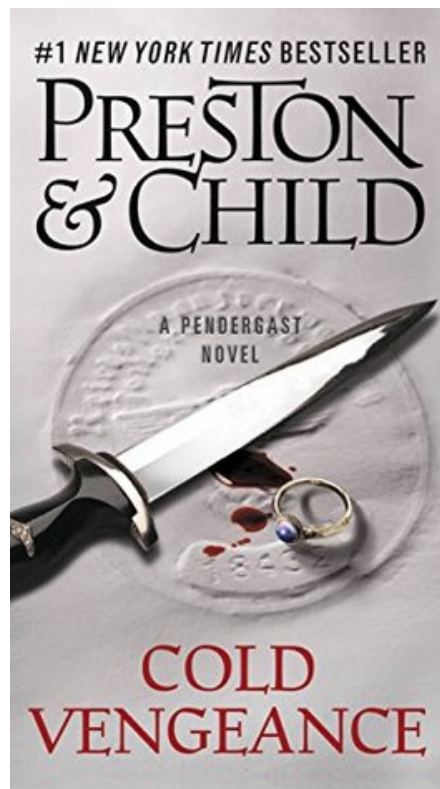




Cold Vengeance

Douglas Preston

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Devastated by the discovery that his wife, Helen, was murdered, Special Agent Pendergast must have retribution. But revenge is not simple. As he stalks his wife's betrayers-- a chase that takes him from the wild moors of Scotland to the bustling streets of New York and the darkest bayous of Louisiana-- he is also forced to dig further into Helen's past. And he is stunned to learn that Helen may have been a collaborator in her own murder.

Peeling back the layers of deception, Pendergast realizes that the conspiracy is deeper, goes back generations, and is more monstrous than he could have ever imagined-- and everything he's believed, everything he's trusted, everything he's understood . . . may be a horrific lie.

Cold Vengeance Details

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From Reader Review Cold Vengeance for online ebook

Juli says

Agent Pendergast is angry. Not just angry.....really really really angry. And out for justice, with a shot of revenge. In the first novel in the Helen Pendergast trilogy (within the Pendergast series), he discovered new evidence in the death of his wife in a lion attack several years before. He swore he would find out who was behind her murder and avenge her. In Cold Vengeance, Pendergast not only discovers that the conspiracy is so much more diabolical and depraved than he thought, but he also discovers that Helen might still be alive.

This book really seems like a bridge between the first novel that introduced Helen and the plot behind her death and the last novel that I'm sure will wrap up the story in a grandiose Pendergastian way. I enjoyed the chase (some of the action scenes were just awesome and there are some great lines by Pendergast in this story), but the weak cliffhanger ending I just really didn't like. I'm a bit tired of the Helen story line, to be honest. I miss the weird cases that lead Pendergast to out of the way dusty museums and archaeological sites. I prefer the somehow distant and reserved Pendergast to this overly emotional, out for revenge version. BUT.....despite my eye roll at the end of the book, this is a good story. There is plenty of action....plenty of bad guys to hate....and enough mystery to the situation to keep it interesting. I will be glad to read through the next book and have the Helen mystery solved so the series can move on to something else. Not that I blame Pendergast for being pissed off that someone killed (or pretended to kill) his wife.....but the overly emotional, almost broken Pendergast is more creepy than his normal strange self. Just a weird vibe to the Helen story-line books. The Constance Green story angle is getting a bit weird also....I hope that gets resolved in the next book or two as well.

I listened to the audiobook version of this book. Rene Auberjonois narrates again. I like his reading pace and his voice. Plus I think he does a really good accent for the Pendergast character. I have partial hearing loss, and never have any problem understanding him. The audiobook is unabridged and just under 12 hours long. Good quality. Very enjoyable.

Cold Vengeance is the 11th book in the Pendergast series. There are 16 books currently, and a 17th coming out in 2018.

For more information on the authors and their books, check out their website: <http://www.prestonchild.com/>

Miranda says

I did not really enjoy this installment of the Pendergast series. It's not that it's badly written, but the authors are really starting to move Pendergast's character and plot lines into the conspiracy theory thriller genre. While I love a good conspiracy thriller, what I loved about Pendergast was the archeology, science, museum settings, New York City and New Orleans settings and Holmesian feel.

