



Sally's in the Alley

Norbert Davis

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Doan, a chubby, wisecracking private eye, and Carstairs, a Great Dane so huge he ought to be considered a new species, follow a trail of mayhem and confusion from Hollywood to the Mojave Desert town of Heliotrope, a place so thoroughly offensive that neither California nor Nevada will admit that it lies within its borders.

It's 1943 and Doan is persuaded by government agents to sweet-talk the location of a valuable ore deposit out of an old desert rat with a mad-on for the government. But first they have to deal with a number of other equally odd characters, including film star Susan Sally, the very lovely and very wacky Harriet Hathaway, who's about to become a WAAC, Doc Gravelmeyer, the sinister local medico who also doubles as an undertaker, and Mr. Blue, a man of mystery who claims he doesn't even know there's a war going on.

There's plenty of action, including a wild chase through Hollywood studio backlots, and even more laughs, before Carstairs finally gets his man.his man.

Sally's in the Alley Details

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Author : Norbert Davis

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From Reader Review Sally's in the Alley for online ebook

Jim says

Another entertaining Doan and Carstairs mystery with more twists to the plot than a barrel of snakes. Thoroughly enjoyable!

Julie says

If I were rating this against other screwball private eye comedies from the 40s I would give it 5 stars. Too bad there are only 4 novels in the Doan & Carstairs series.

David says

I read all three of these back to back to back. It combines the hard boiled detective and humor. Carstairs the dog is the main character and the detective Doan a close second.

Ronald Koltnow says

Doan and Carstairs (well, Doan at least) are approached by the Government and tasked with finding an eccentric, government-hating prospector. The prospector knows the location of some valuable ore, needed for the war effort. The bodies start piling up. Alternating between Hollywood and the rancid desert town of Heliotrope, CA or AZ (no one knows for sure), SALLY'S is a far more comic tale than the debut novel, THE MOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS. Doan starts off less a wiseacre and more of a total jerk. However, Doan's actions are always deceptive. As the conclusion is fast-paced, with Carstairs taking a more leading role, the novel redeems itself at the end. I fear that the Doan and Carstairs novels are proof of diminishing returns. This was less successful than the first, and we shall see what the third volume has in store. That said, Norbert Davis has become an obsession.

Cathy says

1940s pulp fiction with a lot of humor. Carstairs is a Great Dane and Doan is his detective. Quick, fun read.

Ralph says

Doan may be the man of this human/canine sleuthing duo, but I'm pretty sure the only reasons Carstairs the Great Dane keeps him around is because he needs a driver, needs a feeder, needs someone to glare disdainfully at, and occasionally needs someone shot or punched rather than bit. This humor-laced mystery moves along so briskly and presents such a rapid-fire cavalcade of zany characters the reader can barely keep up with the wacky situations and snarky dialogue. It makes it all so easy to miss the clues that Davis drops

openly. It's a wonderful story of a dog and his man who get co-opted for a ridiculous government mission and how they accomplish it, more or less. The only thing for the modern reader to keep in mind is that the book was written in the midst of WW2, so there will be all sorts of unfamiliar references--ration books, price limits, dimming regions, car governors, etc. If you have trouble with them, just ask your great-grandparents...or I suppose you could drop me a line. After all, in the scheme of human history it was only yesterday.

Dharia Scarab says

Since I don't normally write reviews unless I have something specific to say, here's the break down of how I rate my books...

1 star... This book was bad, so bad I may have given up and skipped to the end. I will avoid this author like the plague in the future.

2 stars... This book was not very good, and I won't be reading any more from the author.

3 stars... This book was ok, but I won't go out of my way to read more, But if I find another book by the author for under a dollar I'd pick it up.

4 stars... I really enjoyed this book and will definitely be on the look out to pick up more from the series/author.

5 stars... I loved this book! It had earned a permanent home in my collection and I'll be picking up the rest of the series and other books from the author ASAP.

Nancy says

Kindle book. Setting LA WW11. Spies looking for material for war. Ace flyer meets young girl. Doan finds traitor.

Pamela McLaren says

This is a fun, sassy bright light of a mystery. I've enjoyed every one of the Carstairs and Doan books and wish there were much more than there are. What a treat!

In 1943, its tough to image that an author would right about Japanese and German spies with humor and irreverence but Norbert Davis did. And its wonderful. Its doubly tragic to know that he died so young.

Read it, love it and search out the other four books in the series!

