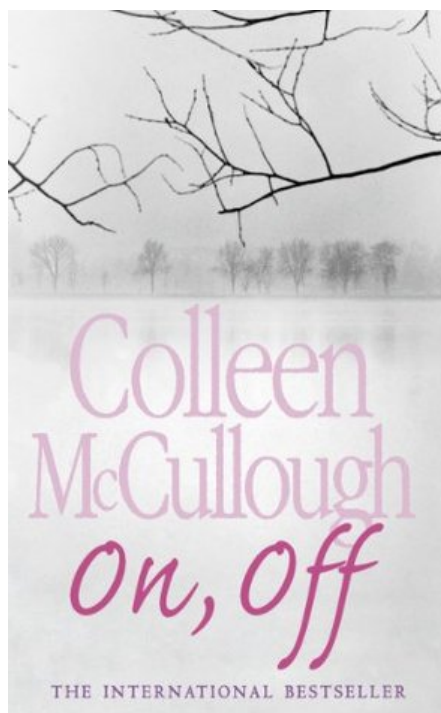




On, Off

Colleen McCullough

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On, Off Colleen McCullough

The captivating novel from the international bestselling author of 'The Thorn Birds'.

Innocence is no protection...

In Holloman, Connecticut, someone is preying on the innocent. At a prestigious research centre fondly known by its staff as the 'Hug', parts of a mutilated body are found. Lieutenant Carmine Delmonico of the Holloman Police learns that a string of horrifying murders – each with the same modus operandi as the one at the Hug – have been committed throughout the state. When another body is found, the medical staff become prime suspects.

With the powers that be in turmoil and every member of staff hiding something, Delmonico must delve into the lives of each and every Hug employee. This is the case of his career and he is determined to solve it. But how, when he is hunting a monster who leaves no clues and is always two steps ahead?

On, Off Details

Date : Published August 19th 2010 by Harper (first published January 1st 2006)

ISBN :

Author : Colleen McCullough

Format : Kindle Edition 388 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Crime, Mystery Thriller

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Midge says

I haven't read Colleen McCullough since *The Thornbirds*, so when I picked up this book at the local Library sale, I was surprised that it was a mystery.

There a lot of suspects who might be responsible for placing a mutilated, headless body in the refuse refrigerator at the research center of a small private university in Connecticut. Lieutenant Delmonico has the case and ultimately discovers the responsible party, but not before there are more, similar killings. In all the story convolutions, Delmonico even begins to doubt his own suspicions.

...and there is a surprise ending!

Neide Parafitas says

Que policial mais intrigante!!

Dou por mim a ver os acontecimentos se desenrolarem, sem que tenha qualquer pista sobre quem possa ser o assassino! Mais para o final do livro lá me deparei com uma situação que me deixou a pensar, mas depressa notei que tinha tido uma intuição errada, pois diante das circunstâncias que eram apresentadas como poderia ser possível??

Mas... Eis que tudo se explica e afinal a minha primeira intuição estava certa! :))

Um policial sem dúvida muito à frente!!

Adorei!! :)

Stephanie says

I was totally surprised to see a book by Colleen McCullough in the mystery/thriller section. I love her historical fiction for the breadth and the depth they give to famous people and places in history, and for her lush writing style. I also love mysteries. So I thought I would combine my two loves, and ended up very pleased. So many mystery/thrillers are just packed with unnecessary jolts of suspense or cliffhangers at the end of a chapter just to keep a person reading; the characters are really caricatures of police detectives or bad guys; and the plot is often obvious from the start. Now I see what these kinds of books can be when in the hands of an excellent writer!! While I thought the premise of the book was disturbing, the story was so well told that I could not help caring what happened to the characters and wondering why they did what they did. I also loved how it was set not in the present-day, so there was some cultural context of the '60s to the story, and how the current mystery was tied to a mystery from even further back in the past. All in all, a fascinating read, and even the twist at the end made sense to me (after I re-read it about 5 times...).