None of that is evident in the new Pendergast. He even goes so far as to make multiple glaring mistakes (and frankly the mistakes are predictable plot points, maybe that's his problem) that he mocks himself for. He's all over the world, hunting stags in a marsh, finding a World War II Nazi conspiracy and shooting half a dozen men on a boat with magically placed gymnastics and bullets and other feats of spy thriller action rather than his previous Holmesian and seemingly magical insights into human habit, psychology and history. And I know I should be for character development, but I want smart Pendergast back...not good shot Pendergast.

One thing I was super happy to see is that they brought back Corrie Swanson from Still Life with Crows. She's probably one of my favorite characters in the series and I've been wondering about her. Constance is also back, as well as a continuance of the characters picked up in Cold Fever.

I was also irritated that this book is set up as a cliffhanger, for no particularly good reason. The book isn't that long and not that much happens in it beyond a hunting accident and the aforementioned slaughter on the boat. It's complete exposition, with far too much inner monologue, apparently to set up for what I hope is a thrilling finale. But there's nothing in here that demanded such time or explanation that it couldn't have been a completed story.

I had hoped with Gideon's Sword getting their apparent penchant for action adventure/conspiracy thrillers out of their systems, that the two authors would return Pendergast to his New York City or New Orleans history settings and deal with the urban monsters that thrilled me so much in the beginning. Apparently, that isn't going to happen anytime soon. I'm ready for this particular trilogy to be over.

Mike (the Paladin) says

Okay, take notice, I gave this book 4 stars, I like the Pendergast books... I give this preamble because I'm going to say some things that could be taken as negative. But they're not so negative that I didn't enjoy the book.

First let me say, I'm not a died in the wool Preston/Child fan (and why in the listing above does Child get short shrift?)[When I first wrote this, for some reason only Preston's name was listed]. I've read books written by them individually which I found (in my opinion) ranging from mediocre to "wow this is crap". I recently tried the first in their "new collaborative series" Gideon's Sword, which I found frankly ridiculous (or if you read my review, ludicrous). I don't plan to be following Gideon's Crew up.

Pendergast on the other hand, I mostly enjoy. I was introduced to the character in Relic, a book which my wife loved, when she read it. Later as her health failed she was bed fast and had trouble reading so I was constantly searching out audio books for her. The Pendergast saga continued, as she listened to them (or sometimes after if I wasn't around for the entire read) I'd hear them to. Since her death I have continued to follow the adventures of our intrepid Special FBI agent.

And Pendergast seems to be a VERY Special Agent as he freelances as often as he works for the Agency. He's been in prison, gone up against his superiors, been involved in more strange, unexplained and bizarre deaths, events and happenings than probably all other members of all federal agencies combined (excepting possibly Scully and Mulder and he'd probably give them a run for their money).

We pick up here where the last installment left off with our dauntless hero plumbing the depths of a mystery surrounding the lowest point of his life, the apparent murder of his beloved wife. Having assumed for 15 years that she died in a horrible hunting accident, when he found otherwise Pendergast has already proved that he will stop at nothing to get to the bottom of all this!

The book follows the story and it's a good yarn. It is at times (unintentionally I believe) a bit laughable with Pendergast putting Superman to shame. Pendergast is THE TOUGHEST, BADDEST, MOST RESOURCEFUL, DEADLY, UNRELENTING protagonist in all thriller fiction. Books, movies, TV..nobody holds a candle to Aloysius Xingu L. Pendergast. James Bond? Phfitt. Dirk Pitt? a wus. Mack Bolan? a pushover. My daughter and I believe he might even be a match for.... Horatio Caine! Though we did come to the conclusion that match-up might result in a black hole or something. Dressed in unrelenting

black nobody who goes up against Pendergast shall prosper.

Yes I like the books but aside from the good story telling there are so many things like predictable situations (if you don't see the ending to this one coming a mile away you haven't read enough books or seen enough movies), humorous cliches (Why did you do such and such? I'll tell you later...but there's no time now [we never get back to that conversation before the end of the book of course, nor the one that goes] Why didn't you tell me such and such? I'll tell you all later, but right now there's no time!)(Or..."They will be back any minute, I'll only search one more room").

