



Dead Politician Society

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When the mayor keels over dead in the middle of a speech, a clandestine student society immediately takes credit for his demise. Their mission is to create a perfect political system by any means at their disposal. Clare Vengel, a rookie officer fresh from the police academy and beyond bored with her routine as a beat cop, volunteers to go undercover as a student to infiltrate the secretive organization. A streetwise amateur mechanic, Clare takes a dim view of book smarts—she is of the opinion that higher education is for people who can't handle the real world. In short order, she alienates a popular professor and begins to lose the respect of her police superiors. Soon, another politician is killed, and Clare steps up her clandestine involvement with the suspect students. When two more politicians die, the race begins to apprehend the culprits before her own duplicity can be revealed.

Dead Politician Society Details

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Author : Robin Spano

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From Reader Review Dead Politician Society for online ebook

Debra says

Rookie police officer, Clare Vengel is on her first undercover assignment, which she is determined to get right. And really, how hard can it be? All her supervisor wants her to do is pose as a political science student, gather information, and report back to him. There's to be no heroics or putting herself in dangerous situations. To accomplish this task, Clare needs to befriend some of her classmates, as one of them might be the serial killer who's poisoning politicians. But in Clare's world, relationships get complicated and mistakes are made, and this is what makes *Dead Politician Society* so much fun.

Set in Toronto, this is the author's first mystery about a young woman eager to succeed, but on her own terms, and those terms aren't always easy. She's smart but lacks tact, especially around her supervisor. She's impulsive, streetwise, resourceful, and yet unsure of herself at times. Also, there are darker aspects of her personal life involving her parents. This well-paced plot is all about actions and consequences, and learning from mistakes; something readers will relate to, whether they're interested in politics or not. Enjoy!

Brian DiMattia says

Only read part of this book, so in fairness I should say that it may get better. But the writing wasn't good enough to keep going.

There was no subtlety, and no nuance. Have you ever been around a group of people where everyone there is convinced that they are either the smartest person in the room, or the cleverest, or both? That's what it was like reading these characters. They were all either self-important and arrogant, or cliched and two-dimensional...set decoration to give the poser characters something to emote at.

I think there was the potential for an interesting plot here, but from the book description I was expecting something darkly comedic in a University setting, like Neal Stephenson's "The Big U" or Jane Smiley's "Moo." Instead, I think the author created some characters that she was very excited about, and didn't take the time to let them develop.

Alexander Inglis says

I have lived in Toronto almost my entire life, and vaguely in downtown Toronto my entire adult life. I love this city, warts and all ... so I am sucker for new writers setting their tales in my front yard. And back yard. If "The Streets of Toronto" doesn't have quite the same ring to it as if that ended in "San Francisco", my heart skips a beat, nonetheless, every time. So what a joy to discover the work of Robin Spano and her first novel *Dead Politician Society* starts out with murder of the mayor and an undercover rookie cop is sent in to sort out the possible involvement of a secret student-faculty society on the campus of University of Toronto. This well plotted mystery has great pacing, entertaining characters and a satisfying resolution.

Clare Vengel, rookie cop, is being given a one-way chance to advance her career: infiltrate Dr Mathew Easton's "Political Utopia for the Real World" class and, more specifically, the shadowy SPU that may be

behind the sudden poisoning of Toronto's mayor. Clare's boss is irascible, unsupportive and close-lipped as the investigation proceeds along parallel paths, leaving Clare to sort out what clues she stumbles across. Clare's classmates are a mix of idealists, with their own issues trying to make it through school, and there are several of them ... but who could be involved in the murder ... make that murders ... as the tale progresses? There are other key characters, too: like the mayor's ex (as in divorced) wife, currently enjoying a lesbian fling with one of Easton's students; and a couple of reporters at the local newspaper ... and the killer, who sends taunting tweets, and promises a book deal to an aspiring writer. It's not long before it's clear there is a list of victims to be poisoned (causing the caterer who seems to be a common link no end of consternation) ... but who is next and can the carnage be ended?

Although I'd sorted out the killer a bit earlier than I would have liked, the details and secondary plots and involvements were a pleasant surprise. There are a lot of characters here, and not enough time to flesh them all out (including our heroine), and folks are all just a little bit too nice (hello, this is Toronto the Good), and I did find the constant ping pong among the different layers of the tale jarring ... but it's so well plotted, and the pacing so strong, these flaws are forgivable. A second book in the series is already announced for a fall release.

