



Skulduggery

Carolyn G. Hart

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Never published in the U.S. before, Skulduggery introduces Dr. Ellen Christie, an anthropologist who knows San Francisco can be a dangerous city, yet she admits a frightened stranger into her apartment. He brings a report of a treasure and involves her in a desperate hunt that leads through the darkest byways of Chinatown. Ellen dives into the chase and isn't certain of her own motives. Does she want to help Jimmy and his brother Dan? Or is she playing them along to advance her own career? And what are those feelings she has for Dan?

Skulduggery Details

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Author : Carolyn G. Hart

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From Reader Review Skulduggery for online ebook

Susan says

A young Chinese-American man tells anthropologist Ellen Christie that he wants her to identify some mysterious bones. Of course, she can't give him a definitive answer, but she knows that he's talking about the famous Peking Man fossils that disappeared in 1941. Tracked by thugs through San Francisco's Chinatown, Ellen knows she's in danger, and is also worried about her professional ethics. Her guide is the young man's handsome older brother Dan, who takes her on a tour through the social problems of Chinatown in the 1980's.

Dany says

This was a short and easy read with a hint of romance, many humanitarian considerations, plenty of adventure and suspense. Fun but short; it would have been nice to have more depth to the story and to the afterward of the characters. I did like the connection to the real-life missing treasure of the Peking Man bones, that was very interesting. All in all, enjoyable to read something different from Carolyn Hart than a traditional mystery.

Pat says

An old book, c84, about bones of Peking Man showing up in Chinatown in San Francisco. Reprinted in 2000.

Jeanine says

This is the first I've read of the "old" Carolyn books. Very enjoyable.

Rex Tshimuanga says

I think it was hilarious with... Then when skulduggery had a face off with and when he used the to turn into ... To be continued

Julie says

Set post Vietnam war, mystery set in Chinatown in San Francisco. Features cross-cultural romance. Re-issued.

Elena Santangelo says

Delighted to find a Carolyn G. Hart book that I hadn't read and a stand-alone thriller at that (that is, not part of a series). I loved that it was set in San Francisco's Chinatown, and that most of the characters were Chinese, but without the stereotypes. In fact, the characters were pleasantly diverse--some old, some young, from different backgrounds and professions. The premise, too, was interesting: the disappearance of a young man and a rare ancient skull.

This was an audiobook and the reader had a lot to be with me giving the book only 3-stars. Of the 6 CDs in the set, the actor took 5 of them to figure out the main character's voice. It was a first-person narrative. The voice was vital to the telling, yet the protagonist seemed to have very little attitude except possibly when she was scared. And she sometimes sounded scared when there was little reason. I'd describe the narration as sort of hamishly boring for 2/3 of the story--often too dramatic, but not creating a real person I could picture and cheer for. The male protagonist had even less personality, and when they were in scenes together (more than half the book), it was often difficult to tell who was speaking. The odd thing was, minor characters' voices were brilliant, with distinct accents, tones and personalities. It seemed like the more of a role a character played, the less of a realistic voice he/she had. I found it difficult to listen to the story telling at times.

That said, it is a fast listen, and Carolyn Hart's descriptive prose is worth the effort. Despite the reader, I enjoyed my trip to Chinatown and this novel.

Lynn says

Interesting history on lost bones of Peking Man, and on SF Chinatown. Well-devised suspense with a little romance thrown in. Typically good Carolyn Hart writing.

Favorite quote:

It was all so long ago now, so far away. The years pass so quickly, like petals drifting down, dropping so softly you scarcely realize they are gone until the stem is bare.

Val says

Another early novel from Hart. I found this very interesting. Based in San Francisco, anthropologist Dr Ellen Christie becomes involved in the search for some very valuable bones, brought to her attention by a young Asian boy wanting to sell them. When he disappears, his older brother becomes involved and takes Ellen on a journey through Chinatown trying to find his brother and the bones.

A lot of information is given about Chinatown and Chinese traditions which keeps you enthralled.