Get the picture?

For some reason none of this bothers me or puts me off. I stay interested in the story and follow it, even as there are times I crack up at the book. Or books...and we'll need to follow "books" it seems, as we seem to be into a plot here that may have legs enough to last through quite a few books. Shall I give any hints that might be semi-spoilers?

Naa, at least not "outside" a spoiler warning. Read the books, enjoy. They're pure brain candy, literary junk food at it's junky, fun, best. Have a ball.

(view spoiler)

L-J Johnson says

What have they done to Pendergast?!? I'm not liking this stereotypical action stud the authors are turning him into. Where are the strange mysteries, haunted hallways of museums, Pendergast's both cerebral and mystical take on the world? And that this particular storyline - Pendergast investigating his wife's accidental death/murder/disappearance from 12 years prior - is going to take three books is just ridiculous! I'm tired of novels just stopping, with no ending at all. This wasn't that long of a book; this easily could have been brought to a real conclusion. And this certainly isn't a compelling enough story to warrant three novels, probably 1100 pages total, and a wait of a year or more for book #3! They brought back Corrie, a beloved character from the miles superior Still Life with Crows, and gave her almost nothing to do. Enough's enough, guys. Get this silly Nazi conspiracy story out of your system, stop having Pendergast act like he's in a Bourne movie, and go back to the much richer, interesting and unique stories you used to write.

Becca-Rawr says

Preston-Childs fans unite, but be warned. This book is best read with the others underneath your belt. A least the one before it, Fever Dream, if you want to understand this one. The other ten if you want the full impact. Do not pick this book up going, 'Oh! A week-end beach read!' This is not a beach read. If you want knitting patterns and recipes, the cozy mysteries section is out back.

Once again Preston and Child both grasp the mysterious aspects of their most memorable characters, this time with the biggest mystery of all; whatever happened to Pendergast's wife? Killed in Africa, or something else?

This review will be extremely short for many reasons. These books are to be shared among fans once completed. There is something of a following, where at the last page we grip out fellow fans by the shoulders in an overdose of joyful emotions and express our hopes and fears about the upcoming book and the book now finished.

This is one of the best in the series, sending the characters, and readers, off a precipice where we'll have to wait and see where and how we land.

For those of you considering the series, please pick it up, and stick with it. The books are always beautifully written, the characters become instant favorites, and there is no genre or category with enough strength to keep these novels in. I love the style the prose, and the plots that I can never compare to anything else I've ever read. Some people have the ability to describe these books to inquiring fellow readers, I do not. I can only tell you to read them.

(If you are interested in discussing the book further because you have read it, feel free to message me.)

Michael Knudsen says

Special Agent Pendergast is one of my favorite characters in contemporary fiction. So here's why Cold Vengeance only gets 3 stars: This is the first of this particular cycle of novels that really feels like just an installment. Not only do you KNOW you're not going to get a decent resolution to this book, but you know it from the beginning. This would be fine if you're lucky enough to be reading the whole series after its publication, but argh, this is one of those cliffhangers we readers could have done without. Sadly, this book feels padded and it reeks of P & C cashing in. Also, our hero is not at his resourceful and intrepid best. Obsessed with tracking down the ultimate fate of his (supposedly) deceased wife, his mind is a little muddled and he makes some serious mistakes that his enemies capitalize on. Sure, this helps extend the story, but it's just not as fun as when Pendergast is at the height of his powers, physically and mentally. For the first third of the novel we don't even know where he is after Esterhazy shoots him. Sure, the sequence on the yacht is vintage Pendergast, but I could have used a bit more of that in this book. And finally, am I just noticing this now, or is Pendergast hardly ever the point-of-view character in these novels anymore? It seems most of the story is told from the viewpoint of other characters, which in my mind weakens the fictional presence of our hero. I'd like to spend more time inside that incredible brain!

NOTE: Don't read this as your first P&C novel. Find the list by publication date and read them in sequence. There are some great ones in there!

Shaina says

4.5

I always learn so much in these books. They make me laugh, ponder ?, " get the feels" as many of you would say, etc.

Know this, these authors are very good at leaving you hanging SOMEWHERE so that you just must pick up that next one ASAP.