Kari Anderson says

Politician's are dropping like flies and rookie cop Clare Vengel finally gets her break to go undercover and show the world what she's got. Her first gig, a college poli-sci student trying to find who is poisoning the politicians.

Dead Politician Society is written through the eyes of Clare, Matthew, Annabelle, Laura and Jonathan. Clare of course is our leading lady. Matthew is her new poli-sci "teacher", who may also be in charge of the secret society that claims to be killing the politicians. Annabelle is a lowly obit reporter who was the lucky one chosen to receive the obits the killers were sending out. And Annabelle dates Matthew. Laura's ex-husband was the first politician killed. Her girlfriend is also in Clare's class. And Jonathan is actually just a man in love. Yes, he's in Clare's poli-sci class, but he followed his heart to get there. Each of these offer a unique perspective of the story, some from the outside, some from the very close inside.

Clare has to keep her cool and her cover while trying to find who is slipping the poison.

I normally have an easy time writing the summaries for the books I read, but this one was a toughie. It may be because I was watching a nail-biting, West Virginia rival football game on ESPN at the same time, but I really think it was just because I am still having a hard time wrapping my head around everything that happened in this book.

The number of narrators is one of the things I love most about this book. I'm all about short, quick chapters. And and of most of America these days, I have a hard time paying attention for long periods of time. This was great for my short attention span. The book changed just in the right times.

To go along with the changing of the chapters in the book, I was very impressed with Spano's writing. It's hard for me to sit down and write a book from one point of view, let alone five. Each chapter's tone changed with each character. Writing like this amazes me. It also offers different ways to tell the story. A lot of the info we learned about the killer was not actually shared by Clare, but through the eyes of the other narrators.

I wasn't quite sure what I was getting myself into when I first agreed to read this book. Robin contacted me and asked if I'd be interested in taking part of her book tour for this month. Her book was on NetGalley, but

since the cover wasn't pink and purple and glittery, I didn't pay it much mind. This is why I love reading. I am always pleasantly surprised.

I will always be the fan of a mystery novel if it keeps me guessing. And from the first chapter, I was guessing who the killer was. I thought I knew a few times, but just like Clare, got caught up in friends and fellas to really see what was out there.

Clare is a very likable leading lady and I am really hoping Spano has another one up her sleeve. I give Dead Politician Society 5 bookmarks!

Check out Robin Spano's virtual tour (link below) and watch for my post to be added. My date is 9/11. I have to admit, this is my first tour like this and it is really cool.

Michelle says

Filled with twists and turns, shadowy characters and situations that are not as they seem, Dead Politician Society is what one expects from a mystery. Yet, it is so much more. Subtle in its intricacies, each character peels back the layers of the mystery, unveiling a welcome depth to the story.

Dead Politician Society is told from the point of view of multiple characters. While this can be a bit confusing in the beginning, it allows the story to become character-driven rather than action-driven. In fact, the entire story is reminiscent of *The Moonstone* in that the action occurs behind the scenes. In turn, the reader builds a relationship with each of the characters, driving the discoveries and adding complexity to the tale.

The mystery itself is quite interesting. It involves politics not typically seen in any novel, if ever, which lends a unique air to the story. Similarly, the use of multiple points of view highlights the different motives for the murders. Unfortunately, this also means that shrewd readers will be able to solve the mystery well before the big reveal. However, rather than detracting from the story, this adds to the reader's enjoyment, making the story almost interactive in nature.

Since Dead Politician Society is character-driven, a reader's enjoyment of the story hinges on one's engagement to each of the characters. The main character, Clare Vengel, is brash, tough, quick to judge and quick to react. Everything about her is over-the-top, from her determination to win, her determination to drown her sorrows, her determination to project a tough demeanor to her determination to solve the case. I, unfortunately, found Clare to have a huge chip on her shoulder, making it difficult for me to like her, let alone root for her to solve the case. However, the beauty of character-driven novels is that each reader will react differently to each character. Someone I may not like may be a character that others love and vice versa. With novels like this, reactions to characters are key.

Dead Politician Society is set in Canada, and Ms. Spano does an excellent job of highlighting the differences between Canadian and U.S. societies. The politics mentioned are uniquely Canadian, discussing various reforms and government seats that exist only in Canada. The verbiage too is different, although not as drastic as a novel set in England. The differences are slight but there, serving as a reminder that Canada is indeed not the U.S.

Overall, Dead Politician Society is a great addition to the mystery genre. Smart and well-written, Ms. Spano utilizes the most up-to-date politics to drive this modern murder mystery. Using the points-of-view of

multiple characters, she creates a story in which the reader is actively engaged and involved, rounding out a story for any type of reader. Readers everywhere will fall in love with Clare and cheer her on as she works to solve her first case. For true lovers of the genre, Dead Politician Society will become a must-read.

