



## Better Off Dead in Deadwood

*Ann Charles , C.S. Kunkle (Illustrations)*

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**Better Off Dead in Deadwood** Ann Charles , C.S. Kunkle (Illustrations)

One dead body. One century-old, haunted opera house. One zombie musical. One pissed-off detective.

Will Violet "Spooky" Parker keep her tail out of trouble or will she end up as one of Deadwood's walking dead?

### Better Off Dead in Deadwood Details

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## From Reader Review Better Off Dead in Deadwood for online ebook

### Kelly says

Sweet Mother of Pearl! Who says that being chased by crazy things that go bump in the night can't be fun? Because this book IS TOTALLY FUN! Violet's right in the middle of more shenanigans in the town of Deadwood, Detective Coop has her on his "most likely to get caught breaking into a locked building" list (actually, I just made that up. But if he \*did\* have a list like that, I'm sure she'd be on it!), and Violet's clients expect her to help out in all manner of supernatural goings on!

Oh, and there's a dead body.

With the fate of Calamity Jane Realty up in the air, Violet's worried about her job, breaking the news of her secret boyfriend to her kids, finding time to spend with said secret boyfriend, and keeping out of Coop's way. Cooper has a real hard-on for her, you know. Not in a sexy way. In a "I'm sure you're hiding things that relate to this case I'm trying to solve" sort of way. And he's right. Which is probably the one thing that made me shake my head this time around. While part of me understands why she's keeping things from him (because the truth is so unbelievable that even Violet, who witnessed it with her own eyes, has a hard time believing it's true), part of me wants her to come clean and just lay all her cards on the table and let the Detective do his job and sort it out.

Meanwhile, things are a little rocky on the Doc front. No, not rocky. More... uncertain. Once Doc explains his hangups, I could see where he was coming from and it makes sense, but I don't want tension between those two. Well, I want the sexual tension because the amount of times and creative ways that those two get interrupted before getting down to the dirty is HILARIOUS! I figure that Doc has a permanent case of blue balls after all the times he's been cock-blocked by circumstances beyond their control in this book. Poor guy.

Anyway. Lots of happenings. Lots of almost-sexin'. Lots of Violet getting into a jam. This series continues to entertain me and I'm so so SO sad that the next book isn't out yet.

-Kelly @ Reading the Paranormal

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### Maggie says

#### Annoyingly Good Paranormal Mystery

Violet Parker is drawn into investigating the death of her boss Jane from Calamity Jane's Real Estate. But the more she digs, the more dirt she finds. As her suspicions multiply, so do those of Detective Cooper, who finds her digging annoying, dangerous, and counter-productive to his real investigation. Before you know it, Violet has a big old target painted on her back and a fistful of suspects.

This book has ghosts and zombies. The ghosts are for real, while the zombies are actors in a community theater play. Both add to the general misdirection and delightful chaos of this book.

I kept trying to put this book down and I couldn't. Violet's sassy comebacks and escapades kept me laughing late into the night. The strong cast of supporting characters are equally well-developed from the hunky

detective, to Violet's self-appointed sidekick Harvey to her coworkers and of course, delicious Doc, her love interest.

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## Douglas Meeks says

For anyone that reads my reviews I usually try to give enough info to get you interested but in this case this whole series is an example in how to write paranormal books that appeal to a wide cross section of the reading public. Every book has been 5 Star and this one is no exception BUT the trick here is that she has inserted a bit more paranormal into each book (it is barely paranormal most of book #1) until this book is pretty close to a "normal" level of paranormal. Great writing, great humor, serious life threatening plots/situations and some normal problems. Add in several characters you can hate in addition to the REALLY evil guys and it is a formula that can't miss. Start with book #1 and keep going, you will get hooked, there are only 4 of them so far and all top notch entertainment. I HATE her bratty kids but I guess that is a problem most single Moms face when they have to devote a huge amount of time to keeping food on the table and trying to have a love life. Get these books, you will thank me :)

Nearly Departed in Deadwood  
Optical Delusions in Deadwood  
Dead Case in Deadwood  
Better Off Dead In Deadwood

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## Elena says

Read for the **URR Halloween 2017 Reading Challenge: a romance set in/near a haunted house.**

After the excruciating struggle I had to put up to finish Dead Case in Deadwood I picked up **Better Off Dead in Deadwood** feeling pretty prejudiced against the Deadwood series, Ann Charles, women with blonde curly hair and realtors in general. I was, in short, *not* in the best frame of mind to enjoy this book. And yet, enjoy it I did.

