



## Dead in the Garden

*Dahlia Donovan*

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**Dead in the Garden** Dahlia Donovan

A Romantic Cosy Mystery.

Join bestselling author Dahlia Donovan on a cosy mystery adventure in Grasmere Cottage Mystery book one. With love, wit, and a murder to solve, life for Valor and Bishan is about to get bloomin' complicated in this sweet gay romance.>

*Dead body in the garden? Check.*

*Mystery to solve? Check.*

*Police focused on the wrong person? Not good.*

All grown up and graduated, Valor Tarquin Scott, son to Earl and Countess Scott, owns The Ginger's Bread, a biscuit shop, in Grasmere in the Lake District. The love of his life, Bishan Tamboli, has turned his music studies into a successful career playing with the London Symphony Orchestra. It's a perfect life with their cat, spending evenings watching Poirot on the television.

The nightmare begins with one dead former schoolmate, leading police to believe Bishan is responsible.

Valor struggles to solve the cryptic puzzles left behind in a race to prove Bishan's innocence.

He can't help wondering how far the body count will rise before they manage to stop the killer.

## Dead in the Garden Details

Date : Published October 6th 2018 by Hot Tree Publishing

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Author : Dahlia Donovan

Format : Kindle Edition 128 pages

Genre : Mystery, Romance, M M Romance, Lgbt, Contemporary

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## From Reader Review Dead in the Garden for online ebook

### **Don Bradshaw says**

I got totally lost in this sweet murder mystery. I love the way the characters interacted with each other. Be warned though that the murder is carried over into book two so buy the series. You will not want to wait. No sex in the book which was fine as it was a character driven story with no need for fluff.

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### **Alissa says**

Will post a review after I have completed all three books.

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### **Daylin says**

Super cute! Normally I'm not a huge fan of mysteries but I couldn't put this down. I look forward to the next two

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### **Kristine (A Cozy Booknook) says**

This is a great start to this series. It's full of great, interesting, and diverse characters. I didn't want to the book down. There is a bit of a cliffhanger at the end of the book, I'm eager to read what happens next.

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### **?♥? Michaeelle ♥? says**

Never read a "Cozy Mystery" before...looks like a good one to cut my teeth on.

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### **books are love says**

This was short, sweet, endearing and entertaining. Dahlia Donovan does a great job in giving us a story that has you entertained and loving the characters while keeping you guessing as to what is going on and why. We have so many suspects and plots going on. And who would want to hurt Bish? That is the sweetest man. He is autistic but shows us that it doesn't have to be a hindrance. Bish is a great musician, a wonderful person and has found an amazing partner and love in Valor.

Valor is just as adorable as Bish. He is the one that loves a good mystery whereas Bish loves puzzles and just being with Vlaor and enjoying their life together. Valor's love for Bish knows no bounds and I love how in tune he is with Bish and his protective side for him. When a dead body is found in their garden Valor's nose for wanting to solve the mystery is up. Only now it is to help Bish and find out who wants to harm them and

why?

We see twists and turns and the past come to rear its head. Valor's family is a piece of work and so do not deserve his time and energy. Bish's family is fun and I love the banter between them all. The mystery of the dead man reveals a lot of the past, secrets that come forward and a ally in the least likely place. We also get a ending that has you need more of the story and these two wonderful characters.

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### **Lola says**

When I saw this book and found out it was a cozy mystery with a gay couple as main characters I immediately knew I had to read this one. I am pretty sure this is the first cozy mystery I heard of with a gay couple and the story sounded pretty interesting too. I would categorize it more as a cozy mystery first and a romance second as the romance doesn't get as much focus due to certain events.

Dead in the Garden is a pretty unique cozy mystery. The set-up doesn't follow the common pattern of a cozy mystery and I kinda liked the different approach. I had read a few reviews before I started this one so I already knew the murder wouldn't be solved in book 1 and I think this helped adjust my expectations. The pacing of the mystery makes a lot more sense if you know there are two more books before things get resolved.

There isn't a clear pool of suspects that you get to know early in the book like with most cozy mystery. In fact the main suspects you only meet toward the end and even then you don't get to know that much about them and the motive isn't clear. But as the mystery isn't resolved yet I find it hard to say much more about it at this point. The progressing was different from most cozy mysteries, which I liked, but it did take some time before we got some suspects and it doesn't quite feel clear who is doing this and why.

