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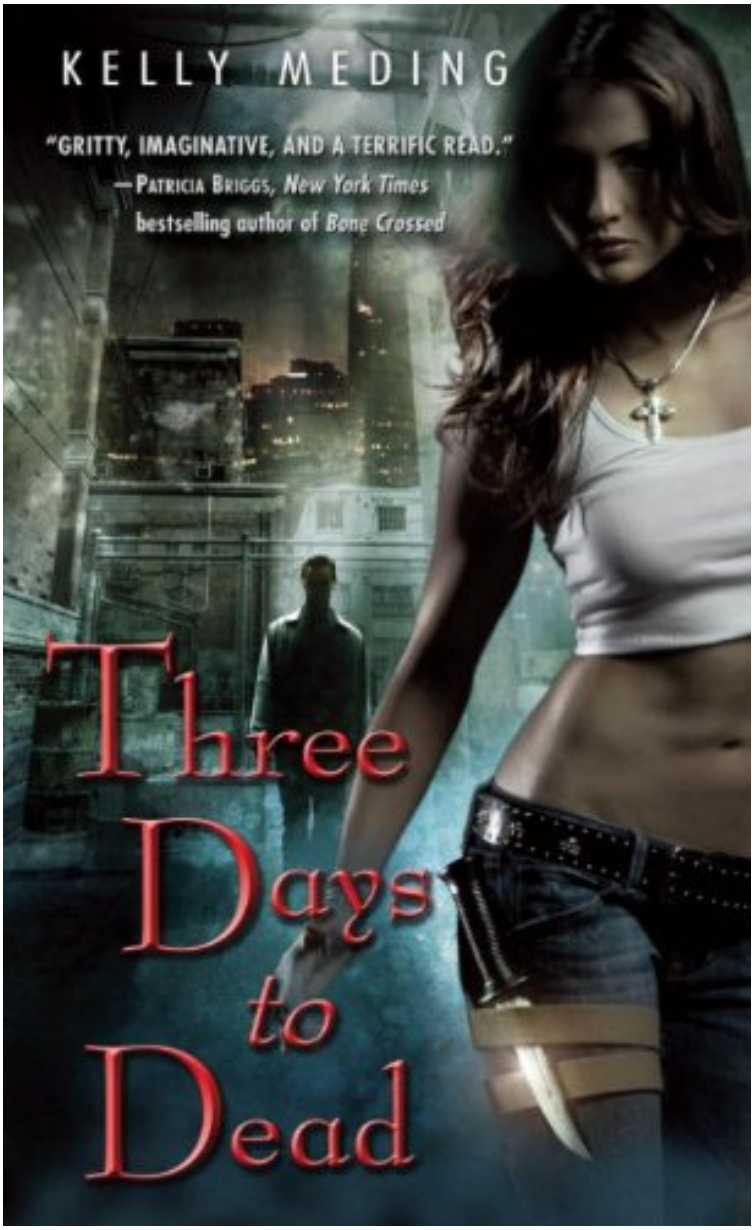
# Three Days to Dead

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**Par Kelly Meding : Three Days to Dead** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Three Days to Dead:

**Description :**

Prsentation de l'diteurTheyll never see her coming. . . .When Evangeline Stone wakes up naked and bruised on a cold slab at the morguein a strangers body, with no memory of who she is and how she got thereher troubles are only just beginning. Before that night she and the two other members of her Triad were the citys star bounty hunters, mercilessly cleansing the city of the murderous creatures living in the shadows, from vampires to shape-shifters to trolls. Then something terrible happened that not only cost all three of them their lives but also convinced the citys other Hunters that Evy was a traitorand she cant even remember what

it was.Now shes a fugitive, piecing together her memory, trying to deal some serious justiceand discovering that she has only three days to solve her own murder before the reincarnation spell wears off. Because in three days Evy will die againbut this time theres no second chance. . . .From the Paperback edition.ExtraitChapter One71:59I don't recall the first time I died, but I do remember the second time I was born. Vividly. Waking up on a cold morgue table surrounded by surgical instruments and autopsy paraphernalia, to the tune of the medical examiner's high-pitched shrieks of fright, is an unforgettable experience.I vaulted off the table, my mind prepared to execute a move that my chilled body hadn't quite caught up to, and promptly lost my balance. My knees didn't bend; my ankles stayed stiff. I landed on my bare hip, earning another shock of cold and something quite new: pain. Sharp and biting, it lanced up my hip and down my thigh, orienting me to two facts: I was on the floor and I was completely naked.Something metal clanged to the floor, rubber squeaked on faded tile, and the screams receded. Far away, a door slammed. The soft hum of machinery mingled with the hiss of my ragged breathing. Fluorescent light glared down from gray overhead fixtures. I smelled something sharp, bitter, and completely foreign.My bruised hip protested as I sat up. The room tilted. A sheet dangled from the edge of the table I'd fallen from. I wrapped the thin, papery material around my shoulders. It did little to cut the chill.Coroner's table. Naked. Scalpel on the floor. What the holy friggin' hell?I searched my addled memory, hoping for an explanation as to why I was bare-ass naked on a morgue floor.Nothing. Zilch. Awareness wrapped in cotton batting. No cinematic instant recall for me.My chest seized and I began to cougha wet rasp from deep inside my lungs. I spat out a wad of phlegm and continued coughing until I thought my chest would turn inside out. When the spasms ceased, I grabbed the side of the table and pulled. My feet responded. Knees bent. I managed to stand up, using the surgical table as a crutch, and found myself staring down at its shiny surface.And a stranger's face.A curtain of long, wavy brown hair framed a curved chin and high cheekbones. Not mine. A smattering of freckles dotted the bridge of her nose. Definitely not mine. I touched my cheek, and the stranger touched hers. All wrong. I was pale, with blond hair, blue eyes, and no freckles. And younger. The dark-haired woman with track marks inside her left elbow and an open, but healing, gash down the inside of her forearm was not Evangeline Stone. She was someone else.Another sharp tremor raced down my spine, creating gooseflesh across my back and shoulders. Wyatt. I was on my way to see Wyatt Truman. We'd agreed to meet at our usual spot by the train yards. I arrived. Waited. And then what?Something bad, apparently.I gazed around the small autopsy room with its plain gray walls and yellow tiled floors. Two identical beds lay on either side of a floor drain. An instrument tray lay upended on the floor. A wall of doors, roughly three-foot-by-four each, had to be where they kept the bodies. How