



# The Hindenburg Murders

*Max Allan Collins*

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## **The Hindenburg Murders** Max Allan Collins

The date is May 3, 1937. The legendary Hindenburg has just left Frankfurt on its final, fateful voyage across the Atlantic. And passenger Leslie Charteris has a terrible sense of foreboding. . .

The author of a world-famous mystery series featuring a benevolent sleuth called the Saint, Charteris was puzzled by the overzealous security at check-in--and disturbed to find the Hindenburg under Nazi control. But when an undercover Gestapo agent disappears the next day, it becomes clear to Charteris that his apprehension was not unwarranted.

Asked to investigate, Charteris soon uncovers his fellow passengers' most dangerous secrets. But a number of disturbing events occur during the doomed dirigible's final hours--and only Charteris will know what really sparked the explosion that made the Hindenburg go down in flames. . . .

## **The Hindenburg Murders Details**

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Author : Max Allan Collins

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## From Reader Review The Hindenburg Murders for online ebook

### Ira Therebel says

Unlike Titanic I knew nothing about Hindenburg, but this didn't prevent me from liking the book maybe it even added as I was finding out things without knowing them before. It is written in the same style as the first book but my worry that the outcome will be similar luckily didn't come true. I didn't figure out who the murderer was. I did figure out one thing though, which I don't want to spoil. But it was the fact that some other characters would be involved only I didn't figure out their role in it.

The book is once again very well researched as when I read the end notes I found out that most of the people in the book were on Hindenburg. Including the amateur detective in this story, Leslie Charteris, only he was on a different flight. This makes me love this series, I sure will end the rest of it as well. Sad for Ulla not being saved (this isn't a real spoiler) but this is a sad reality of what would happen to a dog in a disaster.

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### Harold Shaver says

In the second of his "Disaster" series Max Allan Collins tackles the mysterious destruction of the Hindenburg on that fateful day in April 1937. The "guest" criminologist this time around is novelist Leslie Charteris, the creator of fiction detective Simon Templar aka the Saint. Charteris actually was a passenger, along with his then wife Pauline, on the Hindenburg's maiden voyage to America in 1936 which is why Collins chose him to be the sleuth-on-board this time around.

Without any spoilers involved Charteris manages to solve two murders, uncover a nest of saboteurs and almost, but not quite prevent the disaster. Relying once again on detailed research into the incident including the findings of both the German and American inquiries Collins comes up with a very plausible solution to the explosion that downed the immense airship and virtually spelled the end of commercial lighter-than-air passenger craft.

What can I say, in addition to the great fiction mysteries that abound and of which i can never get enough, I love these historical mysteries that have no real answer but for which, with enough research and a lot of writer's insight, a reasonable conclusion can be drawn. Mr. Collins has shown himself to be a master of this sort of book, first with his Nathan Heller series and now he's taking on the greatest of histories mysteries, first it was The Titanic Murders and now the destruction of the Hindenburg. Next on the list is "The Pearl Harbor Murders", I can't wait, no really I can't, I will be starting it right after I post this review.

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### Linda says

I found only one word in this book that I would classify as an error. When describing the size of the Hindenburg, the author uses the word "enormity." "Vastness" might have been a better choice, as "enormity" is a synonym for "wickedness."

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### AndrewP says

The Hindenburg has always had some weird fascination for me and I have researched quite a bit about the

zeppelin and her final demise. After I read the synopsis of this book I just had to read it.

Max Allan Collins has taken the known facts about the zeppelin's final voyage, including the passengers and crew and worked them into a murder mystery. His protagonist is the author Leslie Charteris of 'The Saint' fame,(who actually flew on the Hindenberg's maiden voyage). I thought this was a very unique idea, and one that worked very well.

Overall I really enjoyed this book. It's written in the typical murder mystery style of the 1930's. The story progresses and at the end there is the big reveal where the hero goes over all the clues given in the book. How many did I spot? Not many I'm afraid, but they are all there if you were paying real close attention. Collins also brings up some moral issues in the story and does a good job of showing that not all Germans were Nazis.

