



Dead Is the New Black

Christine DeMaio-Rice

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A RED ADEPT SELECT FOR OUTSTANDING BOOK IN ITS GENRE

Laura Carnegie gave up on the man of her dreams a long time ago. He's fashion designer Jeremy St. James, and not only is he her boss, everyone knows he's gay.

When he's arrested for murder, secrets come to light and nothing is what it seems. If Laura can just solve this crime, keep the cops off her tail, break up a counterfeiting ring, and get the show on the runway by Friday, she might stop being Seventh Avenue's perpetual loser.

Edited by Lynn O'Dell of Red Adept.

Dead Is the New Black Details

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From Reader Review Dead Is the New Black for online ebook

Deanna♥Pink Lady♥? says

4 Couture Stars

Well, Well.....CD Reiss is a master manipulator of writing!! I was first introduced to her writing style in her Songs of Submission Series. That entire series blew me away and I quickly became a super fan. She has the ability to write such beautiful words with the most heartfelt meaning. I can feel what she is writing through the power of her pen(I guess computer now).

So, this book is a mystery. That is right, a mystery with no sex. It almost made me shiver with that thought- No Sex!! I will admit that I'm not much of a mystery reader but I do love fashion and New York so I decided to jump in.

In a mystery, there are always so many characters so you need to be on the ball while reading. Laura Carnegie is a pattern maker in the fashion world. She works for Jeremy St. James, fashion designer, who is gay and the guy that Laura can never have. They are busy preparing for fashion week as his show is one with the hottest buzz. But what happens when the backer to the designer is found dead in Jeremy's off? Seems like an open and shut case- arrest Jeremy for the crime, right? Well as you know, mysteries are not open and shut. What you think is never what it seems.

Laura is not convinced of Jeremy's guilt and decides to do a bit of sleuthing. The cops aren't happy with her digging around their case. She elicits help from her sister, Ruby, and her friend, Stu(who has feelings for Laura) to help her prove Jeremy's innocence. There are twists and turns and you think you know who did it and of course then comes another fork in the road.

I enjoyed reading this book. It's good to read other genre and spread your wings. I will definitely read the next book in the Laura Carnegie Mysteries. I look forward to seeing Laura's future in fashion and hopefully love!!

BR with my Pinkie J

A copy of this book was provided in exchange for an honest review, thank you.

Akl says

I feel bad for giving it a terrible review, especially since it looks like most people loved it. I absolutely hated this book, almost didn't finish, but I try not to start something I don't finish.

The main character is so unlikeable, it is difficult to care what she has to say, and boy, does she have a lot to say. I like fashion as much as the next person, but the detailed descriptions on EVERYTHING almost put me to sleep. My lil' sister is a fashion designer, and even she couldn't finish the book. I find Laura very stuck up, a bit racist. Her fantasy about Jeremy and the way she keeps Stu around as the "second best" as she describes

it makes it even harder to like her and makes Stu look like a stupid guy pining for someone out of her league, which she thinks she is. Her relationship with her sister is superficial, I wonder why they even "like" each other since she spends a lot of time talking badly about her. I do like her sister better than Laura, with all her flaws and perfection, she just seems like more of an interesting character.

Laura's self righteousness is bugging. Again, sister is in Fashion so I understand how they feel about counterfeits and such, and not to mention the legality of it, but the way she looks down on people who wear fakes makes me want to bury her in fakes.

The mystery aspect of it is boring I would not categorize this book as mystery at all. I guess half way through the book who the killer was and who was involved with what.

I am glad I downloaded this book for free when Amazon listed it under free section. I wouldn't be happy if I had spent \$\$ on it.

Jenna Scribbles says

I love cozy mysteries. When I heard that Dead is the New Black was about the fashion world and set in NY, I was all over it. I admit I've watched every season of Project Runway numerous times - thank goodness cable has a thing for reruns.

Ms. DeMaio-Rice knows the ins and outs of the fashion design world, this is apparent. The murder mystery is tightly wrapped up in this industry. I admit, some of it went over my head along with the NYC slang and customs, but I didn't mind. The story was rich, colorful, and intriguing. I learned a lot and was glad the teaching was hidden in the form of a fun who-done-it.

