

Book Review: The Forty-Year Grudge
By Liza Tully

Thanks to NetGalley and the Berkley Publishing Group for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "The Forty-Year Grudge" was released on June 9, 2026.

Liza Tully's second installment in the Merritt & Blunt mystery series (I did not read or review the first) features an interesting premise. Unfortunately, the story itself does not deliver what it promises.

It has been four decades since the women of Sigma Delta Tau were last together. Some have done well for themselves, others not. A reunion in New Mexico that should be a pleasant gathering of old friends turns ugly when one of them is found dead floating in the swimming pool.

One of the sorority sisters is Aubrey Merritt, heralded as the World's Greatest Detective. She and her protégé, Olivia Blunt, are now tasked with solving the crime. And they're working against the clock and a local sheriff who wants nothing more than to solve the case quickly.

The problem, almost from the beginning, is that the narrative plods along at almost glacial speed. The story is told through Olivia's eyes. And it's readily apparent that she's just as enamored with her boss as she is frustrated with the way she's treated. Aubrey Merritt, it's clear, is one crusty old broad. If there's a soft spot in her makeup, it's not apparent.

The other sorority sisters and their respective others are not exactly likeable characters either. They're also flat, one-dimensional people who are challenging, at best, to care about. As a reader, that keeps me from caring about anyone involved in the story.

But back to the narrative and story flow, which did not entice me to move excitedly through the pages eager to help solve the mystery. Because there is no excitement. No suspense. And way too many chapters focusing on terrorizing scorpions.

The ending was so dull and anticlimactic it made me yawn and say, “Who cares?”

One star (and that’s being generous) for “The Forty-Year Grudge.” And zero interest in checking out the first installment.