Highly recommend.

David Marshall says

A slight book which, for no terribly good reason, Seventh Street Books has decided to bring back into print.

<http://opionator.wordpress.com/2012/1...>

Becky says

Skulduggery, originally published in 1984 and reprinted in 2000, is a mystery based around the Peking Man skeleton collection, missing since WWII.

Dr. Ellen Christie is a physical anthropologist in San Francisco. An article about her work identifying remains found at a construction site catches the attention of young Jimmy Lee. Jimmy has recently come across some bones he believes are the lost Peking Man and he wants Ellen to take a look. Based on what she sees, Ellen believes the boy is right, but before she can convince him to turn the bones over for analyzation, they're set upon by two thugs. Jimmy's older brother, Dan, helps defend them but Jimmy escapes. Now Ellen and Dan have teamed up to find the boy and his discovery before he lands in real trouble.

My grandmother was a big fan of Hart's popular Death on Demand series. I was even tasked with tracking down a few in past years for her collection but this is my first time reading her.

I liked Skulduggery. I thought it offered up what I believe is a time capsule look at Chinatown in San Francisco in the early 80s -- not that I've ever experienced Chinatown in San Francisco at any time period.

Hart's attention to detail is wonderful. The sort of people viewing Ellen does as she walks through Chinatown takes this book a bit beyond a typical mystery, really bringing to light some of the struggles of Chinese immigrants in America at the time. Granted it's just a tiny look at that, but it's enough to bring the book places I wasn't expecting it to go.

The pacing and the style were great -- the book appears to be a slim read but it's more meaty than the page extent would lead you to suspect. I did think that the end was a bit dated in terms of style. It's not a real complaint but it is something I also noticed when I read one of my grandmother's old Mary Stewart titles last year. The sort of everything-will-be-alright, happy and neat wrap up ending. Hart's well known for her cozies so it could be that she'd opt for the same kind of ending these days, but I've noticed an overall trend away from that in my current favorite mysteries.

Overall, Skulduggery holds up well and should be a welcome rerelease for mystery fans.

Rachel says

Light and fun

Aubrey says

I thoroughly enjoyed "Skulduggery" by Carolyn Hart, a sort-of-anthropological mystery/crime novel set in Chinatown. At less than 200 pages it was a quick read. I read it straight through in one sitting. It's true that the characters aren't as well developed as they might have been in a longer novel, but I thought they were quite rich given the brevity of the book and I didn't have any trouble becoming interested and emotionally

invested in their stories. The action begins right away and runs right on through to the end without losing much (if any) steam. Highly recommended for a diverting afternoon or evening. (And, if I'm remembering correctly, it's relatively free of excessive sex, violence, and cursing. I'd let my mom read it.)

Ashley McNally says

I loved this chase of the Peking Man! It was exciting and adventurous! The characters were wonderful and extremely clever.

Tinika says

Skulduggery is set in San Francisco's Chinatown circa 1980s. Ellen Christie, an archeologist dubbed "The Bone Lady," is approached by Jimmy Lee who shows her a skull he believes is Peking Man. No sooner does he do this than his brother Dan shows up looking for him followed by a couple of thugs set to steal the bones. While Ellen and Dan fight off the baddies, Jimmy and the bones disappear. One thing that I was very impressed with was how Ms. Hart wove in the history and variation of experience in Chinatown without making it sound like a school lecture. She created characters and made them part of the plot's progress as Ellen and Dan search for the bones.

Skulduggery is more light action thriller than mystery but the plot is based on a real life mystery, one that has puzzled me for a long time. During the 1930s, fossil remains of early humans were excavated near Beijing, China. In 1941, the fossils disappeared and have yet to be rediscovered. Theories abound as to what happened to them and Carolyn Hart introduces some in her story that I had never heard before.

Skulduggery has a satisfying conclusion. Carolyn Hart does not give us a definitive answer as to where Peking Man is today - she just includes one more tantalizing possibility.
