



Darned if You Do

Monica Ferris

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The USA Today bestselling Needlecraft Mysteries have shown that when it comes to murder, Betsy Devonshire, owner of the Crewel World needlework shop, doesn't mess around. But when a local hoarder is murdered, she'll need all her wits to dig a new friend out of a heap of trouble...

After a tree falls on Tom Riordan's house, landing him in the hospital, the police discover a mountain of junk piled high in his home. Locals in Excelsior, Minnesota—including Betsy and her Crewel World Monday Bunch—offer to help with the cleanup while Tom recuperates.

But when Tom is found murdered in his hospital bed, the sole heir to his property—his cousin Valentina—becomes the number one suspect. Betsy believes there's more to the case than meets the eye, but finding clues to the killer's identity in the clutter Tom left behind will be like looking for a needle in a haystack ...

FREE CROCHET PATTERN INCLUDED

Darned if You Do Details

Date : Published February 3rd 2015 by Berkley (first published January 1st 2015)

ISBN :

Author : Monica Ferris

Format : Kindle Edition

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Fiction

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From Reader Review Darned if You Do for online ebook

Fran says

These are getting more yawnful each book. I really dislike books that start out with different POVs, and you don't see the regular characters for awhile. I think the mystery was pretty predictable and the entire hoarding plot tedious.

Carolyn says

Another 'mystery' from Monica Ferris that seems anything but. Really, I think her well has run dry in the clever mystery department, at least for this setting.

A very long lead in to the murder gives lots of descriptions - of everything and anything - and very little plot. You get a bit of development of the main character's personal life, but not enough to justify this book either. There are some false leads, and bouncing POV, but very little to engage, very few twists or turns, and the whodunit was obvious from very early on.

Disappointing, because I have really enjoyed these in the past.

Susan Webb says

I love Betsy Devonshire and Goddy. She is a smart woman who cannot help but get involved in murder investigations, especially if she feels it isn't being handled correctly. I like how we get to see a glimpse of her human side, her relationships with friends, with her boyfriend, Connor, and her pets. This series is wonderful

OpenBookSociety.com says

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

Darned if You Do
A Needlecraft Mystery #18
By Monica Ferris
ISBN 9780425270110
www.monica-ferris.com
Brought to you by OBS Reviewer Jeanie

Synopsis: Darned If You Do

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Valentina—becomes the number one suspect. Betsy believes there's more to the case than meets the eye, but finding clues to the killer's identity in the clutter Tom left behind will be like looking for a needle in a haystack ...

Review:

I very much enjoyed 'Darned if You Do,' Monica Ferris' amazing 18th novel in A Needlecraft Mystery series. One doesn't need to read others in the series before reading this as Ms. Ferris is excellent at defining the long-term characters when needed.

Betsy is the owner of Crewel World; it is in one of the storefronts in the building she owns, where she lives in an upstairs apartment. After the previous night's storm that took out power in Excelsior, Minnesota, it is the only building in town that has power. Betsy's live in boyfriend, Connor, had a huge generator in the basement, and turned it on when the town went dark. Crewel World has been 'home' to many groups and classes for needle crafters, who descended on them quickly after finding that they – and the sandwich shop in the building – had power. They discussed various events from the storm, including Tom Riordan's house.

Nobody ever had been in the Riordan home. The night of the storm, all that changed after the neighbor's tree fell on his house, through the roof, pinning him to his bed. That neighbor heard his weak cry for help. Sergeant Larson responded to the call; he broke down the door. The EMT's could barely get up or down the stairs to bring him out after he was freed from the tree limb as the house was filled with three generations of 'collecting' or 'junking'. It was piled to the ceilings on both floors and the stairs narrowed from books on them.

Tom's cousin and only living relative came to help him; she was almost as strange as Tom. Valentina Shipp drove in from out of state, getting a room at a cut-rate motel. She learned that the doctor and Tom's social worker, who had never seen the inside of the home, refused to allow him to return until it was safe to live there with his broken leg. 'Safe' meant cleaning out decades of Tom's 'things' with the help of volunteers; when Tom found that out, he ordered her to leave his hospital room and not return. 'Safe' also meant that the plumbing and possibly wiring would all need replaced and brought up to code, and mold remediation.