Jennifer says

As a fan of McCullough's *_Tim_* (one of my all-time favorite books), and also of *_The Thorn Birds_* and *_The Ladies of Missalonghi_*, I was incredibly surprised to spot this book at the bookstore. That didn't stop me, of course, from buying it immediately.

Briefly, the book takes place in 1965 in Connecticut and follows a detective, Carmine, as he attempts to solve a "multiple murder" case that is closely tied to the heavily endowed neurological research center, the "Hug," in the earliest days of forensic science and criminal profiling. This is a difficult case with many details and characters, and the climax and resolution, along with a surprise twist, occur in the last few pages.

McCullough is expertly detailed and accurate (from what I could tell), from the intricacies of neurological research to the 1960s setting and chronology. She is an excellent writer, but I agree with another review that pointed out that the first part of the book was overwritten - I was surprised to find quite so many details about a woman's outfit coming from a male detective, even if it was explained by one sentence, that a detective had to be observant of everything. Also, in the beginning, some descriptions are overdone. McCullough does fall into stride, however, and the writing isn't an issue within a few chapters.

Like other reviewers, I found this book to be impossible to put down - I read it in a little more than a day, even with working full-time. The story never stumbles or bores, and the characters, even though there are a lot of them, are easy to know and keep track of.

My biggest criticism of the book is the same as that of other reviewers, that there are a few red herrings and details that are not explained or tied up by the end of the story. Although I understood the overall outcome and general motive by the end of the book, I was left with many unanswered questions, such as the Hug's specific involvement and why the crimes were committed in the exact way that they were.

Other than the niggling of those questions, I really enjoyed the thrill of this book, and am wondering if there will be a sequel.

Jeffrey says

This disturbing serial killer mystery leaves the biggest surprise for the end and may show that McCullough can succeed in any genre but there is something kind of foreordained about the book. Almost like the author is playing with the reader.

I really do not like when authors present something at the very end that is not even remotely revealed in the book. Part of a mystery is that we the reader are involved with the detective in solving it, and many times we guess way before the detective, but this ending left me seriously peeved.

So although the mystery was well presented, and the detective was a good character I was ultimately unsatisfied with it and a lot of that had to do with the ending.

Bernadette Robinson says

I fell across this series by chance while at the Library one night. I picked up the third in the series Naked Cruelty, not realising that it was part of a series. Yes, you've guessed it I am a little OCD with series and had to reserve this one the first in the series before reading Naked Cruelty.

I am of an age, that the book The Thorn Birds by her was very popular and I can remember reading the book quickly in order to stay in front of the TV series of it that aired in the 80's. I have read other books by her too, but wasn't aware that she wrote crime/thrillers until I saw Naked Cruelty.

On, Off is set in the 60's in America. It tells the story of Carmine Delmonico a detective on the case of a serial killer who mutilates his victims, apparently keeping body parts as souvenirs. A research centre know as the 'Hug' appears to be at the heart of the action at the beginning, but nothing is ever as it seems. All the victims are young and female and physically all have similar characteristics. As each victim disappears, the method of their disappearance is a cause for concern.

I found the first part of the book quite slow going, as there are lots of characters to get your head around and at times it was quite descriptive. I also found that I didn't have too long to devote to reading it, only managing 10 or so pages at a time rather than larger chunks. Once I got into the story though and found more time to read, I was able to read it in larger chunks and I found that it became an easier read. It's odd how some books need to be read in larger chunks like this one and others you can manage to read easily with reading less pages.

I enjoyed the relationship between the investigating team and look forward to reading the next in the series to follow them, Too Many Murders.

There are plenty of red herrings along the way and I have to say that I did guess some of the outcome, but I must admit that I was surprised by a few things and applaud Colleen McCullough for keeping a few things close to her chest until near the end. I found that as I was getting nearer the end of the book that I was rushing to get my hands on it to see where we the reader was taken.

Great first book to what I hope will turn out to be a promising series. 8/10 from me.

