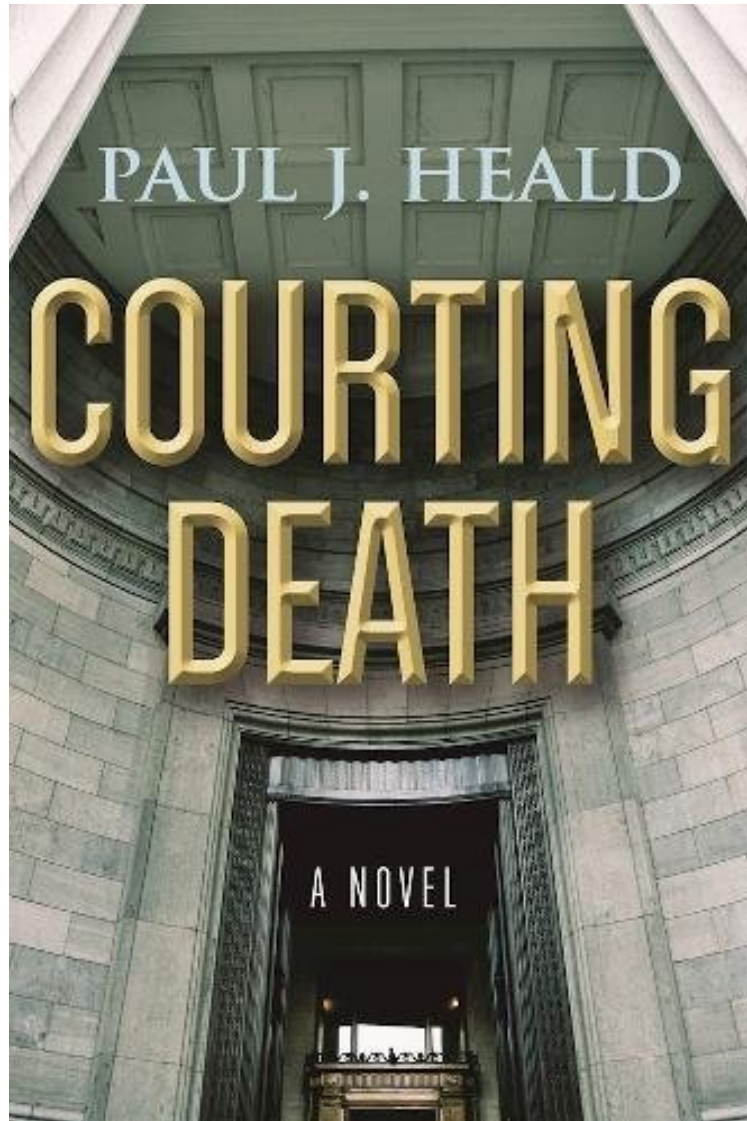


(Free and download) Courting Death: A Novel (The Clarkeston Chronicles)

Courting Death: A Novel (The Clarkeston Chronicles)

Paul Heald

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Paul Heald : Courting Death: A Novel (The Clarkeston Chronicles) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Courting Death: A Novel (The Clarkeston Chronicles):

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A very satisfying read By Paul M. Kurtz Quite well written and plotted. Law, morality, philosophy, music, a murder and some sex as well. I recommend it without reservation. Paul Kurtz 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Death, in many forms. By Margot Peter Loved this book, the author is hitting his stride. Look out Grisham, Clarkeston Chronicles are terrific. 4 of 4 people found the following