It made sense how Valor got involved in the murder, but at times it didn't feel like they were progressing much or that he was doing much. The biggest clues and changes actually were because of what the murderer did. Part of the puzzles he had friends help solve, which was nice to see he had help, although the puzzle wasn't as interesting as it got basically solved off screen and you couldn't solve it yourself. There wasn't as much snooping or talking with people, but more research and thinking about who would be behind this and piecing some clues together.

I thought it was a bit weird how they arrest someone without much evidence and continue to keep him for 3 weeks, I think it was, while the evidence keeps building and it seems clear he isn't the culprit. It also was just sad how this affected all the parties involved. There were also parts where things seemed to move a bit slow and it didn't fully keep my attention at times. For the most part it was a fun read tough.

I am not sure if I like how the story is broken up into three parts, as now you can try out the first part for cheap, but at the same time the story doesn't feel quite complete. And I am not sure if I am curious enough to buy the other two parts.

I liked the romance. It's an already established romance, which works here. Valor and Bishan seemed like a great couple and I liked how much Valor cared about Bishan and also worked with his autism well. We don't get Bishan's point of view, but he seemed to care about Valor a lot too, even tough he doesn't quite articulate it in the same way other do. I thought his autism was handled well from what I can tell. It also was a nice touch how Bishan was Indian and there are some mentions of his close knit family. And it's actually Valor's

family who don't like him being gay and now don't speak to him anymore. The focus isn't really on the romance tough, due to events in the book they aren't together as much, but even with them separated it was clear how much they cared about the other.

I liked Valor as a main character, although I would've liked to get a better feel of his personality. It was a bit hard to get a full idea of his personality. I did like how he had a bunch of people who helped him and supported him. There are a bunch of fun side characters, who come alive to varying degrees. I felt like some of the side characters could use a bit more depth as I had sometimes trouble remembering who was who at times.

To summarize: all in all this was a fun start to this cozy mystery series. I liked how it had a gay couple as I haven't seen many cozies with a gay couple before. The mystery and how it progresses doesn't fall in the traditional cozy mystery pattern, which I kinda liked for the most part. The story is split in 3 parts, do the mystery doesn't get resolved here. It also takes some time before we get some suspects, which we don't get to know too well and the motive is still unclear too. The story didn't fully grab me at times, but for the most part I had fun reading this one and I am curious how the mystery will progress. The romance was sweet and well done, but the couple is apart for most of the book, so there aren't as many scenes with them together. I did like them both and they seemed to care about each other. I would recommend this if you're looking for an unique cozy mystery.

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### **Jason Bradley says**

This cozy mystery was awesome! I love the characters! Just be sure to have the second one queued up when this one ends!