Granted, **the series still suffers from Charles' problems with female characterization.** And Violet continues to practice with zeal the ancient art of slut shaming and her insufferably patronizing ways are still going strong, so you'll be treated with gems like

*If only [Natalie] hadn't convinced herself that she'd fallen for Doc, confusing lust for love yet again. I'd never been able to understand how a girl so pretty and smart could be filled with so many insecurities.*

and

*"Tell me about it," [Tiffany] practically purred next to his ear. "I was just telling the detective to give me a call if he needed help with anything." Like unzipping his pants with her teeth? Sheesh, she was throwing herself at Cooper. Doc was right about her. Someone needed to slap her upside the head with some self-esteem.*

And... well, who am I kidding? Normally a couple of passages like these would be enough for me to dump a book into DNF oblivion. But this is book #4 in a series that, overall, has been giving me some seriously good

times: I'm pretty invested in Deadwood by now - especially because, **despite Charles' shortcomings, she did craft an extremely charming cast of characters.** Once you get to know Aunt Zoe, Harvey, Doc, Elvis the Chicken, Detective Cooper and Cornelius, it will be hard to give them up and turn your back to Deadwood.

I have high hopes that, now that things between Violet and Doc are settling down and the cringeworthy subplot of Violet and Natalie falling for the same man is dealt with (with Natalie proving who's the better person around here and what female friendship can be like when one isn't too busy being a self-centered, hormonal teen) the worst is behind us and Charles can focus on what she does best - writing a fun, delightful paranormal series. Fingers crossed for An Ex to Grind in Deadwood: I'm loving the title already.

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### **Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says**

Seriously loving this series and I just might be half in love with Doc myself. Full review to come.

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### **Abigail says**

One of my favorite series read ever! For the last two years I have been transported to an incredibly believable world full of colorful characters and things that go bump in the night. Well, some of them are not just things, some of them are really bad people.. but some of them? They go more than just bump in the night. And where is Violet in all of this? Somehow right smack dab in the middle of all the mayhem ... again!

She is still needing to sell houses, and though Violet would prefer they not be haunted or possessed by demons or attracting the WORST kind of paranormal miscreants, she will take what she can get. Now if her client would not be so flighty maybe she can keep her job and not have to worry so much. On top of her grief with the murder of her boss and friend NOW she has to deal with the most insufferable chauvinist whose sorry rear-end she saved in the last book. You would think he would be thankful, but no he is just as much of a jerk as before. On top of that the local chief of police is causing nothing but grief and if she used Four Square, she would probably be mayor of the local police department. Her "boyfriend", Doc still is dealing with his ghost issues, but with Violet's help he may actually get some control over it and with that the relationship will gain more solid ground. Now if her best friend would give her boots back and come hobbling in so they could get back to what they do best... wait what is that.. crashing funerals or being ninja like stalkers to suspected miscreants in town!

Ann did it again! I love a good mystery but like things with a twist of the unknown. This one leaves us hanging again and wanting for more! Can it get any better? I bet it can! Each book gets more and more exciting and crazy! But what do you expect from a woman who has a chicken named Elvis, a love for peanut butter fudge ice cream and tequila? Keep them coming Ann!

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### **Gina says**

I just can't quit reading these cozy mysteries with paranormal elements. I see all the stuff that usually bothers me in terms of plot and pacing, but I still must read them. Violet, mystery solving realtor, is still as narcissistic Mary Sue as in previous books. This one was repetitive. It almost seemed that passages were cut

and pasted in places. Same snarky jokes. Same dialog between some characters. Same ridiculous kid antics. Lukewarm mystery that was a little more paranormal/far fetched than previous books. Yet, I'm still enjoying them and have already checked out the next from the library.

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## Wendy Cantu says

After reading *Nearly Departed In Deadwood*, the first book of the *Deadwood Mystery* series, I was in love (I gave it a five-out-of-five star rating and I rarely do that). When I finished the second book, *Optical Delusions In Deadwood*, I thought it was great, although not as good as the first book. I drew the same conclusion from the third book, *Dead Case In Deadwood*.

