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Dead Letter: Addressee Unknown

Janet Feduska Cole

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Janet Feduska Cole : Dead Letter: Addressee Unknown before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dead Letter: Addressee Unknown:

Elyse, Saul, and Arturo continue their unrelenting quest for the Lunersee stamps. Clues arriving in cryptic envelopes have expanded their search interests to include other priceless artifacts stolen during WWII. The Amber Room, an

invaluable treasure stolen from Russia by the Nazis, tops Elyse's list. After completing a philatelic cruise, the trio evades a deadly crash scenario initiated by a sinister driver on a European highway. Another attempt upon their lives occurs on the shores of Lake Lunersee. The adventures continue into an underground cavern where their survival is uncertain.

I am still amazed by all of the research that must have been involved in the writing of this book. I have always been drawn to books focusing on WWII Nazi Germany and the atrocities associated with the Jewish Holocaust. *Dead Letter: Addressee Unknown* teases the brain as it cycles from fiction to fact and back. It is entertaining while providing a fascinating history lesson. *Dead Letter: Addressee Unknown* is a highly readable work where the author skillfully weaves little known but interesting historical facts from World War II with fictional characters into an entertaining story line that has enough twists and turns to keep the reader turning pages. Violence and the threat of violence adds tension to the plot but is balanced out by the self deprecating humor of the heroine. This is the second of a series and the author adroitly introduces new characters and constantly changes locations to keep the story fresh. ed by Sue Merrell, *Windy City ers* When you are knee-deep in a Chicago winter and need an escape, a book with exotic locations, quirky characters, and high-risk adventure could be just what you're looking for. The second book in Janet Feduska Cole's philatelic mystery series, *Dead Letter: Addressee Unknown*, offers all three. *Dead Letter* takes the reader on a river cruise through Germany and Austria with a cast of secret Interpol agents. The heroine and narrator, Elyse, is accompanied by her friend Saul, a slightly nerdy petro glyph expert, and her magazine editor, Auturo, whose heavy Polish accent cloaks every exchange with humor and mystery. In addition, her mysterious college friend, Karl, and his voluptuous bride, Mindy, are never far away. Elyse refers to them as the Slarls--a combination of "slutwoman" and Karl--and they're the perfect comic nemeses, bungling yet vaguely threatening. Elyse and her friends are hot on the trail of \$50 million worth of rare stamps that were pilfered from Jewish collectors during WWII and then hidden, possibly in the Lunersee Lake in Austria. From the AuthorSharing an insightful review: Cole enjoys outdoor activities such as scuba diving and rock climbing, and these interests flavor her storytelling. Cole also has a nice understated sense of humor. Unfortunately, though, I do not think *Dead Letter* lives up to the full potential of the intriguing storyline. The first half of the book is sluggish, mainly because Elyse is narrating instead of participating in the action. She tells the reader about a variety of wonderful World War II mysteries, such as the disappearance of Russia's opulent Amber Room, but she tells them as she uncovers them on the Internet. There's also very little interplay between the characters in the first half. In the second half of the book, the pace picks up with more character interaction and an exciting climax. Most of the scenes could use more detail. For instance, the book opens with Elyse reporting for jury duty, but I had no idea this scene was taking place in my old hometown of Joliet until much later in the book when Elyse recalls a "mysterious character in the Joliet courthouse." Likewise, since *Dead Letter* is the second book in the series, it takes the reader a while to figure out who the characters are and how they are connected. This lack of background leaves the reader a bit disoriented. In addition, the publisher did not provide much in the way of editing and proofreading, and I was surprised by some of the errors (Auschwitz is spelled "Auswitch" in three places). With better editing, and more character and scene development, *Dead Letter* could be as much fun as the Indiana Jones adventures.