



## Dead, White, and Blue

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Summer is a hectic time of the year for Annie Darling. Sun and scorching temperatures never fail to bring swarms of tourists to her mystery bookstore, *Death on Demand*, for the latest beach reads. But Annie still finds time to enjoy herself. The Broward's Rock Fourth of July dance is just around the corner, and the island is buzzing with excitement—Shell Hurst included...

Shell is the kind of woman wives hate—for good reason—and most of them wish she would just disappear. But when she does, and a teenage girl is the only one who seems to notice, Annie can't help but feel like someone should be looking for her. Last seen walking into the pine trees at the Fourth of July fireworks display, Shell has seemingly vanished without a trace.

The residents of Broward's Rock grow uneasy when a second islander mysteriously disappears. Annie and her husband, Max, know something dangerous is brewing. They soon find themselves following a twisted trail marked by blackmail, betrayal, and adultery, winding from the corridors of the island's lovely inn to a pier lashed by pelting rain, to a gathering on the terrace of a country club where a trap is set for a calculating killer...

## **Dead, White, and Blue Details**

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Author : Carolyn G. Hart

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## From Reader Review Dead, White, and Blue for online ebook

### OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/de...>

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Laurie

Carolyn Hart does an excellent job of writing a mystery lover's mystery. Any mystery reader would love to have the cozy and caffeinated Death on Demand bookstore in their neighborhood. The daily management of the store is a significant part of the book, and there are numerous details to keep the regular mystery reader entertained. Annie regularly mentions the books that she recommends and stocks by title and author. Readers can follow along and see if they agree with her recommendations. The bookstore posts watercolor paintings of scenes from mystery books for the patrons to guess. This creates no small amount of competition among the patrons, and the reader gets a good enough description that she can guess too. Sadly, I was not successful in my guesses, but it was fun to see what the images referenced. Hart is also unafraid to poke fun at some of the more aggravating tropes in her genre. Emma Clyde, local mystery author and thoroughly obnoxious human being, thinks very highly of her own artistic merits, and writes books in which the protagonist disdains the local police. Watching Emma squabble with her closest rival Henny Brawley is most entertaining.

Beyond the bookstore Hart is skilled at evoking atmosphere. Every time someone took a sip of coffee or walked outside after a rainstorm I could feel the sensory experiences, more so than I find in other books. Set in the South Carolina Sea Islands, the weather is a constant presence, It's almost a character in and of itself. Hart makes the reader feel the oppressiveness of the heat and the tropical atmosphere created by the rainstorms.

As for the particulars of the mystery of Shell Hurst, it is a classic case of victim as persona non grata. No one likes Shell. She's the sort of woman other women hate: beautiful, nasty, and seduces men for sport. As with a mystery wherein no one likes the victim, the pool of potential perpetrators is deep. This book has many, many characters. At some points it is difficult to keep all of the characters straight. Hart is using many elements of the classic Agatha Christie model, and I would have appreciated a Christie-style cast of characters at the beginning. Annie and Max persist in asking questions, and the culmination of their investigation reads like a Poirot novel. I enjoyed this book, and look forward to the next.

\*OBS would like to thank the publisher for supplying a print copy of this title in exchange for an honest review. This review is part of an author blog tour that we are honored to be involved in\*

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### Linda says

I have not read any of this series of 'cozy' mysteries, but wanted to include some authors outside of my comfort zone, so grabbed several. This reminds me of some of the books I used to read, where everyone in town, except for the local sheriff, were suspect, and sometimes even he or she was included. This plot centers around Annie and Max Darling. Annie owns the local bookstore, Death on Demand, and this book namedrops often. Lists of authors, books, and both appear in the narrative. During the Fourth of July celebration, one of the locals disappears. She had many ties in town and had threatened to make an announcement at the festivities concerning one or more of the community members. Several had reason to stop this from happening. When a son of her ex is accused of murder after the body is found in a pond, the

Darlings begin full force in trying to find the truth. When a witness dies, no one is safe from suspicion. Pulling the witnesses, statements, film and still photos together, they finally solve the case. Problem is, the victim is not at all likable and much of the action and especially the ending is kind of ho hum.