The author has obviously done a lot of research and acknowledges his sources all in the afterword. Interestingly, one of the websites he used is the one where I got most of my information. <http://www.airships.net/hindenburg> This site has a lot of information and old photographs from the Hindenburg so I would recommend taking a look before reading this book. The photographs of the interior are great references to get a feel of the environment while reading.

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### **William Richardson says**

A really good book, the 2nd in the disaster murder series. A mix of murder with a different writer as the person trying to solve the crime. Mr. Collins is an excellent author. Looking forward to reading more of his books.

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### **Summer Leblanc says**

Very interesting plot. I had trouble putting it down.

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### **Chris says**

Pretty good mystery that takes on the final flight of the Hindenburg. Good women characters, plausible plot, and a solution that makes sense. Is it the deepest book in the world? No. Is it a fun read? Yes.

Chapter titles were a hoot too.

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### **Juli says**

On May 6th, 1937, a German passenger airship, The Hindenburg, burst into flames as its crew attempted to dock at Naval Airstation Lakehurst in New Jersey. 36 people died in the disaster: 13 passengers, 22 crewmen, and 1 mooring worker on the ground. Many theories about the cause of the disaster have been put forth over the years -- sabotage, static electricity, lightning, engine problems, leaking hydrogen, etc. But no definitive cause has ever been pinpointed. The disaster changed public opinion about the safety of airship

travel and marked a rather abrupt end to that mode of transportation.

The Hindenburg Murders takes the sabotage angle, and formulates a fictional mystery around the disaster. The plot does not make light of the historical disaster, or the deaths it caused, in any way. It merely poses a fictional account of what happened on the ship leading up to the disaster. Famous Author Leslie Charteris (author of mystery novels featuring a mysterious sleuth, The Saint) is a passenger on the Hindenburg. Charteris enjoyed passage on the Hindenburg's maiden voyage the year before, and is happy to be travelling on the airship once again. Although he does notice immediately that security on the airship has been heightened to almost ridiculous levels by the Nazis. Once the voyage has begun, Charteris is warned that his cabinmate is actually an undercover state police agent onboard to ferret out any anti-Nazi sentiments or behavior among the passengers. Soon after, his cabinmate disappears. All that is left is a bit of the man's tie stuck in one of the airship's windows. One of the passengers or crew is a murderer. The Nazi crew expresses fears of sabotage or a possible time bomb on board the airship as well, asking Charteris to aid in their investigation of the killing.

Not only does the story give some awesome details about the airship itself, but the mystery portion of the plot has some awesome and suspenseful twists and turns. I had no idea about the murderer's identity, or the exact reasons why, until the moment of reveal. The other passengers are interesting and well-developed, not merely caricatures of stereotypical political/social issues of the period before WWII. They discuss politics, fear of the state police and the Nazi regime, relations between their countries and other topics that would have concerned people of the era in a believable way, adding depth and intrigue to the plot.

The Hindenburg Murders is the second book in the Disaster Mystery Series. There are six books in all. Each one is a separate, stand-alone story, woven around actual historical events and featuring a different famous writer or actor as the main character. Max Allan Collins uses real historical events as a setting for these stories, mixing fact with fiction. The disasters are portrayed respectfully and not in a light manner. The books are well-written and excellent mysteries, adding in background, information and real details of the actual disasters. I'm definitely going to read the rest of the books in this series!

I listened to the audiobook version of The Hindenburg Murders, narrated by Simon Vance. The quality is outstanding. Vance's voice and reading style is excellent. Very enjoyable audiobook!

