

FATAL FEBRUARY

by Barbara Levenson

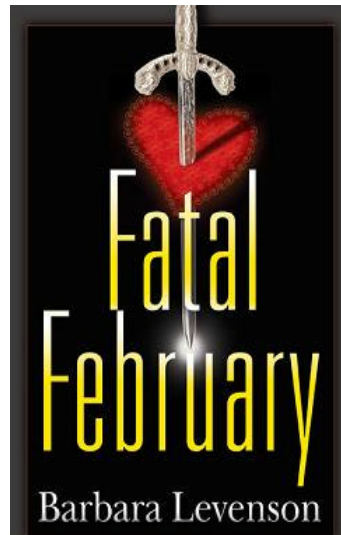
ISBN 978-1-933515-52-6

Fiction / Mystery

Pub Date: February 1, 2009

Oceanview Publishing

Hardcover \$22.95



Reader Views

Reviewed by Leslie Granier

Mary Magruder Katz lives life in the fast lane. As a lawyer who specializes mainly in criminal defense, she has certainly seen her share of interesting events. However, her life is completely turned upside-down one fateful February day when she is involved in a car accident with smooth talking and sexy Carlos Martin. The day continues with him coercing her into representing him in a real estate transaction and ultimately leads to the end of her five-year engagement to a fellow attorney. Mary shortly thereafter gets her first client at her new law practice - a wealthy lady who has been accused of murdering her husband. She must do her best to exonerate her client, while having to defend herself against some legal charges of her own. The greatest strength of "**Fatal February**" is the likable characters created by the author. Mary is portrayed as intelligent, warm and willing to go to any lengths necessary for her clients. Carlos, who at the beginning of the story seemed like a shady character, actually turns out to be a respectable human being. The strengths and weaknesses of both characters are depicted which helps the reader better relate to them. Mary and Carlos make a cute couple and their unconditional support for each other is endearing.

This book is well-written and follows an orderly progression from the fact-finding stage to the hearings. Levenson does a good job of making several characters viable suspects in the murder. The scenes in which the witnesses, that Mary has already questioned before the hearing give their testimonies, are somewhat repetitive because they once again say the same things in nearly identical words. However, the ending is unexpected and allows the reader the freedom to decide what really occurred.

"**Fatal February**" by Barbara Levenson will appeal to a broad adult audience. Mystery lovers will especially find the subject matter intriguing. The author evenly balances the material between Mary's personal life and the murder trial which keeps the story more interesting. I do not know if this will be the beginning of a series featuring Mary Magruder Katz, but I definitely am interested in reading more about her.