long had I been in there?Why had I been in there?Wyatt would know. He had to know. He knew everything. He was my Handler; that was his job.Did he know where I was? Or who I was, for that matter?Opposite the refrigeration unit was a desk and beyond that a door marked PRIVATE. I stumbled toward it, clutching the sheet around my shoulders, still having some trouble with my extremities.I limped into a small bathroom containing a sink, two stalls, and a bank of four gray lockers. I tried each one. The last opened with a sharp squeal, and the eye-watering stink of old tennis shoes wafted out. My stomach churned. Inside I found a pair of navy sweatpants in XXL and an oversized white T-shirt. Nothing else useful.I dropped the sheet and tugged the shirt on, not surprised that it swam all over my thin frame. I was a few inches taller than I'd been. Bigger breasts, rounder hipsless the blond waif, and more the curvy woman. Definitely an upgrade. I rolled up the extra material and knotted it around my torso. The sweatpants went on next, and even with a drawstring, they were ridiculously huge.It didn't matter. The clothes just needed to get me out of there. I blotted my hair in the sheet, removing some of the excess moisture now that it was starting to thaw. The pants slipped, and I hiked them back up. A red hole peeked through the top of my belly button, hinting at a vanished piercing.Voices bounced through the other room. I tiptoed to the door and pulled it open just far enough to peek outside. The technician was back, waving her hands wildly. Short, red hair bobbed around her shoulders each time she turned her head. Her companion was an older man, white-haired and wrinkled, dressed in surgical scrubs. He picked up the chart hanging from the end of the bed I'd previously occupied and skimmed the contents."Dead bodies don't just come back to life, Pat," the man said."I know that, Dr. Thomas, but she was dead. I was here when she was brought in early this morning. I pulled out the drawer when her roommate came to identify her."Roommate? My roommates were gone. I didn't even have a couch to crash on anymore, now that the Owlkins were dead and their apartment building razed."She was still dead when Joe put her on the table for me," Pat continued, "but then I got a phone call. When I got back and pulled the sheet, she was pinking up. I swear, I thought I was seeing things, but then she sat up.""I see," Dr. Thomas said, in a tone that clearly indicated he didn't

believe her. "The physical examination showed that she died of acute blood loss. How do you think a dead body without blood sat up and walked out of the room?"Pat gaped at him, her mouth opening and closing, but producing no response."The last thing we need," Dr. Thomas said, "is a lawsuit from that girl's family, because we misplaced the body. So I suggest you stop acting hysterical and find her, or you'll be looking for another job."Dr. Thomas spun on his heel and stalked through a pair of swinging doors, leaving Pat behind. She stared at the settling doors, hands limp by her sides."I'm not crazy, you son of a bitch," she said in a small voice. Not much of a fighter, that one. Then her entire body went rigid. Slowly, she turned in a small circle, eyeing the room. Her head snapped toward the far corner, as though she'd heard a noise. I held my breath and waited."Hello?" she said. "Chalice? Chalice Frost? Are you there?"Chalice Frost? I could only imagine the sort of teasing she'd endured as a child. Probably why she (I?) had turned to drugs. Not that I possessed any memory of such a thing; I only had the track marks on my arm as proof. The gash, too, and the longer I stared at it, the more convinced I became that the exposed flesh had knitted, drawing the skin closer together. Healing."Get it together, Pat. It's your blood sugar, that's all. It's off, so you're seeing things."It was just too painful. I stepped into the autopsy room, still clutching the front of my borrowed sweatpants in an ongoing attempt to protect my modesty. The door shut with a solid thump. Pat jumped and spun around. Her mouth fell open, eyes widening to impossible