Kathleen Dixon says

My book club was advertising a sequel to this and it sounded quite interesting. But what's the point in reading a sequel before you've read the original? And I wasn't planning on buying the book anyway, just borrowing it from the library, so it made sense to get the first one first.

This is quite intriguing – the book is published in 2005, but set in 1965. it doesn't seem long enough ago to be regarded as a historical novel (murder mystery, actually) – though my children and grandchildren might argue with me there. Perhaps the author was thinking of the younger generations, or perhaps she was aiming for the older reader (60+) who might enjoy the nostalgia, and who might find the modern whodunits too full of gratuitous sex and violence.

Where do I fit? Well, I was really impatient with it for quite a while, and almost decided to stop reading it. But I was curious to know who the murderer was. What shall I do? – just keep reading even though I'm feeling annoyed by the pace ...? or go to the end of the book and read the last chapter or so? I opted for the latter, also browsing a couple of pages midway through.

I met somebody once who said that she ALWAYS reads the back page before deciding whether to bother with any book. Now, I'm glad I didn't read the very back page because when I ultimately got to it, it was a nice surprise. But I'm also glad I read towards the end – I found out who the killer was (giving me one up on the detective, Carmine Delmonico, and his cohorts), which made me really curious about how he got away with it so well and how they caught him.

So, in the end, I enjoyed this book a lot.

Sandie says

What a departure this is for Colleen McCullough. Best known for *The Thorn Birds* and her historical writings, this book journeys into the genre of the serial killer thriller and the brutality of this excursion is one that will leave the reader horrified and disgusted, but quickly turning the pages to discover the identity and motivation of the murderous monster capable of committing such appalling crimes against innocent teenage females.

The story begins in October 1965 with the gruesome discovery of the torso of a young girl found at a neurological research center in Connecticut. This is back in the days before we coined the term "serial killer" or utilized DNA testing as an aid in crime solving. The protagonist of the piece is one Lieutenant Carmine Delmonico, an old fashion sleuth, who continually seems to be a few steps behind the clever murderer. His suspects are a myriad of research center employees and directors, each with obsessions and varied quirks as well as a few camouflaged secrets.

The killer is devious, driven and bold and the outcry from the media and terrified parents of potential future victims makes the Lieutenant's job a real tightrope walk.

Readers who are turned off by scenes of torture and rape should steer clear of *On/Off*. If, however, you would like to use your wits to see if you can arrive at the complete solution to the puzzle and can "hang in there" until the last page you will be presented with an ending that will leave you agape.

Georgiana says

Perfect! Simply perfect!

Jane Jago says

I didn't see most of this coming, and it has teeth. Big, sharp shiny teeth.

I also love the hero because he isn't handsome or brilliantly gifted or especially intuitive. He feels real.

Monica says

"On, Off" by Colleen McCullough is the first in her series featuring Carmine Delmonico, a Lieutenant in the Holloman Police Department. Let me first say that if I didn't know McCullough had written this book, I would never have guessed she was the author. This novel is very different from what most of us know McCullough for, such as "The Thorn Birds". And I'm not yet sure that's a good thing. I'm still thinking this is very much like an author's first book in a series, where they are just starting to develop character and at times take the plot a bit too far in an attempt to create a complexity that is sure to draw the reader in and leave them eagerly awaiting the next book in the series.

To clarify...there were far too many characters in this book...far too many suspects and subplots going on. I had to make notes since I don't like reading a book and not being able to keep characters and other information straight in my head.

Then there are the crimes that took place...a bit too sensational and gory for my liking, torture, violence, and sadism.

And then there was the ending after the ending. By that I mean that after the crime was solved, McCullough decided to add a bit more to the wrapping up of the book. For me that extra wrapping up went a bit too far.

Having said all that, it was a good attempt at giving readers what they want...another crime series to read and another strong protagonist named Delmonico. I haven't yet decided if I'll read the next book.