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### **Alise HARRIS says**

I used to like the Darling books more than the latest ones I've read. They recap everything that happened on the night of the murder about a hundred times. Then they read the newspaper articles to you, so it's recapped again. I was so bored by the end of this! Then the cops and darlings find out who the killer is on page 262, but it isn't revealed until page 290. Ugh. If I had to sum this book up in one sentence, it would be "Get to the point!"

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### **Shirley Schwartz says**

Great Book. Thanks Carolyn.

This is another excellent effort by the Queen of Cozy, Ms. Carolyn Hart. I have been reading the Max and Annie Darling Books for some time now, and I love each and every one of them. This book is another winner. The setting is of course Broward's Rock in South Carolina. The book is set in a steaming hot July on this little island paradise. This is beach reading at its best. Annie and Max are trying to find out what happened to a young woman who disappeared during the fireworks display on July 4. No one seems to think that anything bad has happened to her, but Annie and Max know that she just didn't disappear off the island without a trace. There is no shortage of suspects, as this young woman has not made many friends in Broward's Rock. She has not been above going after any man she fancies and could care less if he's married or not. And Annie and Max are nothing if not entertaining. I love reading about their lives and their friends with each book that comes out. It's like reading about old friends, and that's what cozies are supposed to be about. Can't wait for the next one.

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### **Hope says**

It's been years since I read a "Death on Demand" book--I feel like I started reading these in middle school in the 90s and loved them, though it may have been a little later--because I thought the last ones I picked up, like "White Elephant Dead" had lost some of the series' early energy. But "Dead, White, and Blue" feels like a return to classic form, albeit updated with iPhones and Skype (while the characters haven't aged, Hart has given them today's technology; I felt terrifically old when another character's birthdate was given as 1989).

This installment centers on a missing woman, the much-younger second wife of a rich islander, who disappears after making threats to several people at a country club dance. Did she vanish on her own? Or was she murdered by one of the people she threatened? Many seem happy to assume that she's run off with someone. The only person who seems to care is the missing woman's stepdaughter, who asks Max to look into her disappearance. While Annie and Max investigate, Max's eccentric mother, Laurel, goes on a cruise with local novelist Emma Clyde and Annie's favorite customer, Henny Brawley. From afar, the three women text and email Annie and Max with one simple question: "Where is the body?"

The central mystery is compelling, the supporting characters are amusing (Laurel Darling is always fun), and Annie and Max are as charming as ever. I'd forgotten Hart's cool habit of having Annie mention mysteries for sale in her bookstore, as well as the monthly contest to identify painted scenes from several novels, which inspired me to bookmark several mysteries for my to-read list.

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### **Sharon says**

I've read all the Max and Annie Darling books. This one isn't up there as one of my favorites. Part of the problem was the victim. Nobody really cared that she went missing except her stepdaughter who hires Max to find her. The character of Shell was never fleshed out enough that I didn't especially care she went missing. I did enjoy visiting Annie and Max and would love to hang out with Henny, Laurel, and Emma-I think they are a hoot. I also enjoy visiting the Death on Demand bookstore and usually end up with a few new titles to add to my to be read list. I figured out the killer early on but not the why. I thought the denouement was a tad over the top. I also was disappointed that the character erroneously arrested was going to be excused for their culpability in what happened to Shell. Ms. Hart still is one of the best cozy mystery writers on a par with Susan Wittig Albert and Rhys Bowen and while this wasn't her best in my opinion, I am looking forward to the next one.

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### **Anne says**

I have read every one of the books in this series. I enjoy Annie and Max. This one was hard to get through. I hope the next one is better.

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### **\* Jennifer says**

Not the best one out of the series, but still a very beautifully written murder mystery. I'm with Annie and Max until the wheels fall off.

Full review: <http://jenn.booklikes.com/post/896234...>

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### **Lesya says**

Just knowing that Dead, White, and Blue is Carolyn Hart's fiftieth book is cause enough for celebration. However, the fireworks in the latest book launch another mystery in the Death on Demand series featuring Annie and Max Darling. Hart throws her own party in the book, and naturally it ends in murder.

Summer in Broward's Rock, South Carolina means a busy time for Annie Darling at her mystery bookstore, Death on Demand. But, she takes time to celebrate the fourth with her sexy husband, Max. As members of the country club, they enjoy the dance and fireworks. They may be lost in their own romantic world, but even they can see that some of the members are not happy with Shell Hurst. And, no one missed the woman who taunted club members, and then walked away into the night on the 4th. It took a teenage girl to come to Max, report her missing, and swear Shell would have answered her cell phone.

