



Dare to Die

Carolyn G. Hart

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She came in the rain. Alone. On a bicycle.

Annie and Max Darling are completely unprepared when the arrival of a mysterious young woman shocks their sea island and stirs up more than just gossip. It turns out that Iris, the beautiful stranger, is a former resident of Broward's Rock. Her arrival throws the normally happy town into a downward spiral that pits neighbor against neighbor. Things take a turn for the worse when Annie befriends Iris and invites her to attend the Darlings' party at the pavilion where Death is the uninvited guest. Suddenly, Max and Annie find themselves in the middle of a fight they don't understand and at the mercy of an unknown assailant who's trying to kill them—and all they know is that it is one of their friends.

Dare to Die Details

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From Reader Review Dare to Die for online ebook

Annette says

It had been awhile since I read a Death on Demand mystery. For some reason, the last one I read simply did not hold my interest. But, because I enjoyed the books in the past, I decided to give the series another chance, and I am glad I did. This is a rather sad story of long held secrets and the past deaths of teenagers. A young woman comes back to the island where tragedy happened when she was young. Iris wants to make things right and confirm what she thinks she knows of the deaths that happened when she was in high school. And of course more death occurs, because someone does not want the past brought forward, and they certainly do not want to be confronted on the possibility of murder. It is a good book. Carolyn Hart is a talented writer and this book held my interest. I would suggest that anyone who likes a mystery will enjoy the book.

Rebecca says

"Dare to Die" is one of a series of novels featuring mystery book store owner, Annie Darling and her husband, Max. I read one of these years ago and only vaguely remember it. Basically it's about the perfect couple who have sex every morning living on an idyllic island where the people are salt of the earth -- and murderers run amok every 6 months or so to give Annie something to investigate. There's a cast of characters (trust me, the people in these novels have no resemblance to actual people) who dress in caftans, do competitive yoga, have deep personal relationships with their cats. They wander through the pages occasionally to give the book some 'color'.

There's supposedly a smart sheriff on the island, Billy, who warns Annie and Max to 'stay out of it' every time there's a murder and then ignores them as they go around contaminating evidence and tampering with witnesses.

Hart spent so much time focusing on what people are eating I began to wonder if she was on a diet while writing this book. The mystery here isn't much-- I spotted the killer on page 50.

Was it irredeemably horrible? No, but it wasn't very good either.

Dorothy says

I did manage to finish this book but it did not appeal to me. As one other reviewer mentioned, the characters seemed like caricatures and the plot did not interest me.

Becky says

I was desperate for a book to listen to on my commute. The only reason I finished it was because I'd already invested 6 hrs of time in it. I really didn't care who

killed who by the end.

Noa Yehudayan says

"Dare to Die" by Carolyn G. Hart, was a very deep and dark book. As I read the first couple of chapters from this book, it started to get very interesting, but later on I started to feel bored as the context that the author has written was very repetitive. The reason why I first chose this book was because I wanted to read a mystery genre. This particular story talks about the love life between Max and Annie Darling and a new girl named Iris introduced as a former resident on the same island Max and Annie live in. Throughout the book, Max and Annie feel a very bad vibe creeping up on them as they are being chased and tracked down by one of their friends who we later figure out is a killer. The more people that Max and Annie are close to start to die, the more scared they become as it all comes down to just the two of them. The climax gets pretty intense, but the storyline feels very flat in between the lines. I wish Hart could build up the climax to its full potential instead of dropping the storyline from time to time. I felt like I was reading up and down each sentence and there wasn't much I was getting from it.

Ellie says

Dare to Die is another installment in Carolyn Hart's Death on Demand series about Annie and Max Darling, a happily married couple living in an idyllic island where Annie runs the perfect fantasy for those of us who love reading-and cozies: a bookstore specializing in mysteries. Of course, as fate (and the author) would have it, death often shows up at her door and Annie must do more than sell mysteries: she has to solve them as well.

In Dare to Die, Iris, a former island resident who left after high school, returns to confront her troubled past. In the process, Max and Annie discover that one of their friends is not only not a friend but in fact a killer. As people die around them, they come frighteningly close to facing their own death as well. Annie has no choice: she either has to discover the killer's identity or become a casualty herself.

The characters in the Death on Demand series are likable, even Annie's vaguely annoying but beautiful mother-in-law. The location is a dream and, except for the small issue of a killer always lurking somewhere in the sunshine waters, the place is one I would willingly live in full-time.

Dare to Die is another excellent contribution to this comforting and comfortable series. I recommend it strongly to those who like cozies in general, this series in particular, friends and family, bookstores, islands or, best of all, all of the above!

Val says

A Death on Demand mystery. Stranger turns up in a storm on a bike. Turns out to be a former resident of the island and has come back to clear up a mystery. Unfortunately, friends who were involved in the 20 yr mystery now seem to be under threat.

Kat Lebo says

Dare to Die
by Carolyn Hart

I believe Dare to Die is the 19th book in Carolyn Hart's Death On Demand series. I've read all 19, plus I have 4 unread books in the series. This was, for quite a while, my favorite series to follow. Somewhere along the way I lost my passion for it (I believe in Dead Days of Summer -- just didn't like that one), and although I kept purchasing books, I wasn't reading them. As new books that I haven't purchased are coming out, I finally decided that I needed to get back to this series that I once loved so much.

