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"FUN, FROTHY AND CHARMING"• - Publishers Weekly

Readers are biting their nails as the popular alphabetic Midnight Louie feline PI mystery series nears its end with this 26th entry. The Las Vegas reunion show of a groundbreaking band revives a deadly duel between its two divas. Now petite PR powerhouse Temple Barr and her faithful feline roommate Midnight Louie, assisted by the Vegas Cat Pack, must sniff out clues to save the Crystal Phoenix hotel's reputation and any at-risk lives, including their own. For sleuths and suspects, it all comes down to the black and white lies that destroy hopes, lives, and family.

Secret revealed: Douglas plans a final entry to follow the "Z"• book, Cat in an Alphabet Endgame. (The series' first two non-alphabetic titles, Catnap and Pussyfoot, have been reissued in e-book as Cat in an Alphabet Soup and Cat in an Aqua Storm.)

Cat in a Yellow Spotlight Details

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Author : Carole Nelson Douglas

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Charty says

This entry felt more disjointed to me than some of the other's in the series. It also felt like it was very much a placeholder/filler as we finally (almost, maybe?) get to the final installment in this far too long running mystery series. I didn't really enjoy the central mystery (a broken-up band of aging divas reunites for a secret Vegas show). The black and white theme was harped on WAY too much and I didn't really care about any of the band members. The extraction of Max from Temple & Matt's life is almost complete and I missed the mystifying Max and his magic and glamour. Matt is fine and all but he's a little bland.

Whatever it's shortcomings, I've read all the rest of the books in the series, might as well stay til the bitter end.

Kat Lebo says

Cat in a Yellow Spotlight: A Midnight Louie Mystery
by Carole Nelson Douglas

This is the 26th episode in the Midnight Louie mystery series -- the second series that is, as Midnight Louie starred in a 4-issue series prior to this one, so, in reality, Douglas has now penned not 26 Midnight Louie adventures, but 30. In the first four books, classified, I believe, as romances, Louie was the house cat at the Crystal Phoenix, owned by Nicky Fontana, and these books detailed the romance and marriage of Nicky and Van von Rhine, and chronicled the early investigative powers of Midnight Louie.

In the current series, Midnight Louie has given up his career as security cat for the Crystal Phoenix and moved in permanently with the Crystal Phoenix's P.R. person, Temple Barr at the Circle Ritz. The Fontanas - Nicky, Van, and Nicky's 9 brothers, remain an integral part of the series character cast, along with the Circle Ritz owner, Electra Lark, the ex-priest, Matt Devine, the Mysterious Max Kinsella, the ever vigilant policewoman, Carmen Molina, Louie's mom, Ma Barker, his purported daughter and business partner, the current Crystal Phoenix house security cat, Midnight Louise, and many more.

In this particular adventure, Temple and Matt are planning a wedding, but with Max back in town, the not-so-late Kathleen O'Connor, aka Kitty the Cutter, is also back chasing after Max and his friends with evil gusto. This all puts Temple (and Louie) in the middle of the fray, an ex-lover on one side and a current fiance on the other. At the end of the last adventure, Kathleen had attempted to eliminate the three as they collaborated together at Max's known-to-few abode, the former residence of Garry Gandolph Randolph, and also the former residence of Orsen Welles. She succeeded in doing damage to both the men in Temple's life, but Midnight and his gang of black ninja cats had saved the day, with Midnight dealing Kathleen a blow to the face that will forever remind her of her run in with this black feline.

This novel revolves around the reunion of an oldies band, Black & White, who are booked for several performances at the Crystal Phoenix. Temple, as the Crystal Phoenix P.R. person, moves into the Band's luxurious hotel suite at the Crystal Phoenix, in order to keep an eye on this reunited band, which has a very quarrelsome past, and to figure out what the problem is with one of the lead singers, French Vanilla. The singer has been acting as if on some sort of hallucinogenic drug, and Temple must figure out what it is, where it is coming from, who is behind it, and try to keep the reunion from dissolving into a free for all well before the very expensive event at the Phoenix. Readers get to have a reunion with choreographer Danny

Dove, too, as he is involved in the elaborate staging of the reunion show. Of course, the side issues of Temple's impending marriage to Matt, the possibility of moving from Vegas to Chicago for Matt's work (especially upsetting to born and raised in Vegas Louie), Max's continued attempts to protect everyone from his stalker, Kathleen, and all the other side issues that remain active and unresolved from the prior 25 books, remain as part and parcel of the storyline, especially to those readers who have followed the series from the beginning.

Let's talk about what I liked first.