proportions."If it helps," I said, the voice strange to my ears, "you aren't really crazy."She adopted an unhealthy pallor, then fainted dead away. Her head bounced off the tiled floor with a sickening crack. I winced. She lay still, her chest slowly rising and falling."So much for not scaring anyone," I muttered. Chalice's voice was deeper than mine. It felt powerful, like I could scream to wake the dead. No pun intended.I crouched next to Pat and checked her head, but found no gushing wound. Just a small lump. It's not every day that someone sees a reanimated corpse. Likewise, it's not every day a person becomes a reanimated corpse. My day was decidedly much worse, so I did the first sensible thing that came to mind. I stole her tennis shoes.No way was I walking hell knew how far in my bare feet. The white canvas shoes fit snugly, unlike my clothes, and helped provide a bit of warmth for my ice-cube toes. I padded over to the medical examiner's desk. A cardboard box labeled "Effects" sat on the blotter, surrounded by untidy files, scraps of paper, and other office sundries.Inside the box, I discovered a stack of manila envelopes, each one different in thickness and weight. I sifted until I found a slim one with "Chalice Frost" printed on the front. I tore it open and upended the contents onto the desk.Out fell a pair of sealed plastic bags. Inside one was a gold hoopthe missing belly ringand in the second a pair of silver cross earrings. No wallet or license. No scraps of information to tell me who this Chalice chick was, besides poorly named.I needed an address, or even a phone number. I'd broken into morgues in the past, usually to check mutilated bodies for signs of Dreg attack, so this wasn't an entirely unfamiliar environment. I plucked her chart from the foot of the exam table. Chalice Frost, aged twenty-seven. She lived in an apartment in Parkside East, one of the last "nice" neighborhoods in the city.The chart also listed a phone number. Pat said myherroommate identified Chalice's body. Was she at home? Would she pick me up if I called? Or would she freak out and faint like reliable old Pat?The one thing I really wanted was a cell phone. Pat had a phone on her desk, but as I reached for the receiver, I couldn't think of a single number to call. Not even Wyatt's number. I should have known his number. I had dialed it a thousand times. But no, the little space in my brain reserved for that string of digits was empty.This was bad.I tore a piece of paper from one of the M.E.'s files and scribbled down the address and phone number. With no pockets in my extra-baggy clothes, I stuck the paper in my borrowed shoes.A daily newspaper caught my eye. Ignoring the headlines about inflated gasoline prices, I checked the date. May twentieth."Twentieth," I said, trying it out. "May. Twentieth." Nope.It had to be a mistake. My brain was fuzzy and my memories hazy, but I knew that I set out to find Wyatt on May thirteenth. It was the day that the Owlkin Clan was attacked; the entire nest was destroyed because of me. Everything had changed two days before that, the night my partners and I were attacked by a pack of vampire half-breeds. My partners had died; I hadn't.The other Hunters had come after me, screaming for my head, and I'd run. I'd eventually gone to the Owlkinsa peaceful race of shape-shifting birds of prey. Then I'd been found and the Owlkins slaughtered. It hadn't made sense then, and it didn't make sense now. I'd given up and decided to turn myself in. To stop running. To stop getting others killed.Had I gotten myself killed in the process? Chalice died last night, but when did I, Evangeline Stone, die? What had happened to the last seven days? And why the hell was I back?Instinct told me that someone had screwed up. You didn't mess with a reincarnation spell without putting all of your ducks in a row, and while my new body was strong and young, it felt untrained. Unready for the physical, painful nature of my former job as a Dreg Bounty Hunter, and whatever task still lay ahead of me. Chalice Frost could not have been their first

