

Beverly Hills Dead



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In this tepid sequel to 2004's *The Prince of Beverly Hills*, bestseller Woods revisits the late 1940s but fails to realistically evoke the era of the HUAC hearings, Hollywood blacklists and the waning days of big studios and the star system. Demoted L.A. detective Rick Barron recently quit the force to head security for Centurion Studios and has now morphed into the studio's head of production. Using this new power at the studio, Rick is in charge of selecting leading actors and scouting settings for a gritty western written by famous playwright Sidney Brooks. Centurion is a worthy stand-in for the typical studio of the era, but the Hollywood blacklist story and the untimely disappearance of one of the stars is familiar territory, and Woods doesn't break any new ground. Longtime fans of Woods's *Stone Barrington* series are sure to enjoy certain aspects of the story, but newcomers are likely to be disappointed. (Jan.)

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BEVERLY HILLS DEAD is an interesting, though oddly paced, novel about Hollywood in the early days of the Blacklist. Rick Barron, head of production at Centurion Studios, is the kind of noble guy who was very rare in those terrible times when careers were

destroyed by even the suspicion of Communist ties. Tony Roberts once again performs Woods's work with a voice that sounds like it was meant for the 1940s. Roberts's hero sounds like a man who always knows what he's doing, and is always right. Though the death the title refers to comes late in the novel, the story is interesting and tailor-made for audio. M.S. © AudioFile 2008, Portland, Maine-- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

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