Julie Davis says

We've established by now that I'm a fan. Just began this and looking forward to seeing what Carstairs & Doan get into.

Completely brilliant end to the series of four novellas about Carstairs & Doan. The time is World War II, the place is Hollywood, the very reluctant heroes are private detective Doan and his Great Dane Carstairs. G-men take over Doan's life to send him on a search for unique ore in the desert town of Heliotrope. Mistaken identity, a gorgeous Hollywood star, Japanese spies, a dead body that won't stay where it was put, and general chaos soon follow.

This story starts off at a dead heat with the looniness in full swing within a page or two. However, if the reader sticks with it things begin to clear up after Doan has returned from his trip to Heliotrope. This is the first of the stories where I had only the slightest glimmer as to who the bad guy was and no idea at all of why. Brilliant for those who like noir mixed with madcap comedy.

Bev says

Sally's in the Alley is the second book by Norbert Davis starring the plump, wisecracking private eye, Doan, and his canine companion, Carstairs. This comic take on pulp fiction's hard-boiled private dick brings Doan into contact with some mysterious G-men. The Feds convince Doan to track down a man by the name of Dust-Mouth Haggerty who is supposed to know the location of a stake of unique ore--a commodity that the USA would like to get their hands on for the WWII war effort and one that operatives from the other side wouldn't mind grabbing for themselves. Doan's hunt takes him to the bizarre little town of Heliotrope where the Sheriff charges rent for the inmates to inhabit his cells and the local doctor does duty as the coroner and the local undertaker. You might say he has cornered the market on life and death. If you want to stay healthy, you'll want to eat plenty of apples so you can keep this doctor away for good.

Working with Doan is his right-hand dog Carstairs, a Great Dane who is so big he just might need his own zip code. Carstairs loathes alcohol and being shot at. He doesn't care much for new faces, but will tolerate a pretty one if its owner treats him right. Oh...and he believes that he's brains of the operation and that Doan works for him. Doan and Carstairs have quite a few adventures and meet some interesting people--from a collection of corpses that would do the doct.....undertaker proud to the lovely film star Susan Sally to the zany and talkative Harriet Hathaway who is on a mission to join the WAACs. Along the way Harriet picks up "Mr. Blue" a vague man who says he didn't even know a war was going on. Add a treasure-hunt drive in a Cadillac in a desert rainstorm with a flash-flood for good measure and several folks who aren't quite what they seem; shake well, and pour out for madcap adventures and comic antics.

This book was just plain fun. A screwball private eye tale with lots of action and plenty of fast-talking on the part of Doan. Norbert Davis paired up his private eye with an animal long before it was cool and pulls it off without making Carstairs too cutesy (as if a Great Dane the size of a Shetland pony could be cutesy). The interactions between the two are funny and realistic....I can just see Carstairs harrumphing over some of Doan's shenanigans. And Davis takes you from one loony character to another and it all fits so nice and snugly in this lovely vintage mystery. Four stars.

First posted on my blog My Reader's Block. Please request permission before reposting. Thanks.

Krystyna says

Not one that I really enjoyed

A good read but not as good as the others - it was just a bit too much out there for me. Although I must admit I did enjoy Carstairs attitude towards everything. Disdain!

When he is seconded to the government, he really isn't too happy about it. Especially as he has to drive to some hole in the ground town and find a person of interest. The interest being that the government want to know where a certain deposit of ore is in the dessert. A hitchhiker, a dead body, a spell in jail, and then another body before he high tails it back to Hollywood. Now he still has the hitchhiker and a man she is trying to brainwash into joining the war effort as well as still trying to keep up his story of being an enemy agent. Plus a famous movie star has just turned up dead at his door. Can he get the location of the mine? Who is killing all these people? Will he be able to get out of the government clutches? How will Carstairs react to everything?

Jan C says

Actually ★★ 1\2.

I didn't think this one measured up to the first two books. Part of the problem is that Harriet, a tag along girl, seemed a bit of an airhead. This wasn't a problem with the tag along girls in the previous books. They all had something going on whereas Harriet doesn't seem to have anything going on.

Here Doan and his faithful Carstairs, a bloodhound or mastiff or something (I just remember that he is a big boy) had recruited by the FBI to act as Japanese spies and find out where some ore is. A real convoluted story.

Kelly says

Comic mystery featuring P.I. Doan and his Great Dane Carstairs in WWII-era Los Angeles. Very funny.
