Playing God for online ebook

Patricia says

I never made it off the first page. There were crude references and I decided I didn't want to read another word. I even returned the Kindle version to Amazon--something I rarely do even when I hate a book. This author is not for me.

Marty Langenberg says

Joe Burgess! I loved his character. So human, so male, in every way. The usual cliches - ex wife, long hours, doggedly determined. None of these distracted from the excellent telling of a great yarn. Even his 'relationship' with a hooker who finally tricks him into having sex, somehow fits the man. His partners/coworkers in solving the crime are too supportive for my liking but he can't solve this one without them. The suspects are many and varied. Joe's incompetent, brown-nosing boss creates a nice frisson and adds lots to the way the story unfolds. At least he gets his comeuppance late in the story. Noblesse oblige fails, as it so often does.

ctrothschild says

Great Story

Burgess reminds me a of another former detective from another series of books. Story was top notch but could we make Cote's a ?title more human!

Colin Rochford says

Playing God by Kate Flora

A police procedural which is exciting and well written. It is a novel with a message, no, several messages. And this works.

I have many quotes that I I'd like to share with you.

"Burgess stomped on the brakes, the Explorer responding with orgasmic ABS shudders,"

"On a morning like this with the air so cold, great columns of sea smoke rose off the salt water, sunlight turning it a soft golden colour, so that he might of been driving toward the gates of heaven instead of South Portland."

"Her long, straight hair was held at the nape of the neck with the red wire twist tie from a bread bag."

"abbreviated tank top cut so low you could have mailed letters in her cleavage."

"His shirt slimy with the acrid fug of his own sweat. "

"Great, fluffy white gobs smacked against the windshield and surrounded him with a lace-curtain landscape (snow)".

I enjoyed it very much. And I'll be looking for more from Kate Flora.

LJ says

PLAYING GOD (Police Proc-Maine-Cont) – G+

Flora, Kate – 1st in series

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*** When a man is found dead in his locked car with his clothes undone and a rod shoved down his throat, Sergeant Joe Burgess is called in to investigate. The victim is prominent radiologist Dr. Steven Pleasant, who mistreated Joe's mother. Pleasant's name is a misnomer as Joe finds the victim had a penchant for prostitutes, selling prescription drugs, mistreating other patients and only caring about money. But Joe is a dedicated cop and, in spite of his boss demanding Joe treads lightly among the town's powerful, he is determined to uncover the killer no matter who is implicated.

*** This is the first book I've read by Flora and I enjoyed it. I liked the character of Joe, he made sense. He's absolutely dedicated to his job, occasionally beyond the point of reason and in spite of his personal feelings about the victim. There are interesting supporting characters to keep things in balance. The plot kept me interested all the way through. The author made good use of the setting and has a good ear for dialogue. The suspense was good and the ending was effective. I am looking forward to reading more by Ms. Flora.

Kathryne says

I will keep reading Joe Burgess. Although I gave it three stars, it is really more a 3 3/4 Stars. Each night, I looked forward to finding out the next turn of events.

Suzanne says

I had high hopes for this book. The author has a lot of published books, I love a good police procedural, and I love books set in various locales around the country. Unfortunately, the protagonist, Joe Burgess, is not an easy guy to like. Many cops carry demons, but they manage to stay focused on the task at hand. While Joe professes to have the right goals, he is easily distracted by his personal feelings. There were so many digressions describing his past, his difficulties connecting with people, and his obsession with an unsolved case in the past, that the current case was being put on the back burner. I had a hard time keeping all the characters straight. The "cop banter" felt contrived. And my biggest pet peeve for a straight-up police procedural mystery - sexual activity, with a lot more detail than I need. I know, personal preference. But for me this book was a disappointment.

Eric_W says

I ran across Books in Motion a couple of years back. They apparently got their start catering to long distance truck drivers producing some very good original audio recordings with their own stable of readers.

A prominent medical doctor is discovered dead in his Mercedes with his "ahem" at full mast and several

shades of lipstick on the more sensitive portions of his anatomy. Joe Burgess, the detective catching the case, soon learns from his young second wife of his predilection for the euphemistic BJ at night in his car. No one liked Dr. Stephen Pleasant and the suspect list grows. Even Joe had a reason to dislike him as the doctor had screwed up his mother's treatment. No point in recapping the plot. Engaging and well-read with a very likable protagonist.