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Peacejanz says

Wow! I have mostly ignored Colleen McCullough after The Thorn Birds. What a mistake. This is the first of her books about an old fashioned detective in a small university town in Connecticut. It seems to drag at times, as we see the detective use an employee of the research institute for information and then change his feelings about her. There is a strange death, the body discovered by accident at the research institute in a restricted area. All the employees of this university research lab are suspects and the detective and his crew keep having missing girls in the area. Sometimes the girls show up dead but always on the property of a researcher at the lab. There are many false clues but the ending is well worth the slow description - it was a shocker, on the very last page. This is a possible spoiler - do not read the last page until you have read the entire book! The book was published in 2006 but there are following up books with Detective Carmine Delmonico.

If you enjoy mysteries, it is time to go back to McCullough.

Galena Sanz says

Hacía mucho tiempo que este libro estaba en mi estantería, esperando ser leído, pero con pocas probabilidades de conseguirlo, o eso pensaba yo. Sin embargo, me levanté un día y decidí empezarlo. Sabía que era novela policíaca, pero hacía años que no leía nada o casi nada del género, no obstante, volví con este libro y estoy encantada.

Conocía a la autora por su libro La nueva vida de Miss Bennet, libro que no me gustó mucho, pero con este thriller perfectamente estructurado, me ha enamorado. Haciendo un lado los detalles escabrosos, las cosas horribles que este asesino les hace a sus víctimas, en serio, dan ganas de vomitar, el misterio nos hace leer sin parar. Sospechamos de todos los personajes ¡porque el asesino puede ser cualquiera! Al mismo tiempo,

parece imposible que sea alguno de ellos. Descubrir quien es el asesino no me sorprendió mucho, porque yo desconfiaba un poco de todos, pero el final ¡oh, el final, que horrible y bien planeado! Me dan ganas de poder decirle al teniente Carmine Delmonico qué es lo que sucede en realidad. Creía que iba a tener que quedarme con las dudas, pero en un final clásico se resuelven todas ¡y de qué manera! Me ha gustado mucho como la autora ha creado todo este mundo y como ha sabido crear el caso, asimismo, creo que ha hecho un buen trabajo a la hora de llevar al lector por la historia y guiarnos hacia donde ella quiere. A pesar de todo, quedan algunas interrogantes por contestar, porque sigo sin entender por qué el asesino hacía todas esas barbaridades a las chicas... En fin, un caso horrible.

Por otro lado, los personajes están muy bien llevados y creo que conseguimos tenerles cariño, sobre todo a Carmine, aunque su relación amorosa avanza de golpe y porrazo y son bastante cándidos, me ha gustado. El libro tiene una continuación, aunque cambia el caso y solo se mantiene Carmine como capitán. Tiene pinta de ser una buena lectura también, pero lo dejaré por el momento, demasiado drama, muerte, violaciones y familias rotas, pero a pesar de todo, descubrir el misterio merece la pena ¡Recomiendo mucho el libro y espero que los amantes del género no lo dejen pasar, sobre todo porque es poco conocido!

Elizabeth says

This story keeps you guessing, and I absolutely was stunned by the ending!

Anorhi says

This book is awful. From the ridiculous red herrings (guess who has a secret basement/tower/cabin/holiday house/Forrest? EVERYONE!) To the stupid ending to the no characterization of any characters to the redonkulous bits of 'character' shoved it. (The war vet detective has a super red apartment (which is somehow just fab) and knows tolkien well enough to reference tom freaking bombadil, but not other neckbeard shit, Desmonda super gymnastics (never previously alluded to), The killer is silently sawing through the steel deadbolt of the super secure flat for hours). to the super forced relationships to the MASSIVE amounts of conclusions jumping (I know, It's the 1960's. but even then police work wasn't all 'hurrrrr I has a hunch')

The only remotely decent bit is the killings. Before you discover the stupid ending previously mentioned.

I usually leave my books on trains for others to enjoy when I'm done, but this I'm burning. My good deed for the day.
