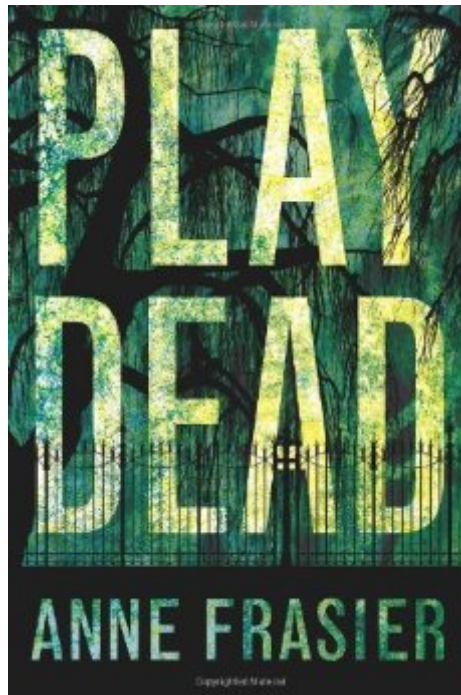


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Play Dead (Elise Sandburg Series Book 1)



Synopsis

No one is more familiar with Savannah's dark side than homicide detective and native resident Elise Sandburg. She's been haunted for years by her own mysterious past: she was abandoned as a baby in one of the city's ancient cemeteries, and it's rumored that she is the illegitimate daughter of an infamous Savannah root doctor. The local Gullah culture of voodoo and magic is one that few outsiders can understand, least of all Elise's new partner. Now someone is terrorizing the city, creating real-life zombies by poisoning victims into a conscious paralysis that mimics death. As the chilling case unfolds, Elise is drawn back into the haunted past she's tried so hard to leave behind.

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Customer Reviews

Once I started reading PLAY DEAD, I couldn't put it down. I enjoyed HUSH and SLEEP TIGHT very much, but this is the best. Anne Frasier has a way of getting into the skin of her characters that makes every book unforgettable. Her characters are so unusual and so bent, yet by the end of the book they're part of you. I finished reading the book yesterday, but I've been thinking about it ever since.

I read this book in one day. Something I haven't done in quite a while. The characters were compelling. The plot fascinating. The dialogue excellent. If only all thrillers were this thrilling. I like Anne Frasier's first two books but I loved this one. Her best so far.

I really wanted to like this book. The summary and previous reviews made it sound very intriguing, and the setting of Savannah, GA made it hard for me to pass up. However, the descriptions of the city and its residents did not ring true to the city I know and love - seemed more like someone who had read a book about Savannah or maybe passed through the city once. I decided to overlook that personal disconnect, read the story as if it were set in a "fictional" city, and just enjoy the mystery. But I still couldn't get into the story because even the descriptions of mundane things - like Elise and Audrey (mother and daughter) having breakfast together, or Gould jogging, or Elise *thinking* about Gould jogging - just didn't have a natural flow. That, in addition to the stilted dialogue between the characters, made it a real chore to read. Simply not enjoyable.

Every now and then a book comes along that just grabs you from page one and does not let you down for the entire experience. They are few in number, but this is one of them. This book had great characters, worthy of a sequel. David was well thought out and had demons to deal with. Elise was a terrific heroine with her own shadowy past and messed up relationships to deal with, but never let her personal life get in the way of her professional life as a detective. Elise was extremely capable and did not have to have a clue bite her in the butt to see it. Here were some characters you could really relate to put into very scary situations and they handled them the way a real person might actually handle them. I don't give out many 5 star ratings to books but this one deserves it. The third work I've read by Anne Frasier. All were very good...This was the best, at least I think so.

Savannah medical examiner John Casper is performing an autopsy when he suddenly realizes that the body is still alive, the man is still breathing albeit very slowly. When the man eventually dies, it is discovered that he had tetrodotxin in his bloodstream, a poison that doesn't cross the blood brain barrier so victims are paralyzed and unable to speak, but totally aware of what is going on around them. Homicide detectives Elise Sandberg and David Gould head the investigation. As a baby Elise was abandoned on a grave; her father was thought to be a root doctor and a conjurer so she is aware that the public will believe they are dealing with dark magic because superstitions run soul deep in Savannah. David is running from his own demons but unlike Elise he doesn't believe in the supernatural. More victims are found as body moves out of the grave before dying. The perpetrator

poisons David leaving him paralyzed and needing help, but only Elise might save him if she can put all the pieces of the puzzle together in time. Fans will find themselves reading about a different kind of Savannah one that is more like New Orleans with root doctors, conjurers and practitioners of the supernatural. The two protagonists get off to a rocky start but in time and with patience on Elise's part, they make a good team. PLAY DEAD is a compelling and memorable police procedural, made even better by the way the characters interact with one another. Anne Frasier will be appreciated by fans who like Kay Hooper, Iris Johansen and Lisa Gardner. Harriet Klausner

The front of the book says Anne Frazier can "deliver thoroughly engrossing, completely riveting suspense!" That is every bit true for all of her books, and this one is right in line with the first two. The characters are intriguing, yet surreal, but also passionate, with all the human frailties. Once you start, you can't put it down because you are pushing all limits to determine "who dunnit". A great read.

I loved the idea and the plot, but I found that it lacked a lot of the depth I love to see in books that hint at the supernatural. I didn't find the characters very complex and it was easy to forget them. But, it was a creative story nonetheless.

Reading Anne Frasier's latest, Play Dead, is like taking a roller coaster ride and a carriage tour simultaneously. Unblinking, Frasier outlines the dark, mysterious side of Savannah with a bold Magic Marker and fills in the spaces with the city's innate beauty and light. The protagonists, Elise and David, may be worlds apart in personality and life experience, but they are more alike than they seem at first glance. Both are determined to solve the strange case of corpses that aren't, delving into the arcane world of root doctors and mysticism while dealing with their own inner demons. Most authors use setting merely as a backdrop for their characters. In Play Dead, setting IS a character. Good job!

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