Max Allan Collins is the author of several books, including CSI novelizations and the Reeder & Rogers Secret Service books. For more information on the author, the disaster series and his other books, check out his website: <http://www.maxallancollins.com/blog/>

Leslie Charteris wrote his novels featuring Simon Templar, The Saint, from 1928-1963. Saint stories after 1963 were ghost written by other writers. The Saint was also adapted into radio drama, movies and television shows. Charteris is listed as a passenger on the maiden voyage of The Hindenburg May 6-9, 1936. It was not the first flight for the airship, but rather its first trip to North America. On the day of the disaster in 1937, there were 36 passengers on board (the ship's maximum capacity was 72 passengers). Charteris was not on board The Hindenburg on the day of the disaster. The airship, once it caught fire, took only seconds to crash to the ground. News crews were on site to document the landing of the airship in America, so the disaster was well documented. Herbert Morrison's radio coverage of the event for Chicago radio station WLS is probably the most famous eyewitness accounts of the disaster.

## Andrew says

**The Hindenburg Murders** by Max Allan Collins

#2 in the Disasters Series

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**Description** (From Max Allan Collins' Website)

How the Hindenburg went from luxury airship to gargantuan fireball wasn't the only mystery surrounding the zeppelin's fatal flight. First came the murder.

When a passenger vanishes during the Hindenburg's trans-Atlantic voyage from Frankfurt to New Jersey, mystery writer Leslie Charteris is asked to use his knowledge of the criminal mind to quietly pinpoint the killer. Charteris is famous for his fictional detective, the Saint, who extracts riches as well as vengeance from evildoers in true Robin Hood fashion. But in this case, the villain turns out to be the murder victim himself—a Nazi spy. And the list of passengers who might want him dead is long. Suspecting that sabotaging the German airship is the killer's true aim, Charteris must solve the murder before innocent lives are engulfed in flames.

Reconstructing the zeppelin's fatal flight on the eve of World War II, *The Hindenburg Murders* proves that Max Allan Collins is the master of hard-boiled historical fiction.

### My View

An enjoyable read but must admit I didn't enjoy it as much as the first book in the series (*The Titanic Murders*). It is clever how the author constructs a murder mystery story around the disaster., giving this as a convincing reason why the disaster happened in this case. As with the last book it was a well known author (Leslie Charteris - author of *The Saint*) who is on board the Hindenburg and sets about investigating a murder. There were a few good twists towards the end of the story which I enjoyed and did surprise me. For some reason though I just didn't buy into the main character or the other characters in the story in the same way as I did in the first book. Having said that they are good light entertaining reads and I am sure I will come back to the series at some point, but it won't be top of my agenda.

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## Nancy Bennett says

Probably not quite a 4, but definitely more than a 3.

I enjoy the premise of Max Collins' Disaster Series (this being #2; #1 was the *Titanic Murders*) and using real people to tell a fictionalized story. He doesn't trivialize the horrific nature of the disasters but instead uses them as a backdrop to tell an extremely enjoyable mystery story. The plots are not overly complicated, but there are enough twists and turns to keep them interesting -- even if not exactly hard to figure out.

The story is filled with anti-Nazi sentiment and political discussion, which is to be expected given the timeframe of the disaster; you couldn't write a book about the Hindenburg -- or anything else from that era -- without politics being involved. It is anti-Nazi without being anti-German, which is an important distinction that could easily have been ignored in this type of fiction. Even though it is fiction, since it is based on real-life, there is enough historical information to peak my interest in the subjects.

I especially like the Epilogue where the author talks about the research material he consulted, as well as telling what happened in real life to the people he uses in the book. I knew more about the *Titanic* disaster

than I did the Hindenburg, but now I have some great material in order to find out even more.

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## Johnny says

The history mysteries (pardon the jarring sonority there) of Max Alan Collins are historical fiction in some of the best sense. The research is superb and the deliberate insertion of non-canonical elements is creative. Naturally, *The Hindenburg Murders* is set on that last fateful voyage. Naturally, there is/are a/some murder/murders on board that do not reflect actual historical circumstances. Yet, even though you know much of this didn't happen, you find yourself pushing toward the fiery finale that you know must happen. Ah, but as with any reconstruction of a conspiracy theory (and this novel has that), you find yourself turning pages to figure out which theory and how a masterful author is going to weave it into what we actually know of the situation.

