

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

MURDERERS AND NERDY GIRLS WORK LATE

Boero, Lisa

Nerdy Girl Press (350 pp.)

\$12.99 paperback, \$5.99 e-book

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BOOK REVIEW

Debut author Boero's auspicious beginning to a planned mystery series features a law school student with prosopagnosia.

Liz Howe suffers from a rare condition that prevents her from recognizing faces, but her other senses are highly attuned to compensate. When she discovers the body of a partner in the stairwell of the law office where she's working as a summer associate, Liz impresses the investigating detective with her observations. Despite her prosopagnosia, Liz can detect that Detective James Paperelli is lust-worthy. While the young female amateur sleuth crushing on the unavailable detective isn't an original plot device in the world of cozy mysteries, Boero makes it fresh by having James welcome Liz's assistance rather than warning her away. Acting as an informant for Paperelli, Liz enlists firm partner and her boss, Janice Harrington, to help her infiltrate the firm's inner workings. Liz, with her self-proclaimed nerdiness, diagnosed neurological condition and conventional concerns about her appearance, is a believable, sympathetic protagonist, although readers may wonder how she has time to study, research her academic articles, work part time and embark on a self-improvement program. James, on the other hand, with his designer clothing and unending kindness, is almost too good to be true, save one uncharacteristic and troubling emotional outburst. Boero offers unique, memorable settings in St. Louis, Mo., and Marshfield, Wis., the second of which greatly informs Liz's personality (and makes Wisconsin seem like a desirable place to live). Despite a few instances where the action slows and a slightly pat resolution, Boero's book will appeal to fans of mysteries and chick lit. While Liz emphasizes her self-identified shortcomings—seemingly de rigueur for women of this age group—her academic achievements and pursuit by four eligible males suggest otherwise. Still, her fresh voice makes up for a few clichéd aspects of the novel.

Kept afloat by a plucky heroine, like a yuppie version of Stephanie Plum.