I don't think this review requires a spoiler warning at all, but just in case this next paragraph may be slightly spoilery?!? So sensitives stop here. ?

This one gets in deep about Helen and her lineage, and picks up where the last book leaves off. It gives you momentary happiness for the Pendergast family. Momentary. Sigh. I won't say what is getting deep but I'll say the plot for this last book is set up perfectly and is very deep. A subject that strikes the heart of most of us.

Mihir says

Original review over at Fantasy Book Critic

OVERVIEW/ANALYSIS: Cold Vengeance is the second book in the Helen Pendergast trilogy that began with Fever Dream last year. I very much enjoyed the new twist envisioned by the authors as Pendergast begins to re-examine his past and find out about his wife. This move was a brilliant one by the authors and Fever Dream rekindled many a jaded fan back into Pendergast's throes.

This book begins almost immediately after the events of the last book. Pendergast has gone hunting with his brother-in-law Judson Esterhazy, things soon go awry and Pendergast is forced to go underground perhaps a second time in his life (the first time was around the events of the Diogenes trilogy). For things are definitely what they seem and this time around even the ever-doughty Vincent D'Agosta can't be of much help. Things soon take a turn for the unexpected as Corrie Swanson begins her investigation into Pendergast's absence. Aiding her in cause is Vincent D'Agosta who is slowly recovering from the events of the previous title. On a separate track Ned Betterton is a investigative reporter who fills in the void left by Bill Smithback in Preston-Child world and lastly there is the continuation of Constance's storyline from the events of the previous few books and we get a viewpoint from Dr. John Felder which helps the reader in knowing more of what is developing.

Thus with such a convoluted storyline, the authors plunge the readers into a morass of storylines wherein nothing is as it seems and Pendergast is even more bewildered than he was shown in the previous volume. The basic storyline is about Helen Pendergast, the long-thought-to-be dead wife of agent Pendergast, however things and plots have been unearthed which make it seem that Helen was murdered and did not die in a hunting accident. This book not only validates that theory but pushes forward a new one which will further shock Pendergast as well as the readers.

The authors have to be congratulated for not only twisting the reader's perceptions but also backing it up with a tremendous story which does not stop shocking the reader while maintaining its pace and potential. This story's pace is one which does not allow any time for the reader to pause and collect their thoughts as it carries the reader forward through out. The re-appearance of fan-favorite characters of Corrie Swanson & Vincent D'Agosta further helps in engaging the reader as Pendergast is not often present on the scene of action. It's very difficult to discuss the details of the plot as even the smallest points are spoiler-ish and therefore its best if the readers themselves come across these points in their reading journey. Among the book's finer facets are the side plots, which do not detract any attention from the main plot and keep the readers, further engrossed in trying to figure out how it will all end?

The most surprising thing of the book is how assured the authors seem to be in an environment wherein their comfort level is at its zenith, earlier this year the same duo had released Gideon's Sword and its very hard to believe that both the books were written by the same people in almost an overlapping time period. The

difference between both books is startling in terms of plot, characterization and plot twists and is unfathomable. Another remarkable aspect of this book is that even though this is the middle book of the trilogy, it does not show any such signs. It rushes towards the climax while keeping the reader guessing and goes on to deliver not one but two explosive revelations which will have massive repercussions in Pendergast's world.

This book does not get any better than the previous excellent thrillers like Reliquary, Cabinet of Curiosities, Riptide, etc. from these virtuoso masters. Not only will it invigorate the series but will go on to gain more fans for the series as many readers who haven't read the previous series titles can readily start reading the books from Fever Dream and thus will still be enchanted by the world and the characters created by Messrs. Preston & Child.

CONCLUSION: An excellent thriller, "The Dark Knight" to its predecessor and an out-and-out page-turner. Preston & Child have written a fiendishly clever book and inserted enough surprises in it to flummox the most veteran readers and with an ending even more devious than all their previous ones; next year cannot come soon enough for the final book and the resolution to the mystery of Helen Pendergast.