Now we're at book number four, *Better Off Dead in Deadwood*, and I'm sad to say I didn't really like it. There were parts I definitely enjoyed, but the parts I didn't I just downright hated.

### First, the good:

Violet's story is progressing in ways I didn't see coming. When this series started, it was slightly paranormal (just ghosts) and Violet was a firm skeptic. Now, it's pretty much gone off the deep end with paranormal crap. While I can't say I completely love it (I miss the old Violet), I appreciate the author taking the books in a direction that wasn't totally expected.

I foresee a promising plot line in the upcoming books. About 40 percent through I had an epiphany and started generating theories about the characters (primarily Cooper and Violet's ex husband). It's just a theory (although I am pretty sure I saw some solid clues indicating I'm on to something), but I think it would make an excellent plot twist.

### Now, the AARRGH WHY ARE YOU RUINING THIS BOOK!

The relationship between Doc and Violet is damn near intolerable. Their passion for one another seems so superficial and based entirely on sex. I mean, almost every conversation between them included some nasty sexual innuendo. The very first exchange with Doc (which occurred right after Jane's funeral) went something like this:

Doc: I like that black dress.

Violet: You've seen me wear it before.

Doc: I know, I remember removing it with my teeth.

Violet: That's right. But I think I was wearing panties that time.

And then there's talk about bending her over his desk and...well, you get the idea.

This continued through the entire book (and when Violet and Doc weren't together, Violet was fantasizing about him ripping off her clothes).

More annoying was the fact that Doc was kind of acting like a D-bag about getting involved with her

because of her children. And even more annoying than that was the fact that Violet just let it go and seemed to intentionally avoid the topic because she didn't want their fun to end. Really? Mom of the effing year (which is sad because one of the things I liked about her in the first book was how devoted she was to her kids).

It's frustrating because I really do like this series and think it has a promising future, but this whole Doc / Violet acting like horny teenagers thing just has to stop. It's degrading to Violet and makes Doc seem like a sleazy perv.

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### **Barbara ★ says**

I don't know what Deadwood was like before Violet came to town but she's certainly stirred up some shit. Ghosts, zombies, demons, murder, shifty co-workers. I love all of Violet and Doc's encounters. From the sexy talk to coitus interruptus to full blown sex. Those two are burning up the nights (and days) in Deadwood. Things are heating up in Deadwood in more ways than one. In addition to the previous craziness, now there are the mayor and the pixie - an interesting pair with secrets of their own; the unkillable albinos; and Abraham Lincoln Jr - a whack-job in himself. Hmmm hopefully we'll see Violet take out her ex, Rex in An Ex to Grind in Deadwood. I can't wait to see how she handles the shitstorm he's bringing.

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### **Betsy says**

I feel the pot stirring...all the ingredients are in motion and I don't know how things are really going to end up. Ann Charles brings back the characters we love. Violet is still plucky and hopeful. Doc is still smoldering. Harvey is still incorrigible. Zoe is still helpful. Natalie is still confused. But we get a little more this time around. Everybody is revealing a little more of their backstory and true character. Everybody is changing from the mayhem and from their contact with each other. Everybody is growing and evolving and the resulting book is sizzling with grit, tension, lust and chicken feathers. If Cooper could velcro Violet to a chair, he would. Everybody else might appreciate it too so she could take her licks (good and bad) and they wouldn't have to wonder what is going on. But Violet is a leaper, she is not a communicator and she is definitely not a strategist. There is plenty of mystery in this book and it is not wrapped up in a tidy package like an episode of Murder She Wrote. But we do get to see Doc and Violet get closer, Natalie does not disappear forever, Harvey is being domesticated in unexpected ways and Violet puts herself on the line. I am EXTREMELY satisfied by this installment. Bring on the next course please.