Valentina asked for help from various sources while awaiting conservatorship through Tom's attorney; Betsy's Crewel World group members would pitch in to assist. Stunned might describe their first reaction to seeing the inside. One of the volunteers, Georgine, had some knowledge of what might have value, since she and her sister Gracie travelled around the country, supporting themselves by buying goods and re-selling on eBay or craigslist for a tidy profit. Sadly, at least two of the fascinating finds that might have value disappeared. Very sadly, Tom was murdered in the hospital and Valentina, his only family member and heir, was the main suspect. Betsy, an experienced amateur sleuth, finally agreed to help find who the thief and the real murderer was. One of her part timers, Godwin, and boyfriend Connor would help.

Betsy and many of the folks in Excelsior are enchanting! They have a down-home charm and work ethic. Betsy is a calm voice of reason and well-respected, very likable. Even this new reader got to know her quickly as the author wove past and present together to show this three-dimensional woman. We get to know Valentina, Jill, Connor, and Godwin better probably than most of the others; all are defined through descriptions, conversations, and actions as their roles require. If Crewel World was in my neighborhood, I might pick up one of my crochet projects and join one of their groups!

The plot was multi-tiered yet easy to grasp, with twists and turns heightening the experience. This reader actually vicariously felt part of the action while reviewing each clue and chasing one or two red herrings

while trying to solve the mysteries. I had a feeling who might be among the bad guys or gals, even though there was no evidence to substantiate it until those working in the house further discussed what they had seen and when. Emily has a gift of an eidetic memory for what she had seen in the house, which turned the tide of their search. Were it not for the very clever Betsy, Emily and the gang at the shop, the police might not have found the 'perp(s)' on time. The end was very satisfying with every loose thread (or yarn) perfectly in its place. It is easy to see how this series is so highly successful, as it is the down-home small town life many of us crave with people we'd love as neighbors. It is intriguing, exciting, and impossible to put down. Betsy, particularly, is encouraging to Emily and perhaps to the reader who might have some of the feelings Emily had. The grand finale is a 'Classic Lace' crochet pattern that was discussed in the story. I highly recommend this to those of every age of needle crafters, antique collectors, and those who love cozy mysteries. What a beautiful place to visit, no matter the time of year!

Emily Cullen says

A tree falls on Tom Riordan's home and he is trapped. When emergency personnel come they find his house filled from floor to ceiling with "junk". Or is it treasure? Tom's only relative, Valentina comes to take care of Tom and his house but when he is found murdered, she is the only one who really stands to benefit. She asks needlecraft shop owner and amateur sleuth Betsy to help find out who really killed her cousin. I love the "Needlecraft Mystery" series! Betsy makes for a great middle-aged heroine, the mysteries are always fun and there are great characters. I also enjoy her romance with Connor!

Lisa Ks Book Reviews says

This eighteenth installment of the Needlecraft Mystery series starts out with a bang! No, really. It starts with a raging storm, and a tree falling on someone's home. And that's just the beginning of the excitement.

Ms. Ferris has managed yet again to add a fresh take on a long running series. I don't know how she does it, but the author always finds something new to get into for her protagonist, Betsy Devonshire and Betsy's Crewel World Monday Bunch.

As with her past books, DARNED IF YOU DO is very descriptive, ensuring that you "see" things as they happen while you're reading. You can't help but visualize the scenes.

The mystery was filled with plenty of twists and turns, keeping me guessing. And once again, as with the book before this one, book seventeen in this series, THE DROWNING SPOOL, I had no idea who the killer was until Ms. Ferris spelled it out for me.

The needlecraft project in this installment is for a crochet pattern for Classic Lace. You do not have to know any sort of needlework to read this book, but it sure makes you wish you did.

Robin says

This was the first book I have read by Monica Ferris. I enjoyed it. Cute and funny with mystery!

Jessica says

This one was a drag. I knew the culprit almost immediately. Also, no one says "spewth" or makes an "urn" of coffee. Glad I got this from the library....two stars is generous.

Susan Morris says

Still a fun series to read, especially in a stressful week like this one, but where are the editors these days?? One scene, Betsy & Connor are cleaning up from dinner, decide to go to auction, & say they'll stop & get Jimmy John's to eat on the way ... spotted few other discrepancies, too. (Library)

Betsy says

This was a big improvement over Monica ferris's last couple of books in the series. The whodunit was predictable, but the setting was diverting and she took more time making Betsy, Connor, Jill, and Godwin more three-dimensional, where is the past they had been fading to cardboard cut outs. Her descriptions were still a bit too lavish, but far more restrained than they had been. Perhaps she listened to the critics -- she was not over-describing in a way that was just blatant word count padding.