Lobstergirl says

Preston and Child have their little arsenal of stock phrases they can't quit. Depending on where their novels are set, and how much time is spent mountain climbing or in subterranean caverns, there will be varying amounts of *susurrus* and fingers *scrabbling for purchase*. Here we have only one "low susurrus of wind" and one set of feet finding a purchase aboard a yacht. But we do have two instances of fingers being *tented*: Dr. Felder, Constance's psychiatrist, "tented his fingers." Pendergast even takes the time to tent his fingers after his ward Constance has been kidnapped, in order to ponder where she might be. I don't understand why anyone would calmly tent their fingers when lives are at stake and time is of the essence, but then Pendergast is an FBI agent of a different stripe. Tenting signals the thinking professions; in books you won't see a stevedore tent his fingers, or a nanny. Because it is associated with thinking and contemplation, it is of course gendered. "Tented his fingers" and "tenting his fingers" produce 6,010 googlebooks results. "Tented her fingers" and "tenting her fingers" produce 1,511 results.

As we have seen before, Pendergast is not one to manspread. Over the course of two pages, Pendergast "crossed one leg delicately over the other." Not pausing to uncross them, on the very next page he "crossed his legs." A mere eight lines later he "recrossed his legs." So he crossed his newly crossed legs over the previously crossed legs? Because what I'm picturing is some kind of double pretzel. On a later page he is seen "throwing one leg over the other", whether delicately, or athletically, the authors don't say.

Emma says

Brilliant! Fast paced (I really didn't notice the pages flying by) action with barely a pause for breath. Pendergast is wonderful. #Pendergast for President.

Ginger says

Oh my God! What are you doing to me *Preston & Child*?!

You leave me with TWO cliffhangers in the 2nd book of the Helen trilogy? Good grief!

I love this series and these two writers. The action, mystery and complexities of each book is just so well done. I've never been disappointed with a book from the Pendergast series.

Thanks for the buddy read Terry & Matthew!

Can't wait to get to Two Graves which is the last book in the Helen Pendergast trilogy. It's been a rollercoaster of a ride and it's hard to tell you much about the plot of this book, Cold Vengeance without ruining Fever Dream which is the 1st book in the trilogy.

If you've been living under a rock for the last 20 years and haven't read a Pendergast book, **GET TO IT!**

Terry says

Just terrific - Love this series! If you haven't started reading it, you need to!

Matthew says

[(hide spoiler)]

Tiffany says

Special Agent Pendergast has been in my life since I was a teenager, and I've followed his adventures through to my thirties. Like Corrie Swanson from Still Life With Crows, I too shared an admiration for the elusive FBI agent. However, through the series he has grown from an aloof and scrupulously scientific investigator to a man very nearly teetering on the edge of whatever is left of his sanity.

FEVER DREAM began the epic journey deeper into Pendergast's psyche as he realized his wife, Helen, was not accidentally killed, but in fact murdered, and COLD VENGEANCE follows through as horrifying discoveries are made concerning her past: that she may have set up her own murder and, in fact, might not be dead. Pendergast's once severely controlled actions begin to spiral and he is warned by friends about his own past. "Consider your family history" echoes throughout these pages implying that Pendergast has the potential to live up to the same misdeeds as the more psychotic members of the infamous family. After reading these two books, a dark and sinister Pendergast is not all that hard to imagine.

There are many moments in each book of the Helen trilogy where I've wanted to turn back, not gaze into the eyes of the beast Pendergast is becoming, but I've been with him this long, and I can't leave him. And like the loyal Lieutenant Vincent D'Agosta who has been with the FBI agent through thick and thin, I follow Pendergast through the mire in the hopes he finds the answers to his questions, and perhaps a light at the end of the tunnel.

Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child have outdone themselves once again, and with COLD VENGEANCE at the #1 spot on the New York Times Bestseller list, it's proof this is without a doubt the best in the entire

series. The third book can't come soon enough.

kartik narayanan says

This book is an non-standard Pendergast since it is essentially an action thriller rather than a mystery. Somehow in the last few books, Pendergast has slowly switched from being an intellectual type who is a marksman, to being Mitch Rapp. I find that this is slowly reducing the appeal of this series since it seeks to compete in a genre where there are much better ones available. I come to Pendergast because it is creepy and there is a mystery to be solved, not because I want to read about the antics of an unstoppable machine.

Other than this gripe, the other essentials still remain. The writing is excellent with some great humour. Overall, this is an ok book.