CoffeeBook Chick says

With its almost vintage 1950s mystery cover, a la graphic novel, I was intrigued.

Clare is just past the age of twenty-one and is a police officer working boring breaking and entering cases and somehow gets a crack at going undercover when the local mayor dies at a political event. Reasons abound for Clare to become a student at the University of Toronto, and her Political Science class offers more than enough suspects to find a killer who has made killing politicians a priority to spread the word about a secret society that won't stand for two-faced elected representatives. Clare can carry a weapon, fix a car, and make rookie mistakes in her first chance to wear a different identity.

I have to admit, I was worried to read it because I had a little bit of a preconceived notion that I might not like it. The story line sounded interesting, but for some reason, I thought it wasn't up my alley -- well, within the first few pages, I was hooked and read it in one sitting, laughing and enjoying the ride along the way. The chapters change from one character's perspective to another, and although it took me a few chapters to feel a little comfortable with it, I fell right into it and had a blast with this. The dialogue was snappy and natural, and the characters were developed and interesting -- Clare's interactions with her "handler," a more senior officer were frustrating and hilarious. I mean, could he just say one nice thing or pat her on the back just once? I wanted her to tell him off but I relished each time she had to meet with him.

Robin Spano has put together exactly what you want in a murder mystery with a strong chick as the lead who's just getting her feet wet in all things law and order. I probably never would have thought to pick up this book had I not had a chance to review it for the Crazy Book Tours, and I'm glad I did. You can better believe it when I tell you that I'm amped and ready to read book two when it comes out.

Jack says

My first read of this upcoming author was 100% first rate. This is a start of something very special. Loved this book.

Catherine Astolfo says

Robin Spano is a master with dialogue. It's intelligent, witty, charming, and revelatory all at once. Her characters are primarily young but regardless of age, they are all interesting and sympathetic. Each of them reveals a great deal about him or herself through their discussions, debates, word games or simple conversations.

This art of illuminating character through dialogue is difficult but Spano accomplishes it in her first novel like a seasoned pro. The plot is unique, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but with a layer of political savvy. Being from Toronto, I totally enjoyed the local references too. I really liked this book!

Catherine Astolfo, Author of the Emily Taylor Mysteries
www.catherineastolfo.com

Casey (The Bookish Type) says

The most compelling aspect of Dead Politician Society is the bizarre cast of characters. Every character Robin Spano crafts sparks strong emotions in the reader - but whether they be positive or negative is an entirely different question. Clare herself is tenacious and determined, always willing to enter the fray head-on. While her recklessness tends to get her in trouble at work, it makes her a winning character that readers will eagerly cheer on. Susannah, one of Clare's political science classmates, is full of snark and spunk and is equally admirable for her fearless approach to life. However, the rest of the characters are of a different sort. Professor Matthew Easton will cause readers' blood to boil - his misogyny and arrogance are dumbfounding for much of the novel. However, the crimes begin to take a toll on his outlook and it is fascinating to discover the surprisingly deep layers hidden within his character. Even more frustrating is Annabel, the local reporter in a sticky situation after receiving the killer's first letter to the press. Her choices are baffling, but it is oddly captivating to watch her walk the tightrope between daring and disaster. Spano seamlessly weaves these apparently disparate lives into an intricate narrative of whodunnit where everyone seems like a viable suspect. This truly is the best kind of mystery, full of endless possibilities. Though it is a murder mystery, the gruesome aspect is distanced from the forefront of the novel and allows it to be a fun, light read that's more interested in the characters than the crimes that drive the plot. The mystery maintains its suspense until the very end, and the ultimate denouement is a deliciously twisted surprise.

<http://thebookishtype.blogspot.com/20...>

Colleen Cross says

Clare Vengel is very cool and I hope I can read the next book in the series soon! Robin Spano's characters are quirky and original, and her political revenge premise is fresh and interesting. Looking forward to more!

Su says

I wasn't expecting to like this book, because it's not a genre I generally enjoy. However, Robin Spano's writing style is fun to read and engaging, and the plot was paced well enough to raise tension about whodunit while also keeping me interested. It's definitely not rated PG, so if you're looking for a family-friendly read, this isn't it. It's definitely one that I enjoyed enough to re-read.