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### **Spunky N Sassy says**

Spunky N Sassy Rating: 4.0

~~~~~Lindsey's ???? Review~~~~~

This is the type of book that is easy to curl up with. I never knew what was going to happen next and I can't wait for book two.

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### **Kendra T says**

This was an enjoyable cozy mystery with two lovable characters. Valor and Bishan have been together for years, and are now being targeted as someone is framing Bish for murder. Bish has autism, so the struggles he faces as he is arrested causes disruption to his routine and is very concerning for Valor, who is Bish's #1 fan. Bish comes from an amazingly supportive family. Valor, on the other hand, has a horrible family unit. They get through the first book proving that Bish is innocent, but the killer is increasing his number of victims, and they all still seem to be related somehow to Valor and Bish.

This book ended up as a cliffhanger in that we don't find out who the killer is. Luckily, like I mentioned, we do see Bish released and found innocent, but there is still a lot unknown. Luckily the other 2 books in this

series have also been released and can be read back to back. I would recommend continuing onto Book 2 to see what comes next.

*I am voluntarily reviewing an ARC provided by LesCourt Author Services*

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### **Lisa says**

I liked this book. Its the first in a trilogy and really as I think books one and two end on a bit of a cliffhanger, you need all three books so you can binge read them.

Val and Bish live a quiet life in Grasmere when Bish is accused of murder.

Val turns into something of a Poirot. A great cast of secondary characters really bring this book to life.

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### **Joyfully Jay says**

*A Joyfully Jay review.*

#### **4.5 stars**

I feel compelled to mention that the Grasmere Trilogy feels less like three independent titles that string together one larger story arc and more like one story that's been haphazardly cut up into three chunks. Yes, Valor narrates book 1 (he has to, Bishan spends virtually all of that book in jail and is given only a few token appearances) and Bishan takes up narration for book 2, but all the drama in all three books is driven by the same murderer. Book 1, for example, lacks all closure. If I hadn't known in advance I had books 2 and 3, I likely would have given up on the series because I was so displeased with the lack of Bishan in book 1 and the complete non-progress on identifying anything about the murderer. Suffice to say, despite the shortcomings of book 1, all three books together as one unit make for a pretty satisfying read.

If you are looking for a super cozy murder mystery that doesn't skimp on the murder or high drama (car crashes, homophobic relatives, police stings, explosions, kidnappings, death-by-cinnamon) then I'm sure you'll love this book.

**[Read Camille's review of the trilogy in its entirety here.](#)**

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### **A.BookNerd.Bookseller&Bibliophile.Blog says**

This cozy little mystery was exactly what I needed. I was in a reading slump and this picked me right back out of it.

I absolutely love Valor and Bishan. They are such a cute couple! I love that they met at boarding school and found themselves in a long-term relationship. I also love that Bishan is a functioning adult with autism. It

shows a different side to the spectrum that is not portrayed very often. All of this mixed together with family complications and amazing friends creates a cozy plot line.

Add in a little "Who Done It?" mystery and this book turns into a complete page-turner! I couldn't put this down once I started it. It sucked me in and had me guessing at every new development.

This is my first book by Ms. Donovan and I cannot wait to start the next!

Reviewed by: Brianne M.

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### **Nerdy Dirty & Flirty says**

An interesting mystery with a great cast of characters. I'm enjoying the beginning of this series. Valor and his friends are wonderful and I'm loving the relationship between him and Bishan.

Donovan is setting the stage, dropping some clues and getting us invested in the outcome. The more we read, the more serious this mystery becomes. It is clear Valor and Bishan are smack dab in the middle of things and I'm eager to see how everything will play out.

I read cozy mysteries quite often but this one was a bit different for me. I've never read one where the mystery isn't solved. Usually they solve the mystery and go on to another story featuring the same main character having to solve another crime but this was a full on cliffhanger. With it being only 128 pages, I think that Donovan could have combined the books into one rather than splitting it up like this but it definitely amps up my excitement for the next book! I am dying to know who is behind all of this. I'm ready to dive into Dead in the Pond.

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### **Heather Martin says**

\*\*Copy provided to Bayou Book Junkie from Give Me Books Promotions for my reading pleasure in hopes of an unbiased opinion, a review was not a requirement.\*\*

Dead in the Garden is the first book in a trilogy by Dahlia Donovan. All three books are connected and continue the same story and mystery so I'd recommend that if you're going to read this you have the other two books already. This book and book 2 both end with a cliffhanger, so you've been forewarned. I am one of those people who hate cliffhangers, and this series did not make me feel any differently about them. The murder mystery spread among the three books so you won't find out until book 3 who is responsible and the reason for that.

This is the first I've read from this author and I thought the writing was really well-done. I especially love cozy mysteries and I thought this series fit well within that genre. The author has built a world full of interesting people. Valor and Bishan were easily likable characters full of personality. These two characters have a history together and you felt that in the reading of the story. There are a lot of characters in this story, with unusual names to me, so I at times struggled keeping characters straight. This was something I struggled with through the series, especially with the addition of so many students from their school days.

The mystery was written really well and I doubt anyone would figure out who the murderer is before the author wants you to figure it out. Something I didn't expect was Bishan being autistic and how well written his and Valor's life is together. Valor adjusts situations for Bishan all the time with little thought, it's just natural. Seeing their relationship and the strengths of both men was a sweet and nice addition to this cozy mystery. This is definitely a book I would recommend, but again, make sure you have the other two books at the ready!

Rating: 4 stars!!

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