review helpful. Suspend Your Expectations With Regard To Genre (And Enjoy). By Richard B. Schwartz This is an interesting addition to the Clarkeston Chronicles series. Some are disappointed that it is not more of a mystery story. In that regard, caveat emptor. This is much more of a mainstream novel. One reviewer on calls it a coming of age novel. That is close, but imprecise, since all of the characters in an ensemble cast are adults in their mid-20's and beyond. I think of the book as a part of a large patchwork, with the setting as unifying element. In that regard it is a gutsy book, because it assumes that the readers will want to return to Clarkeston again and again, regardless of the specific time frame and the specific cast of characters. *Courting Death* is set in 1988-9. Three young lawyers are serving a clerkship with a prominent federal judge. The first, Melanie Wilkerson, is a former beauty queen. The second, Phil Jenkins, has a real problem: he doesn't believe in capital punishment. The third, Arthur Hughes, is the protagonist in the story. When he comes to Clarkeston he falls in love with his late 20's landlady who has an infant daughter who is a real charmer. At the same time he goes out drinking with Phil and is tempted by Melanie. All three are mentored and dominated by the nameless judge who carries secrets of his own. Both Arthur and Phil are bedeviled by some of the cases with which they must deal and Melanie is drawn into an unsolicited investigation of the death of a former clerk. In other words, this is a complex mainstream novel that principally deals with the private lives of the members of the ensemble cast. There is a mystery story (as there is, so often, in mainstream novels) but it is not at the heart of the plot architecture. That would be the story of Arthur's relationship with his landlady Suzanne and her daughter Maria. A further plot wrinkle is Arthur's decision to join a choral group on the local campus, both to provide him some relief from the concerns of life and work and to exercise a different facet of his personality. If someone described the elements of the story to me I would probably be unlikely to read it, but I have enjoyed both of Paul Heald's previous novels and jumped in without any pause. The result was gratifying. The stories were all interesting; the mini-mystery was nicely done and the ending was satisfying. It's always interesting to see the texture of a life that one has little personal contact with, in this case the life of an ambitious law clerk. Such a life could easily be presented in a clichéd manner, with eager beavers elbowing one another over unrealistic, grandiose cases. The story here is far more realistic—the heart of the novel's traditional appeal—and shows us three characters' intertwined lives in a manner that is interesting though part of the work of those lives can be mundane. Clerks are, after all, apprentices who use a low-paying position to advance themselves in the lucrative careers that follow. We taste a bit of that ethos, but the experience of the characters is ultimately far richer and, as a result, far more engaging. Bottom line: a somewhat quirky (given our initial expectations) novel that works very nicely in all of its elements.

From an internationally recognized law professor comes the third legal thriller in an exciting mystery series, the Clarkeston Chronicles. *Courting Death* finds Melanie Wilkerson (from *Cotton*, book two of the Clarkeston Chronicles) and Arthur Hughes working uncomfortably together in the chambers of a famous federal judge. While Melanie neglects her duties as a law clerk to investigate the mysterious death of a young woman in the courthouse five years earlier, Arthur wades through the horrific habeas corpus appeals of two prisoners: an infamous serial killer and a pathetic child murder. Melanie, a Georgia native who returns from law school in the Northeast, hoped to establish a legal reputation that will eclipse her beauty pageant queen past, which she is now desperate to disown. Arthur is a bright but naive Midwesterner who is rapidly seduced by the small Georgia college town of Clarkeston which, to his surprise, comes with an exotic and attractive landlady. The cohort of federal court clerks is completed by Phil Jenkins, a Stanford graduate from San Francisco who tries his best to balance the personalities of his volatile colleagues. Living and working in bucolic Clarkeston comes with a price. In *Courting Death*, Arthur, Melanie, and Phil are confronted with the extremes of human mortality, both in and outside the legal system, in ways that they could never have expected or prepared for. Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Arcade, Yucca, and Good Books imprints, are proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in fiction—novels, novellas, political and medical thrillers, comedy, satire, historical fiction, romance, erotic and love stories, mystery, classic literature, folklore and mythology, literary classics including Shakespeare, Dumas, Wilde, Cather, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

"Absorbing . . . Heald skillfully illuminates the vagaries of crime and punishment in this disquieting look inside the workings of the justice system." —Publishers Weekly "A terrific read! Law professor Paul Heald once again shows his mastery of the legal mystery with characters as complex as any found in a Grisham novel. It's Southern justice served cold." —Mark Schweizer, author of *The Liturgical Mysteries* series "Unique . . . As close to being a pure legal thriller as you are likely to find . . . A great deal of insight into the inner workings of these cases . . . A great choice for legal thriller fans as well as those who enjoy a good mystery." —Night Owl s "Growing mystery, tangled personal lives, a wonderful evocation of time and place, and an expert insider's view of the criminal justice system would be enough to make *Courting Death* a great read. . . . A triumphant, life-affirming accomplishment. Paul Heald just keeps getting better and better." —Frank Chadwick, author of *How Dark the World Becomes* "As George Eliot complained long ago, too few novels even try to capture the experience of work or the romance of vocation. Fewer succeed. Novels

about lawyers, in particular, too often use the law itself merely as an ornament or plot device. *Courting Death*, by contrast, is a real novel of vocation. Heald wonderfully evokes the intellectual excitement of law as a profession."
—Eric Johnson, Former Chief Assistant Attorney General of Alaska and Assistant Solicitor General in New York