It's always interesting to read a book of this genre by an author with credentials, and knowing what those are often sheds light on incidents which occur in the book. A little investigating revealed that Flora, author of several other mysteries and some true crime reportage, was an assistant attorney general in Maine so she knows Portland and the crime milieu well. In one scene, Burgess attacks his boss because the evidence relating to the murder and rape of a child was being lost or contaminated. Turns out the alleged perp was from a prominent family and could hire an expensive lawyer, so strings were being pulled in the rapist's favor. I wonder if Flora hadn't suffered through her own rage at the rich and well-connected's ability to get off.

Chris says

I like Joe Burgess. A lot. Love the setting – Portland, Maine. A dead doctor, without compassion for anyone including his wife and especially his patients, disliked by everyone– including Joe Burgess. Various leads, including one that Burgess was a little reluctant to pursue. But listening to his mother's admonitions not to play God he's relentless in pursuit. Lots of food for thought in the way he thinks, the sorts of feelings and virtues he accepts and does not accept, and interesting thinking in the way/s he views his own life.

Aviar Savijon says

A by the book crime drama investigation. Well written and story. I loved it!

Carol says

Kate Flora has come up with an interesting and intriguing new character in Joe Burgess...the "meanest cop in the city of Portland." Even though there was no love lost between Joe and Dr. Stephen Pleasant... he was the best detective to get the murder case since he is also Portland's number one detective. Burgess pretty much said it all when he said, "This case has everything - unhappy wife, angry ex. Hookers. Drugs. Money problems. Maybe blackmail, and a vic nobody liked, including his patients." Joe Burgess reminds e a great deal of Michael Connley's Harry Bosch,,he won't stop looking until he gets his man. **Playing God** was a great introduction to this new series...just what I need...another series. *deep sigh*

Carol says

This book is #1 in the Joe Burgess series. He's known as the meanest detective in Maine, and he does try to keep his emotions under control. As a protagonist, he didn't seem very likable to me, and he obviously drives himself so hard he's really a bit of a masochist. Won't allow himself sleep, or decent meals, or rest of any kind while he's on the hunt for a murderer. Annoying, actually. But there are good reasons for his

personality, such as it is. And he's honest to a fault. I grew to like him and now I want more! Portland, Maine, is also a great character in the story, and the writing was such that I could feel the bitter cold as I read. Number 2 in the series is already on my Kindle, ready to go.

Judy Crudele says

Takes place in Portland Maine.

Barbara says

Have to be honest. I'm not a big fan of police procedurals, but I did finish reading *Playing God* in fits and starts over several weeks. The author is very good at writing "cop speak," the characters were okay, the plot was fairly interesting, and the Portland, Maine in winter setting worked well. The pacing seemed a little slow in places, though, especially the last couple of chapters. I really wanted to like Joe Burgess, and there was a lot to like about him. Unfortunately, his "aging hound dog drooling" mentality, which seemed to kick in every time he was with an attractive woman, including two women young enough to be his daughters, wasn't appealing at all.

Kathleen Hagen says

Playing God, by Kate Flora, B-plus, narrated by Terry Rose, produced by Books in Motion, downloaded from audible.com.

This was a good book, a stand-alone, I believe, reminiscent of Michael Connelly's Harry Bosch. The real problem with this book was the narrator. He used a cartoonish voice to denote what he was trying to imitate: the accents of those who lived in Maine. Not good imitations and quite annoying. But the book was a page-turner not to be put down. Detective Joe Burgess is a cop who won't let a case go until he finds the killer. One night, an oncologist, Dr. Steven Pleasant, (a fairly unpleasant character) turns up dead in his car with some kind of rod rammed down his throat. He was in the habit of picking up prostitutes and partying in his car, so the immediate suspicion is that a prostitute or pimp killed him. But Burgess has some knowledge of the man. Dr. Pleasant was his mother's oncologist and through neglect caused her death. As he investigates the murder, he finds lots of people who were unhappy with his care of patients, and doctors and nurses who also hated him. In fact, no one seemed to have liked him except his very young wife. There are lots of twists and turns, lots of action, lots of police procedure, and all in all it was a good read.
