

Book Review: Shaw Connolly Lives to Tell  
By Gillian French

Thanks to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press/Minotaur Books for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "Shaw Connolly Lives to Tell" has an expected publication date of June 17, 2025.

There's something a little off-putting about sitting down to read a mystery novel when the title has given away at least a portion of the ending. You know who's coming out on top in the climactic fight scene.

That's not to say that "Shaw Connolly Lives to Tell" wasn't an enjoyable and emotional read. But that heavy foreshadowing and a few chapters that seemed to drag a bit kept it from being a top-notch thriller.

Shaw Connolly, the oldest of three sisters, is a fingerprints analyst living in Maine. She lives with her father and her two sons, ages 15 and 10. The disappearance of the middle sister, Thea, sixteen years ago, is a tragedy Shaw carries with her night and day. Her obsession with "knowing" what happened to Thea has driven away her husband Ryan, and created friction with her youngest sister, Madison. And that obsession prompts her to continue taking phone calls from Anders Jansen, a man who all but claims responsibility for Thea's disappearance.

Anders taunts Shaw, seemingly knowing every aspect of her personal life, and eventually begins stalking her. Despite taking out a restraining order, Shaw can't stop taking the bait. And her preoccupation begins to impact her work, leading to a temporary furlough.

The story flows smoothly, though a bit slow in spots. A series of seemingly related arsons helps build a suspenseful pace. It's clear there's a relationship between the fires and Anders' escalating taunts; Shaw just needs to put the pieces of the puzzle together and begins to come unraveled when nothing seems to fit. Anders is in her head.

The tension, however, loses just a bit of steam since (as mentioned earlier) the book title gives away a good portion of the ending. It's still a dramatic, intense encounter. But when you know the outcome in advance, some of the punch has been lost. And the dialogue at times is a bit clunky.

There are some good sections of backstory to help understand Shaw and her relationship with her two sisters. A bit more history on Shaw and her husband Ryan would be helpful, as the latter becomes an almost invisible part of the story.

Overall, it's a good read that would be made much better with a different title. But that's just my take on it.

Four out of five stars for "Shaw Connolly Lives to Tell."

And check out all of my reviews at my Raised on Reading ([www.raisedonreading.com](http://www.raisedonreading.com)) book blog.