Douglas's characterizations are wonderful. You can suspend reality and really believe that Midnight Louie, Midnight Louise, Ma Barker, Karma and all the other feline and occasional canine characters are able to communicate with each other, plan, and execute complicated endeavors. I know I look forward to Louie's narrative chapters, told from a cat's eye view, as much if not more than those narratives told from a human point of view. While most long time readers will be firmly in either the Team Kinsella or the Team Devine camp (Team Kinsella for me!), no one can dislike either suitor. Douglas smartly makes them very different from each other, giving Temple some distinct and interesting choices. Electra Lark and the Fontana brothers always add a dash of color and pizzazz to the tales, and Carmen Molina's dogged pursuit of Max as a suspect for every crime that happens in Vegas never fails to add the right mixture of tension and attraction.

The author never fails to pace the story well, keeping one interested and committed to continue not only to the end of one novel, but to anxiously wait for the next installment. The editing is very good, I did find a couple of blips in this novel, one, I believe, stemming from rewrites where either a word was inadvertently left when it should have been removed, and the other being just written in a way that made me have to re-read it several times to make sense of it. Maybe that one isn't wrong, just, to my eye, awkward.

So, what didn't I like? There was nothing I didn't like about the writing (well -- I am on Team Kinsella...). I certainly dislike that there are only two more books planned in this series (Cat in a Zebra Zoot Suit and Cat in an Alphabet Endgame). In many series, the books follow one another with approximately the same distance as publication -- or, in simpler terms, if the books come out once a year, the action in the books is spaced about a year apart. In this series, the action picks up just hours, days or weeks from the end of the previous novel, so, even though the last novel in this series will be Louie's 32nd adventure, it doesn't follow that it chronicles 32 years. I've always owned cats, so I know they can live quite a while. But 32 years would be a stretch! I know I'm not ready to give up Louie, even if Douglas is.

I also really don't like that she's renamed the first two books of this series, Cat Nap and Pussyfoot, to go along with the "color" theme (Cat Nap became Cat in an Alphabet Soup, while Pussyfoot became Cat in an Aqua Storm). I own both of the novels in the original titles. The titles were part of what attracted me to the books -- it pisses me off that now my collection has seemingly "misnamed" books in it. At this point, I own both the 4-piece first set in hardback, and the entire second set to date, all but two (now three) in hardback. Which leads me to another thing that royally honks my horn -- this book, Cat in a Yellow Spotlight, was published only in paperback and digitally. I opted to get it on my Kindle, as I would not be able to finish out the last 3 books as I would like -- IN HARDBACK! I understand the desire to go to all digital publication, but certainly, with only 3 books to go in the series, the decision could have been foregone for this series. I'm betting I'm not the only reader who is put off by this.

I'm not marking down the book (star-wise) for these dislikes, as they have nothing to do with the series storyline. But I am frustrated will remember that frustration when it comes to purchasing one of the other series or stand alone novels that Douglas pens.

Mary says

This is the "Y" book in the alphabetical Midnight Louie mystery series. Las Vegas PR maven Temple Barr is given the assignment to handle the PR for the top-secret reunion of Black and White, a popular rock group that had a spectacular breakup 20 years before. When one of the divas shows signs of drug abuse, Temple needs to get to the bottom of it before it derails the reunion. She is aided by her intrepid cat, Midnight Louie, and his self-proclaimed daughter, Midnight Louise. Meanwhile, her relationship with her fiance, Matt Devine, gets closer to marriage, and her ex-fiance, magician Max Kinsella, is still being pursued by a deranged enemy from his involvement in the IRA. There is a touching (if you're a cat lover) section by Midnight Louie at the end where he ruminates on the possibility of Temple marrying Matt and moving to Chicago, and if there will still be a place in her new life for him.

Anne-Kathrine says

Really enjoyed this book. Divas, drugs, cats and dogs, oh my, it was a fun read. Some questions answered but still quite a few for the next books I would think :)

Alma Lu says

Loved it!!

Kathy says

This was a classic Midnight Louie book -- but we're moving closer to the end, and things are getting tense!

I've been reading the Alphabetical Midnight Louie books since around "Cat in a Midnight Choir" - I checked them out of the library, at first, and then gradually got my own copies, and read and re-read the first half of the series until "Cat in a Neon Nightmare" came out, and since then I've been reading them almost as soon as they've come out (I lagged a little with this release... ended up with it in paperback instead of hardcover!).

Which means, I guess, I've been reading them for more than a decade! But age seems to suit Midnight Louie, whose world moves faster than comic book time (it's only been about two years book-time -- when Matt and Temple started dating, New York New York was a brand-new hotel, not a venerable piece of "old" Vegas! Plus, they were ringing in the year 2000!).