Unlike Collins, I was never a particular fan of *The Saint* in any media.

The notes included by Collins in his afterword suggests that Leslie Charteris was not a fan of the way *The Saint* was portrayed in any of the vast media in which his creation appeared. But, since he actually did fly on the maiden voyage of The Hindenburg and since he actually was a police constable (among many other things) prior to his writing career, he is an inspired choice. Plus his affectation for appearances, for fashion, enabled Collins to sprinkle plenty of fashion references into the story and enable one to see the glamor (in silver screen fashion) in the mind's eye. It works.

The "reveal" isn't tremendously shocking. The rationale behind the "reveal" was unsuspected. The result is worth waiting for and the denouement clarifies anything that may have been missing from the final events. One wouldn't expect *The Hindenburg Murders* to end up as a happy ending, so if that's what one is looking for, it isn't so ahistorical as that.

My favorite lines in this volume are tied to one conversation about politics (quite relevant in the period being covered by this story and even more relevant in today's polarized political scene). The female lead, Hilda, asks: "Are you political, Leslie?" To which the dapper protagonist responds, "Heavens no! The idea of accepting any prefabricated platform is to me the antithesis of sound thinking." (pp. 86-7) My other favorite was tied to a marvelous description of Hilda herself, "...that wonderful kiss of a smile." (p. 140)

Of course, my bias toward historical mysteries is evident when I rate this as highly as I do. Some will think the murder mystery is too thin and the approach taken with regard to the rumored conspiracy too transparent. Some will think the pace is too leisurely as Collins takes us on a luxurious journey where no one is in a real hurry. But I found it just right in spite of the lack of surprises on the initial "reveal."

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## Andrew says

Why did the Hindenburg go up in flames? Was it an accident, or was it sabotage? This question has certainly been discussed and debated in earlier works, both fiction and non-fiction. BUT, author Max Allan Collins treats it as a secondary issue in his book "The Hindenburg Murders". The main issue – who killed the undercover German secret police agent who was on board the Hindenburg at the launch, but who hadn't been seen after the first evening and appears may have been thrown overboard?

Mr. Collins chose author Leslie Charters as his protagonist. The mystery writer best known for his “Saint” creation had flown on the Hindenburg and certainly had some background in mysteries. As one might expect, much of the book centers on the politics of the age – we are, after all, on a Nazi airship flying over Europe towards a landing in America. The author also provides us with several interesting characters among passengers and crew to learn about, and perhaps to suspect ... and, of course, we all know it is a matter of history what will happen when the zeppelin reaches New Jersey! Will this incident be connected to the murder (or rather, murders by that point – hey, it's in the title, this isn't exactly a spoiler!), or will it be an unrelated event that simply provides a time limit on the investigation?

I've now read – or rather, listened to, as I've been privileged to enjoy the audio version of the books – 3 of the books in this 6 book series, and have found myself enjoying each. The concept of a murder mystery tied to a historic event – a well researched historic event – provides a unique backdrop to the mystery genre.

RATING: 5 stars. The book kept my attention throughout, and successfully tied historic events to fictitious ones.

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### **Russell Atwood says**

very enjoyable

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### **Tina Smith says**

I love the way this author pulls you in

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### **Stacy says**

Another great read in the Max Allan Collins' disaster series. If zeppelin travel was really as it's described in the book, I truly wish we could have zeppelins for luxury travel (with helium, not hydrogen, of course!). Collins made it sound quite amazing and peaceful - with all the amenities of cruising without the choppy seas. The mystery itself was quite intriguing too and made me want to go buy the History Channel documentary that Collins used as one of his sources. This book didn't quite make it to 5 stars since the mystery and characters did get a bit overly intertwined and convoluted towards the end. But, I definitely enjoyed the book enough to keep reading the rest of the books in the series.

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