I'd So Rather Be Reading {Nat} says

Have you ever changed purses for the season and unexpectedly found a twenty dollar bill in the bottom of your old purse? Whenever that happens to me I immediately spend the money on something totally frivolous like Godiva chocolate or a manicure. It's the best guilty pleasure, isn't it?

I had that same feeling reading *Dead Politician Society*. This was an unexpected find and I really enjoyed it. I discovered this book when I read an interview with Robin Spano on Daisy Chain Book Reviews and left a comment. Robin then responded to my comment and told me that her book is available for free on NetGalley. Yay! The summary really intrigued me so I requested the title and then started reading immediately after approval.

Dead Politician Society is written in the third person and alternates point of view from chapter to chapter. We follow several characters throughout the story, with the main character being Clare, the undercover cop. Clare is a real fly-by-the seat of your pants type of girl. I like living vicariously through these types of characters, since I am so Type A that I could never live so moment-to-moment. Clare's new to the force and this is her first undercover assignment. Politicians around Toronto have been dying due to what police think is poisoning and the police suspect a popular political science teacher. Clare goes undercover as a college student to learn more.

Clare bumbles her way through the investigation, being constantly castigated by her unappreciative boss. She narrows the list of suspects and does some good police work in the process, which is wholly unappreciated by her superiors. Clare figures out who the killer is but the reader is left in the dark until the very end of the story. When we do discover the culprit, it makes perfect sense; however, it was the person I was least expecting. I like being left in the dark like that---it kept me turning the pages until the very end.

Overall *Dead Politician Society* was a lot of fun. Despite the heavy subject matter, it was a light-hearted read. I'll definitely be on the lookout for Robin Spano's next book!

Just One Gripe:

The characters were my favorite thing about this book. However, until I got to really know them all, it was a little confusing just because there were so many characters featured in each separate POV chapter.

The Best Thing About This Book:

The well-developed cast of characters: Matthew the cad, Johnathan the lovesick computer geek, Susannah the liberal, and Annabel the intrepid reporter; these are just a few of the characters followed throughout the book.

Appropriate for a younger audience:

No

Score:

Characters: 5/5

Plot: 4/5

Setting/Imagery: 4/5

Originality: 4/5

Ending: 4/5

Total Score: 21/25

Julia says

Another solid release from ECW Press! *Dead Politician Society*, the debut novel from Robin Spano, tells the tale of a young undercover police woman on her first assignment. The mayor dies suddenly at an event, poisoned by a secret society: Society for Political Utopia. Clare enrolls in the political sciences program at University of Toronto to learn more about the society and determine who is behind these murders.

I recommend this book for any mystery fan.

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book from ECW Press.

Jason Brown (Toastx2) says

Robin Spano's "Dead Politician Society".. How to put this.. I was happy but not surprised.

Let me explain.

Dead Politician Society (DPS) is an undercover detective novel. The Mayor is poisoned and dies on stage during a speech. A cryptic untraceable email from the killer is received by the Toronto star, it is signed by a rumored Utopian secret society on the local college campus. The police send in Clare under cover to see if she can fish for more details. they have no other leads.

Clare really leads the novel. She is very likable. Working her first undercover job, she is prone to some understandable mistakes. Clare drinks, smokes, rides a motorbike. She juggles guys and overall does what needs to be done to get the job in the can. I really enjoyed her as a character and am glad this is geared to be a series.

With detective novels, in many cases they are designed to give you all the same clues the investigators receive. If you work it a bit, you can come up with the conclusion to the book in advance. Whodunit mysteries at their best.

DPS did not disappoint in this regard. The culprit was within my reach from the very beginning, mulligans and red herrings abound, and the reader picks through them to determine truth.

The story is not told from a single perspective, instead, from the point of view of 5-7 folks. Chapters are short, 1-2 pages per. This makes for a very fast book, quick details, not overly described but neither is it lacking description.

Ultimately, this is not a sleeper hit or New York Times best seller novel. For fans of the genre, I believe that this and future Clare Vengel novels will be important to keep an eye out for. I look forward to the second installment.

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xpost RawBlurb.com

Pauline says

I've never read a single Nancy Drew book in my puny 20-year existence, a fact which has been a cause for ridicule by one of the guys I used to date (he was big on The Hardy Boys, so it follows that he date girls who grew up reading Nancy Drew - but I was an exception, sorta). All I know is that she was this chick who solved crimes with coiffed hair. So to compare Clare Vengel - the protagonist of Robin Spano's first novel - to Nancy Drew would probably be a bit off, maybe even disappointing to the former. Clare Vengel is by all means a better modern-day version of the classic female detective.

More of my review here, plus an interview with the author here.
