



## What They're Saying

If I was a fairy invited to the christening of the Black Orchids, I'd give quirky individuality or fierce loyalty or maybe the path to authenticity. Except I wouldn't need to, because the characters already have all of that. If I wasn't invited, I'd give them murder and treachery and the tendency to run across crimes. But that would be okay, because they can handle all of that, with panache and some ABBA—or maybe a tango.

Laurel Winter, author of *Growing Wings*  
World Fantasy Award winner

**The modern Texas found family gang of amateur detectives we didn't know we desperately needed.**

You'll enjoy watching characters deepen, and you know that person probably lives in your town. You will get great personalities of all ages in this found family of people who discovered each other in college and have never found a good reason not to stay in close contact. Maybe we all can't find it in real life. But we have the Black Orchids.

Katharine Eliska Kimbriel, author of the Night Calls Series  
and Chronicles of Nuala

**Humor and cats plus rich culture and a vivid setting**

There's nothing I like more than a story with rich cultural insights in a vivid setting. Combine suspense with humor—not an easy task—and you have a winning combination with *Hallow: A Fractured Family Tale*.

A sample of tasty quips: "If I was on a wild goose chase, I wanted to actively chase."



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"The same generation that complains about AI and Photoshop thought their professional portraits needed to be manually enhanced."

Finally: "The orchestra was the reason we'd planted an eighth of an acre of squash...I was especially pleased with my trombetta squash, a long-necked lime green specimen that played in the trombone or low French horn range."

One of my favorite characters is Darryl. "The sukkah was, of course, our intern's idea and execution, not that he's Jewish. Darryl Swann assists Johnny (whose grandmother is Jewish) in the cat hospital, Dianne with never-ending tax returns, and me with my legal grind. Decorating for the holidays, all the holidays, brings Darryl enough joy to keep him doing these other jobs."

As a veterinarian, I never tire of the endless animals. "Everyone in town showed up after church so their cat, dog, hamster, bird, snake, tarantula, horse, llama, goat, and others could be blessed. In rural Texas, anything that doesn't bite too hard can be a pet, if it consents to hang around."

The diverse, multicultural characters navigate surprising crimes and misdemeanors. They are considerably entertaining. Drop into Gregg House for a heck of a ride.

Millicent Eidson, author of the Microbial Mysteries

### **What a wonderful book is *Family Matters*.**

I enjoyed reading it, which was something of a surprise, since I have been skeptical of first-person novels. But you made me understand that the challenge of first person is creating a really memorable character to carry the weight of the story. You have done that in JD Thompson. His voice is marvelous. Sophisticated, often ironic, alternating between literary language and everyday talk without ever becoming affected. It reminds me that the South (and I think of Texas as having many southern attributes) gives more attention to the mother tongue than we laconic Minnesotans.

John Baird Rogers, author of the  
Mayfield-Napolitani series



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*Hallow* by M.R. Dimond is the first book I have read from this author, and it is also the fifth in the Black Orchid Enterprises mystery series. I was able to enjoy the story even coming in later in the series. Dimond does a wonderful job of introducing the characters to the reader, regardless of where you are in the series.

Family dynamics is at the center of this story—though there are different storylines throughout the tale. Dimond is able to maneuver between the storylines with ease in a fast-paced way. What's even more fun is the humor that Dimond is able to intertwine with the happenings of the tale. There truly is a lot that happens throughout the story that will keep you turning the page.

*Hallow* is a tale for readers who love cute and cozy mysteries. Through detailed and enjoyable characters and humor, the author is able to create a world where we get to know everyone in a small town - and everything that comes along with small towns.

Book Fidelity

*Hallow* is the fifth book in M. R. Dimond's Black Orchid Enterprises Mystery series, and the first I've read. I was able to follow along pretty well, but this book was so enchanting, I've got to go read the first four and get to know the characters from the start!

Black Orchid Enterprises is the business endeavor of J.D., Dianne, and Johnny. They work and live in Gregg House. They're friends—more like an unconventional family, really—and their professional lives often intersect and overlap in surprising ways. Gregg House is a community fixture, known for their celebrations of just about every event and season. Here we see them hosting events for the Jewish holiday of Sukkoth and the Mexican holiday Día de los Muertos. I would imagine these parties would be some big to-dos even without the events of the mysteries that are unfolding.



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Yes, mysteries. This story is chock full of them! You've got the murder mystery, of course, with a murder that comes surprisingly late in the book. But J.D. also learns that his grandfather may have had a child with Peggy Porter, the girlfriend he was never able to locate after he returned from the war. Armed with a puzzle box and a name and little else, J. D. tries to pin down the fate of the elusive Peggy. Then there's Vidal Abreu, looking to protect his inheritance from his unruly mess of half-siblings and the curious DNA test his daughter took. Who's part of whose family here?

Dimond gives us a host of well-written characters, some appealing, some not so much. Johnny may have been my favorite, with his love for animals and investment in their rescue. I share his fondness for cats, and I loved that he tried so hard to protect all the black cats around Halloween!

The more I read, the more I loved this book. The stories unfolded and intertwined, family was lost, family was found, longstanding mysteries were resolved, and I was a little sad to turn the last page. I hope there's more to come in this series, because I think I've fallen in love a little with the residents of Gregg House and all the shenanigans they get up to!

The Plain Spoken Pen

From the storyline about J.D.'s grandfather's past to the mystery surrounding the burning building, I felt immersed in the lives of this small Texas town. Speaking of getting ourselves immersed, I need to find this place in real life. Throughout the story, the readers are invited to learn about various traditions, holidays, history lessons, and so much more.

Rainy Days with Amanda

Hallow includes a family of characters—not related by blood—that will endear it to even the snobbiest of cozy mystery readers. Author M.R. Dimond went above and



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beyond in creating characters that I may not necessarily want to live next door to, but would definitely like to get to know better.

I could start a synopsis by saying a lawyer, an accountant and a veterinarian walk into a house, but you'd likely think I was starting a joke. However, that is the actual setting of the story: the three professionals live and work together in Gregg House, a Victorian mansion located in Beauchamp, Texas, about 20 miles from Austin.

There are two different, yet significant, plots to the story. Many times multiple plots in a story can lead to literary disaster, but this author did a wonderful job of keeping the plots moving forward and keeping the reader focused and informed.

There is a perfect amount of lighthearted comedy throughout the story, and I loved it! Of the three main characters, JD's character arc is the absolute best. Not everything turned out the way he wanted, but isn't that what best friends are for?

Something else I really enjoyed was the "This and That" section the author included after the story ended. In this section, the author discusses how some of the events in the story are loosely based on actual events. Also, the author included a Playlist of songs that would likely enhance the reading experience.

By the time I finished *Hallow*, I was quite endeared to the main characters. In fact, there's a very good chance that I'll go back to the beginning of this series to see how it all came to be.

Happy reading!

The Clueless Gent

Dimond's series characters are delightful.

Kirkus Reviews



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