

#1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR
OF GRAVE SECRETS

KATHY REICHS

DÉJÀ DEAD

"Scary enough to keep the lights on and the dog inside.
Reichs is that good." —NEW YORK *DAILY NEWS*



DÉJÀ
DEAD



KATHY REICHS

SCRIBNER



SCRIBNER

1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Visit us on the World Wide Web:
<http://www.SimonSays.com>

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 1997 by Kathleen J. Reichs

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

SCRIBNER and design are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster Inc.

ISBN: 0-684-83906-7

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36

[37](#)

[38](#)

[39](#)

[40](#)

[41](#)

[42](#)

[43](#)

[ABOUT THE AUTHOR](#)

For Karl and Marta Reichs,
the two kindest and most generous people I know.
Paldies par jusu miestibu, Vecamamma un Paps.

Karlis Reichs 1914-1996

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In an attempt to create accurate fiction, I consulted experts in many fields. I wish to thank Bernard Chapais for his explanation of Canadian regulations pertaining to the housing and maintenance of laboratory animals; Sylvain Roy, Jean-Guy Hébert, and Michel Hamel for their help on serology; Bernard Pommeville for his detailed demonstration of X-ray microfluorescence; and Robert Dorion for his advice on forensic dentistry, bite mark analysis, and proper use of the French language. Last, but far from least, I wish to express my gratitude to Steve Symes for his boundless patience in discussing saws and their effects on bone.

I owe a debt of thanks to John Robinson and Marysue Rucci, without whom *Déjà Dead* may never have come to be. John brought the manuscript to Marysue's attention, and she saw merit in it. My editors, Susanne Kirk, Marysue Rucci, and Maria Rejt waded through the original version of *Déjà Dead*, improving it greatly with their editorial suggestions. A million thanks to my agent, Jennifer Rudolph Walsh. She is amazing.

Finally, on a more personal note, I want to thank the members of my family who read the embryonic work and made valuable comments. I appreciate their support, and their patience with my long absences.

DÉJÀ
DEAD



1

I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT THE MAN WHO'D BLOWN HIMSELF UP. Earlier I had. Now I was putting him together. Two sections of skull lay in front of me, and a third jutted from a sand-filled stainless steel bowl, the glue still drying on its reassembled fragments. Enough bone to confirm identity. The coroner would be pleased.

It was late afternoon, Thursday, June 2, 1994. While the glue set, my mind had gone truant. The knock that would break my reverie, tip my life off course, and alter my comprehension of the bounds of human depravity wouldn't come for another ten minutes. I was enjoying my view of the St. Lawrence, the sole advantage of my cramped corner office. Somehow the sight of water has always rejuvenated me, especially when it flows rhythmically. Forget Golden Pond. I'm sure Freud could have run with that.

My thoughts meandered to the upcoming weekend. I had a trip to Quebec City in mind, but my plans were vague. I thought of visiting the Plains of Abraham, eating mussels and crepes, and buying trinkets from the street vendors. Escape in tourism. I'd been in Montreal a full year, working as forensic anthropologist for the province, but I hadn't been up there yet, so it seemed like a good program. I needed a couple of days without skeletons, decomposed bodies, or corpses freshly dragged from the river.

Ideas come easily to me, enacting them comes harder. I usually let things go. Perhaps it's an escape hatch, my way of allowing myself to double back and ease out the side door on a lot of my schemes. Irresolute about my social life, obsessive in my work.

I knew he was standing there before the knock. Though he moved quietly for a man of his bulk, the smell of old pipe tobacco gave him away. Pierre LaManche had been director of the Laboratoire de Médecine Légale for almost two decades. His visits to my office were never social, and I suspected that his news wouldn't be good. LaManche tapped the door softly with his knuckles.

"Temperance?" It rhymed with France. He would not use the shortened version. Perhaps to his ear it just didn't translate. Perhaps he'd had a bad experience in Arizona. He, alone, did not call me Tempe.

"Oui?" After months, it was automatic. I had arrived in Montreal thinking myself fluent in French, but I hadn't counted on *Le Français*

Québécois. I was learning, but slowly.

“I have just had a call.” He glanced at a pink telephone slip he was holding. Everything about his face was vertical, the lines and folds moving from high to low, paralleling the long, straight nose and ears. The plan was pure basset hound. It was a face that had probably looked old in youth, its arrangement only deepening with time. I couldn’t have guessed his age.

“Two Hydro-Quebec workers found some bones today.” He studied my face, which was not happy. His eyes returned to the pink paper.

“They are close to the site where the historic burials were found last summer,” he said in his proper, formal French. I’d never heard him use a contraction. No slang or police jargon. “You were there. It is probably more of the same. I need someone to go out there to confirm that this is not a coroner case.”

When he glanced up from the paper, the change in angle caused the furrows and creases to deepen, sucking in the afternoon light, as a black hole draws in matter. He made an attempt at a gaunt smile and four crevices veered north.

“You think it’s archaeological?” I was stalling. A scene search had not been in my pre-weekend plans. To leave the next day I still had to pick up the dry cleaning, do the laundry, stop at the pharmacy, pack, put oil in the car, and explain cat care to Winston, the caretaker at my building.

He nodded.

“Okay.” It was not okay.

He handed me the slip. “Do you want a squad car to take you there?”

I looked at him, trying hard for baleful. “No, I drove in today.” I read the address. It was close to home. “I’ll find it.”

He left as silently as he’d come. Pierre LaManche favored crepe-soled shoes, kept his pockets empty so nothing jangled or swished. Like a croc in a river he arrived and departed unannounced by auditory cues. Some of the staff found it unnerving.

I packed a set of coveralls in a backpack with my rubber boots, hoping I wouldn’t need either, and grabbed my laptop, briefcase, and the embroidered canteen cover that was serving as that season’s purse. I was still promising myself that I wouldn’t be back until Monday, but another voice in my head was intruding, insisting otherwise.