I'm glad I made that decision. Max and Annie Darling are an interesting opposites attract couple, the Death on Demand bookstore a place any mystery reader would love to hang out, Broward's Rock is one of those fictional places I'd love to visit, Parotti's a place I'd love to eat, and Max and Annie's friends are interesting and often surprising. And Annie is a cat lover. What more could I ask?

Carolyn Hart does a great job of drawing visual pictures in the reader's mind. Her writing draws you in and makes you feel a part of the action, whether that action is heart-pumping danger or languid island days. Sometimes it feels like poetry more than prose. For instance, on page 85:

"The late watches of the night often spawned formless fears, phantasms that danced at the edge of consciousness, darting from the dark places of the soul, leaving corrosive trails."

I much enjoy the relationships of the Darlings with those surrounding them. The regulars: Sheriff Billy Cameron, Henny Brawly, Emma Clyde, Laurel Darling, the two Darling cats, Agatha and Dorothy L -- and all the rest flesh out the story, each filling needed roles in Hart's well plotted mysteries.

In this episode, a long ago tragedy will come back to haunt Broward's Rock, putting 5 of the Darling's friends in the spotlight. One person returns to the island, determined to get to the bottom of what happened all those years ago. When Emma is attacked while snooping in the newcomer's room, and then the girl herself is murdered at the Darlings party, Max and Annie are neck-deep in the mystery, using all their skills, and the skills of those around them to solve the mystery. Their efforts eventually win out, but not before another Broward's Rock resident dies and the Darlings themselves are placed in mortal danger. Even solving this who-dun-it doesn't stop tragic death from dogging the footsteps of those involved in this years-old mystery.

There's not much about Hart's writing I don't like. She liberally sprinkles clues throughout the storyline, expertly directing the reader's attention first to one suspect, then to another, and when all is said and done, you think "I should've known that!" Makes for fun, page-turning reading. Her editing and proofreading is excellent. I found only one place that make me stop and look something up because I thought there was an error, but it turned out that the two words, while and wile, are probably interchangeable in this instance (page 268):

"Annie wished they could while the day away, walk out onto the sand, plunge into the surf, come up feeling fresh and fine and free."

See: <http://authorsally.wordpress.com/2010...>)

So, I'm back -- or more precisely, this series is back at the top of my reading list. I'm looking forward to catching up over the next few months.

Ann says

After some intense reading the last couple of months, I needed a break. Carolyn Hart's charming Annie & Max Darling series (Death on Demand #19) was the perfect choice. Annie owns a mystery bookstore in Broward's Rock, South Carolina. What could be a more perfect setting for a cozy?

What's fun about Hart's books is that she name drops mystery writers and book titles throughout so you'll have an unending list of books to read!

Kate says

I love the Death on Demand series, and while I liked this book I didn't feel like it was up to Ms. Hart's usual standards. I found all of the suspects, their histories and their relationships with one another to be confusing, and I was constantly flipping back to the beginning of the book with questions like, "wait, is Fran married to Buck or Russel? Is she the one who did XYZ or was that Cara?" It was distracting and by the end I didn't have any real feelings about the revelation of who the murderer was- just because I couldn't remember enough about each suspect to even hazard a guess. I haven't felt this way with other books in this series so that aspect was a bit disappointing. I think it was because all of the suspects were very similar, and so nothing really stood out about any of them to make them different. I think if I had read the book with a little cheat sheet of who's who in front of me at all times, I might have enjoyed it more.

Amy says

Light little mystery; nothing earth shattering, though one did need a score card to remember all the characters and who was with whom now, as well as 10 years ago in the back story. It would be nice if Carolyn Hart actually knew the lowcountry where she sets this series, but she doesn't, as often comes out in the books. It makes me fear a little bit for our economy here, because with so many deaths on one island off the coast of South Carolina, what's it gonna do for our tourist trade? I guess people will just go, instead, to that little English village where Miss Marple lived.

Linda says

I've been a long-time fan of this series but this one just didn't live up to the usual standard, in my opinion. I

really wanted to like the story but found it slow moving and repetitive. While I already knew the main characters, the new characters (victims and suspects alike) were not well developed and by the end of the book I felt they were still just names. I hope the next volume in the series is better.

Rebecca says

I've always liked this series, though I get daunted by Hart's vast knowledge of the mystery genre! Most of the books she mentions I haven't even heard of. What I love about these books are the characters and the sense of place, and this one is no exception. Classic Hart. My one quibble would be that I think Annie, the main character, has a rather frumpy wardrobe for a 28 year old! Hart loves to describe what each character is wearing, and while I actually appreciate that, I do think Annie dresses like her own grandmother. She needs some low-rise jeans and tank tops. I'm sure Max would appreciate it. :-)

On another note, I just re-read this book (it's two years after I wrote the review above), and totally did not remember that I'd read it before! I guess I've read so many of them that anything that felt familiar I put down to familiarity with the setting and characters. But seriously, that's sad. :-)

Ellen Listens 24/7 Eberhardt says

Rough start, I had thought I missed downloading a section, and with this series that is usually not the case. Once into it, the storyline was fresh. Gave more insight on main characters backgrounds and could have been a good standalone even if not for that clunky start!

Michele says

Carolyn Hart is one of my favorites. No secret about that. She manages to write about the same main characters and keep them fresh. The secondary characters that are new to each story are described so well, you get to know them right off. The other characters that are necessary to the plot but not main characters are always true to form, not branching off into weird directions to make the plot work. She makes the plot work for the characters. There is always a real, personal reason for the actions of each victim and murderer. You can identify with their flaws because if you don't have that very same flaw, you know someone who does.