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Max isn't easily convinced Shell Hurst didn't just leave on some billionaire's yacht. But, Annie starts to have doubts, and the two are soon questioning the people who might have had uncomfortable dealings with Shell that night. And, there's additional pressure when a mystery writer, a reader, and Max' mother all start texting them, "WTB." "Where's the body?"

Fans of traditional mysteries will relish *Dead, White, and Blue*. First, there's the pleasure of the bookstore, *Death on Demand*, with all the mysteries and authors mentioned by name. Then, there's the slow collection of clues as Max and Annie gather together threads to piece together the correct answer. And it ends perfectly for mystery junkies, with the revealing of the murderer back at the country club, surrounded by a cast of neighbors, friends, and suspects. *Dead, White, and Blue* is the perfect fiftieth book by a master of mysteries. It doesn't matter if you haven't read previous *Death on Demand* books. If you love mysteries, you'll want to add this latest Carolyn Hart treat to a collection of satisfying mysteries in which justice prevails.

Carolyn Hart's website is [www.carolynhart.com](http://www.carolynhart.com)

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### **Linda says**

I love Annie and Max and I'm sad that I'm getting close to the end of the series. This one kept me guessing right up until the end. I also love how she mentions all sorts of other mystery authors and their books and series, love it when it's one I've read.

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### **Caroline says**

What can you say about Carolyn Hart's cozy mysteries that hasn't already been said? She's a master at crafting mysteries.

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### **Kathy says**

First the bad, Annie Darling really irritates me. She's a prime example of that old song, "Fools Rush In Where Angels Fear to Tread." She has to be the nosiest person on the face of this earth. The last scene of the book is really a stretch. It wouldn't happen with the cooperation of the police anywhere in this country. Now the good---I love Browards Rock and all its inhabitants. It's a very real place to me and I love catching up with all my "friends" there. I really enjoy the pictures Annie hangs in her book store. (I got two of them this time.) The plot is excellent (other than that last scene that was so far fetched. Even with its faults I'll continue reading about Annie and Max.

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### **Natalie says**

This was another great mystery by Carolyn Hart. She is a great mystery writer. This book dragged on in some parts and was slower than I would have liked. Not enough clues led me to the conclusion. The ending

was good, but not enough suspense and danger. It was a good Fourth of July mystery.

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## **Denise Swanson says**

Carolyn Hart is the master of cozy mysteries. This series is the first cozy that I ever read. The fact that she mentions my Devereaux's Dime Store series in this book was beyond thrilling for me. Love, love, love Carolyn's books!

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## **bella says**

For readers that have been following Annie and Max Darling right from the beginning, with the release of Death in Demand, they will be anxiously awaiting the release of the 23rd book in this series, Dead, White & Blue.

It is summer in Broward's Rock and Annie and Max Darling are looking forward to the Fourth of July dance. However one resident is causing up a stir and everything is due to come to a head at the dance. That person is Shell Hurst, the woman everyone loves to hate. Even her own husband, Wesley Hurst, has reasons to dislike her and wish her dead. When she goes missing after the dance, after having made a spectacle, Max is asked to investigate where she went by Shell's step-daughter, Hayley. However what Annie and Max will uncover is a multiple murder and many people in the town that really wished Shell would disappear and never return.

The Death on Demand series are one of my favorites. They are intelligent mysteries, that are very much reminiscent of Agatha Christie's Tommy and Tuppence. Annie and Max are smart sleuths, that always get their man (or woman!), despite the obstacles in their way. This time there is quite a few people that are determined to stop them from investigating Shell's disappearance, people that would rather she stayed missing!

I love the Darlings and I always enjoy trying to solve the mystery alongside them. I also dearly love Broward's Rock and the Death on Demand bookstore. The secondary characters that appear in each book have endeared themselves to me over time, and I always look forward to taking another adventure with them.

If you haven't picked up this series yet, be sure to begin with Death on Demand. Like a glass of fine wine, these books have only gotten better with age, and I can't wait to see what Carolyn Hart has in store for us next.

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