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### **Roberta Smith says**

I love ghost stories. I've been to Deadwood and loved the town. With so many 5 star reviews how could this book miss (with me, anyway)? I think I would have been better off reading book 1 in the series, but now I don't want to. I found the banter of the main character (Violet) witty, but after a while it grew repetitive and, therefore, tiresome. The interaction between Violet and the sheriff was repetitive and mostly not believable. The sex scenes were bountiful and slowed the story. Too many things were going on and I often felt like the story moved in circles. I wanted it to get somewhere faster (at least as fast as Violet could think of funny things to say). I did get engrossed in the story's climax, but afterwards felt cheated because there were so many questions left unanswered. That's so I'll buy the next book in the series, you see. Except I doubt if I will because even though I like Violet and would like to know what happens to her, I'm tired of the whole

mess. But that's just me. Lots of people are giving this book rave reviews because of the humor. You might enjoy it. I did to a point.

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### **Ian says**

So...  
Book 4 and...  
I still have no idea who...  
...or what she is.  
That should annoy me...  
but it doesn't.

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### **Dotti Elrick says**

This is the fourth book in the Deadwood series. It picks up right where book three left us hanging, with the death of Violets boss Jane. What starts off as a typical murder mystery ends up taking a turn into weirdsville. As in book three, once again the "albinos" are involved. We have a haunted opera house, who is hosting a zombie musical. Violet's odd Abe Lincoln look alike client who talks to ghosts.

Her new boss who finally gave in and hired Ray's nephew Ben. Leaving Violet with a whole new role in Calamity Jane's Realty business. A role Vis not sure shes comfortable with. Her relationship with the sexy Doc, who's not sure how he feels about the extra baggage that comes with Violet aka the twins. Then there's old man Harveys love life, he's been dumped by Aunt Zoe's neighbor. And Aunt Zoe herself. Shes been holding back vital information from Violet. Something tells me Aunt Zoe knows more about demons than she's letting on. Her best friend Natalie is still not speaking to her, and holding Violet's favorite purple boots hostage, much to Docs dismay. And detective Cooper finally makes good on his threats, by handcuffing Violet and taking her to jail.

A fairly typical week in Violets world.

This is a great addition to the series. A lot more of the paranormal peeking out in this one. Its funny, sexy, frustrating and lots of fun. We are left with another small cliffhanger.

I was a bit disappointed in the ending, I guess I wanted to see Violet finally sell another property. Something positive for her to celebrate. But once again everything is left hanging. I'd like to see her have some success if nothing else to shut Ray up.

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### **XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says**

This series really is getting better with each new instalment! The more I think about it the more I think it has everything to do with character development. This is not one of these series where the characters are always the same, never change no matter what happens or the things they go through. Here the characters come to life as they evolve throughout the books, depending on the people they meet, the situations they face, the choices they make... The plots for the Deadwood series are always entertaining but what makes the whole series very addictive to me is the cast of characters.

I'm also finding myself enjoying the setting of the series in the Black Hills of South Dakota. I don't know if the author is from that area or if she has been doing some very thorough research but Deadwood and its area really come to life.

Ann Charles definitely is an excellent storyteller!

- ∞ **Book 1:** Nearly Departed in Deadwood ★★
  - ∞ **Book 2:** Optical Delusions in Deadwood ★★★★★
  - ∞ **Book 3:** Dead Case in Deadwood ★★★★★
  - ∞ **Book 5:** An Ex to Grind in Deadwood ★★★★★
  - ∞ **Book 6:** Meanwhile Back In Deadwood ★★★★★
  - ∞ **Book 7:** A Wild Fright in Deadwood ★★★★★
  - ∞ **Book 8:** Rattling the Heat in Deadwood ★★★★★
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### \* Jennifer says

This book is a continuation of an over-arching plot line throughout the Deadwood Series. It starts out with everyone thinking it's a typical murder mystery, but we quickly get back to the albino's. There's obviously something in Violet's destiny that has her meant for a greater purpose, and it became obvious to me that her Aunt knows about it.

I like the characters in this book quite a bit - I'd like Ray to be a victim soon, and I'd like Cooper to ease back a bit, but mostly these are great characters you could totally see sharing a drink with. I like the way the author handled Violet and Natalie's conflict and the slow inching towards a deep relationship with Doc. Any faster and all that sizzling sexual tension would fizzle out. In my humble opinion, the author does a brilliant job of writing those sex scenes: steamy but without being vulgar or overly graphic. I appreciate that Ms. Charles writes enough to get the pulse rate up, but leaves a lot to the readers' imagination as to filling in the blanks.

I'll end with saying both her kids need a smack upside the head to remind them of the chain-of-command and that I can't wait to read the next one!

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