Anyway, this was a great chapter in the whole -- for anyone who just picks up popcorn mysteries, I'm afraid it's not really great as a stand-alone; there's too much backstory. Douglas does a pretty good job of exposition, but a casual reader would be lost with the ins and outs of the overall story arc. Still, it's a good little mystery, and collection of new characters for the old gang to interact with, more than a little hint of danger in the air, and as always, the cats of Midnight, Inc. taking care of all the humans who couldn't do a thing without their four-footed friends.

Temple is in charge of a brand-new gig at the classy Crystal Phoenix, "babysitting" the reunion of classic rock stars "Black & White," whose splashy comeback is going to be the toast of Vegas -- provided murder

doesn't get in the way! Of course, it does, and the game is afoot as Temple puts herself in harm's way to find the culprit and solve the crime (much to the continued dismay of Lieutenant C.R. Molina!).

But things are coming to a head -- Matt and Temple are ready for their wedding and a potential move to Chicago for his new career as a TV star; CR Molina may someday tell her daughter who her father is and embrace her talent as a singer; the Mystifying Max may get Kitty the Cutter to follow him back to Ireland for a bloody endgame....

But before all that happens, Midnight Louie and Louise (his "maybe-daughter") solve the case of the dead body in the rafters and who was poisoning one of the divas, just in time for the opening.

Sometimes the individual story of the Midnight Louie capers gets lost in the big story arc -- I don't think this is one of them, but then, I'm fully invested in that big arc. In any case, I liked it a great deal. Midnight Louie is still on top of his game!

Ashley says

I started listening to this book because it's a mystery with a black cat as a detective and was pleasantly surprised. The plot was engaging and the characters well developed. It's well along in the series and I plan on listening to/reading the rest!

Cathie says

I enjoy this series! Getting near the end...
She has changed publishers and this and the "Z" book are only available in trade paper.

Gloria says

I was so excited that in the epilogue of this alphabetical mystery series, Midnight Louie reveals that his adventures won't end with the next book. Love this sassy cat and his adventures solving murders in Vegas.

Joanne Friday says

If you have been reading this series you know there are many stories. Everything you think has wrapped is once again at the forefront. Nothing is settled. Midnight Louie has much to do to keep up with Temple and her friends. It is a good thing that Louie has many co-horts to call upon.
If you have not read this series, I suggest you not jump in with this book. Carole Nelson Douglas does include brief reviews but to really get the story start at the beginning of the series.

Myra says

Thanks to a dear friend, I'm finally getting to finish this series (author changed publisher and my library quit getting them). I do have to say I was a bit disappointed in this one. I don't know if it was the change in publisher or what, but it felt like Douglas spent about half of the book rehashing everything that has come before. Once we get past all of that filler, it was fine, but it definitely wasn't up to the standard that I've come to expect from these.

Barbara says

Once again Midnight Louie, along with Midnight Louise and his mom's clowder, comes to the rescue. Temple is tasked with "babysitting" a reunion band that will be opening at the Crystal Phoenix. So she is moved in to the suites with the band so she can keep an eye on them and figure out if someone is trying to sabotage the act. But how do you keep an eye on such a motley group when one of the divas is falling apart, a dead body is found on the set, and secrets are being held by everyone?

In the meantime, the Fontana Brothers are busy guarding Temple and her fiance, Matt, as well as keeping an eye on food preparations to be sure nobody is slipped any poison. With all these people underfoot, Louie and Louise still manage to be in the right place at the right time, but not before Temple herself is sent on a perilous "trip".

Max is staying away from Temple in order to protect her from Kitty the Cutter, but who's going to protect him from both Kitty and Revienne?

Robin Yaklin says

fun read, besides it has cats.

Becky says

Once again, the intrepid cats save the day, solving the mystery and protecting the good guy humans. This is a very long series, so that even if you have been reading since the beginning, it is hard to remember what's happening in the story lines that continue across books. So don't start with this book! Midnight Louie, the cat, is such a great character, and Midnight Louise is now coming into her own as well. The humans are finally becoming aware that the cats are actually aware of what's going on and are protesting them. The cats are the main reason I've stuck with this series.

Charlene says

I've loved this series and am sad to see it is about to come to an end. The reunion of a 60s music group helps solidify temple and matts future, begins to bring closure to the anti terrorist mission of max and his relationship with Kathleen, and begins to loosen the secret of Molina, Mariah, and Rafi. However, midnight

Louie is not happy with what he believes may be his future and you are left wondering where to next.