Mary K. says

I started this series with #18, and I'm not a fan of jumping into character development; I can't help but wonder what I have missed in the prior 17. But I enjoyed the story-line mystery. I learned about Cinnabar, an ore of mercury, and that was enough to make this a worthwhile read. So the question, will I start the series with #1? The jury is still out.

Pamela says

Tom Riordan is an eccentric hoarder, and a most unfortunate victim of multiple-injuries resulting from a storm-tipped tree. Shortly thereafter, recuperating in the hospital, fretting over folks going through his 'things' back home, Tom is tragically the victim of foul play – murder in the second degree. And from there, not every 'thing' is as it should be – let alone, where it should be, or how it should be, or with whom. Betsy Devonshire, amateur PI is on the case.....

Since the first installment of Ferris's cozy-mystery Needlework Series - Crewel World I've been a devoted

fan of Betsy Devonshire. I adore the quirky-fun Crewel World gang: Goddy, Jill, Doris, Bershada, Phil, and Connor. Even surly police chief Mike Malloy is a plucky asset.

I thoroughly enjoy the eccentrically creative, cheeky plots. Another great perk: A needlework pattern included in every book. Oh the fun and fanciful mystery-related patterns I've enjoyed over the years. Everything from blackwork to cross-stitch to knitting, and more. Oh, and I greatly appreciate the lack of excessive expletives. A super great perk!

Somewhere around book #15, however, I started sensing a lack of integrity and verve in the plots and action. Cheeky started becoming cheesy.

Until now.

Darned if You Do has restored my faith in all things Monica Ferris/Betsey Devonshire/Crewel World Wonderful! Ferris has once again dipped into the well of ingenuity, originality, social-behavior astuteness, and current event relevance; all with an added depth that's been lacking as mentioned previously. And though the 'who' in the whodunit was fairly easy to figure out, the what, where, and why was quite intriguing.

I must note: the first two-thirds was a mite bit stronger than the last third, in terms of forward momentum and plot-integrity. Also, the climatic resolve, though engaging, it could have been drawn out with a bit more suspense. Finally, there were a couple rabbit trails that had no bearing on the immediate story. Or did they? Hmm.... They might be foretelling of relationship conundrums to come: That which is spoken in haste today, may lead to waste tomorrow.

Four - Crewel is Cool – Stars

“One of my most vivid memories as a child was a children’s sermon. My minister scattered salt on the carpet, and then urged us to pick it up. Of course, we couldn’t. He said that salt grains were like words, which, when they came out of our mouths, cannot be retrieved. It was the first time I remembered knowing, really knowing, that some words, written and spoken, can hurt and the damage done may be irreversible.”

Claudia Cheyne says

A nasty storm passed through the Midwest causing widespread damage to Excelsior and the surrounding areas. Tom Riordan is trapped in his bed after a tree falls on his house. His injuries are serious enough to prevent him from returning to his home - which turns out to be packed with stuff. He is a hoarder who never allowed anyone inside his door. Now his only living relative, cousin Valentina Shipp is called upon to help out and take over matters for Tom until he recovers. Tom never makes it out of the hospital because someone smothers him with his pillow. Betsy has another mystery to solve. This book was interesting because of the topic of "junkers", auction sales and discovering the value of things that appear to be trash.

Erica says

I was a bit disappointed in the ending of this book. I felt as though some possible plot twists were missed and

I found the resolution to be too pat and neat - just not enough suspense and build up for me. I do enjoy this series overall, but this one was more enjoyable during the middle of the book when it was examining the life of a hoarder.

Vicky Marie says

The books in this series are either a hit or miss. This one was a miss. The first half was nothing but buildup. It took almost a hundred pages for the murder to happen, which for a cozy mystery is way too long. I also noticed Ferris sometimes gives away the murderer. I noticed this first in *A Murderous Yarn*. Just a paragraph or two in their perspective and *bam!*, we know it was them. Why would you spoil your own mystery novel like that? It ruins the fun in the reader figuring it out on their own.
