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## *Left for Dead*, by J. A. Jance, Touchstone, 2012

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### Recommended Readings



#### *Left for Dead*

by J. A. Jance, Touchstone, 2012

Reviewed by Larry Riggs

I must revise what I said in my review of Jance's previous book: she is both a good writer and an excellent storyteller. Jance's smooth handling of the complications in the new Ali Reynolds novel synthesizes plotting and writing. The seemingly unrelated, but ultimately convergent, stories, each beginning with a character being left for dead, evoke the horrific, the ordinary, and the psychological spaces where the two meet. Characters familiar to Jance readers from earlier entries in the Ali Reynolds series meet at a hospital in Tucson, where Ali has gone to give support to the family of a police academy classmate who has been shot and left in the desert. At the hospital, she encounters Sister Anselm, a nun and patient advocate, who is watching over an unidentified young woman who has been raped, horribly beaten and, like the police officer, left for dead in the desert. This young woman turns out to be a missing teenager whose family has been agonizing over her disappearance for three years. The officer's distraught wife, who was involved in a brutal battle with her former mother-in-law for custody of her children by an earlier marriage, must have an emergency Caesarean section delivery. The officer and his wife have been set up to look like drug dealers, and the young woman is implicated in a murder. Again, this is a very complicated but expertly handled plot.

- Larry Riggs is Professor of French at Butler University.