choicewhoever "they" were. Someone should have been there to greet me when I woke. Instead, I was rooting through a dead woman's personal effects, scaring the shit out of hapless coroners, and hoping I could get away without being caught.Time to trek across town to Chalice's apartment for more cash and a change of clothes. Maybe I'd even remember Wyatt's phone number on the way. I just hoped that her roommate wasn't home. One freak-out per day was my limit.From the desk drawer, I rustled a key ring that held at least a dozen different keys, all attached to a glittery metal P. One of them had a black, plastic sleeve around the top, engraved with a familiar logo. Car key. Bingo."Who the hell are you?"The male voice echoed through the cramped room. I pivoted on one foot, dropping my shoulders and balling both fists. At least, that's what I did in my head. In reality, my gradually loosening limbs tangled, and I stumbled two steps forward, hands up like a drunk ninja.Dr. Thomas stood just inside the room, a file in one hand and an expression of confusion painting his age-lined face.No one had sneaked up on me in years. Not even a goblin, and they were built for stealth. I should have heard the squeak of the door hinge and ducked before he ever saw me. But I was listening with someone else's earsuntrained ears, without years of survival to make them sharp. Indecision froze menot a place I liked to be.Dr. Thomas shifted his confusion from me to Pat's sprawled body, his caterpillar eyebrows arching high on his small forehead. "Pat?" His attention reverted to me, widening both eyes. "What did you do to her?"His voice quavered. He didn't launch himself at me or attempt to help Pat, further hinting at the total wimp beneath the angry bluster. I considered whamming him with the truth, but didn't really want a stroke on my conscience."I didn't lay a hand on her," I said, which was very much true. The next part, not so much. "I got lost."He stared, not quite believing. His attention wandered, probably taking in my odd state of dress. He paused on my right hand. I looked down and groaned. The plastic I.D. bracelet still clung to my wrist, probably attached when the body was brought down to the morgue."Damn," I said, tugging at the reinforced band. It didn't give."That isn't possible," he said.I smiled. "What's not possible? A frozen dead girl coming back to life? Doc, if you only knew half of the things that happen in this city after dark, you'd run screaming for the sunny south and never look back."He continued to stare, all of the color slowly draining from his face. Better ask my questions before he did something crazy like scream for help or pass out."I don't suppose you know where Shelby Street is from here, do you? I'm a tad disoriented."He jacked the thumb of his right hand over his shouldera vague direction at bestand grunted something. I took fast advantage of his incredulity, and headed for the door. On second thought, I about-faced and snagged Pat's keys off the desk."Wait," Dr. Thomas said."Can't; sorry.""You were dead."His plaintive tone gave me pause. For someone so intimidating only five minutes ago, he looked like a lost child. It made me want to put him out of his misery."Do yourself a favor," I said, crossing the distance between us in three long strides. "Tell yourself someone broke in and stole the body. It'll make it easier to sleep at night."He blinked. I swung and caught him low in the jaw. The impact jarred my fist and shoulderChalice was definitely not a fighterbut Thomas went down like a stone. Two people unconscious in a matter of minutes was not a great start to the day.No time to ponder the consequences, though. I had a former Handler to find, no idea where to start looking in a city of half a million people, and if anyone else in Chalice Frost's life knew she was dead, I was in for a very eventful day.Revue de presseThree Days to Dead is one of the best books Ive read. Ever. Evy Stone is a heroines heroine, and I rooted for her from the moment I met her. Kelly Meding has written a phenomenal story, one thats fast-paced, gritty, and utterly addictive. Brava! More! More! More!Jackie Kessler, co-author of Black and White