This isn't a fluffy cozy with elements of chick-lit. No, it's not. I found it to be a full-fledged mystery with a deep plot. I would also NOT compare it to The Devil Wears Prada - it's not even close. This book is completely different and so much better.

In one of her bios the author mentions she has enough material for years and years worth of books. I really hope she continues with this series. I see visions of model mysteries, Kelly Cutrone type of characters, etc. Please do!

One request though - I'd appreciate it if Ms. DeMaio-Rice made a couple more characters likeable. In this story, as a new character was introduced, they were generally shown through their flaws, shortcomings, issues, etc. I actually was hard pressed to find anyone I liked. Even the love-interest, Jeremy was described as a raving, mean jerk. So why did Laura love him? Not sure. I seemed to be drawn to Stu and Detective Cangemi - but I think this is only because they weren't described fully. Let's have a few fun, happy characters, in the next book please. Readers need someone to cheer for.

Dead is the New Black is a great read and I enjoyed it very much. I will read the next offering by this author. I hope she is already working on it.

I received this book as a free Review Copy from the author or publisher.

Claire - The Coffeeholic Bookworm says

4 stars

This book reminded me of a lot of subjects: Heidi Klum, Devil Wears Prada and Rebecca Bloomwood from the Shopaholic series, because of all the fashion jargons & mentions of designer labels:) All that's missing is Tim Gunn saying "Make it work!" while clapping his hands. (Okay, that was totally irrelevant, but I just felt like adding it, LOL).

I like the mystery that surrounded the death of Gracie Pomerantz, the financial backer of fashion mogul, Jeremy St. James. It's up to pattern maker Laura Carnegie (no relation to that famous Carnegie) to prove that her gay boss wasn't involved in the murder and to find out the truth. Intriguing, yes! Had me guess the culprit for about 4-7 times, another yes! And when I got to the fashion show, BAM! I was lost with all the glitz and splendor.

Somehow, during these mystery quest, I found myself uttering Heidi Klum's famous words – "One day you're in. The next day you're out."

Ian says

This book is beautifully baffling. It is filled with rich, and sometimes confusing details about the fashion industry. But rather than giving "for dummies" explanations of everything, the author just throws them at you figuring you'll get it eventually. It works. I felt like an observer to something I wasn't fully a party to.

It reminded me of the best Agatha Christie books, and maybe just a little of Alfred Hitchcock. It definitely requires a commitment and I don't think it's for everyone but I thought it was great fun.

Recommended to me by Leslie

Elle the ClosetRomanceReader aka Leftie aka Shoebelle says

3.5*-4.0*

If Devil Wears Prada gave you the inside feel of what goes on in fashion mag biz, this will do the same but in the fashion industry itself. I happen to love fashion so I really enjoyed all the details that CDR wrote in this one. I even pictured Laura, the h, and her sis like the Mulleavy sisters of the Rodarte label. And yes, this is fiction but the whole time I was reading it, I was wondering who the characters can be IRL.

Anyhoot, enough of that rambling. I thought the story itself moved a bit slow and didn't really pick up til midway thru. However, if you love details, it'll make up for the pace. You'll get a good understanding of what goes on inside a fashion house.

The mystery aspect kept me guessing the whole time, maybe it was just me.

The characters were well developed. I'm not necessarily Laura's biggest fan but I understood some of her

insecurities at least. I didn't quite get her relationship with her sister which did work out in the end, her feelings towards Jeremy nor some of her interactions with her colleagues. And I thought Stu deserved more pages. All this being personal preference of course, so I know not all will feel this way.

Having said all that, if you enjoy CDR's writing, I think you'll enjoy this one too. Smart writing, witty dialogues, funny moments in unexpected ways. An enjoyable read altogether.

Sarah Billington says

Really enjoyed this. The voice reminded me of Stephanie Plum, only different. I'm in awe of mystery writers. How do they do that?? A LOT of research has gone into this book, or it draws on expert knowledge of the fashion industry or both. Well done!

♥ Jx PinkLady Reviews ♥ says

I discovered CD Reiss late last year and she's very quickly become a firm favourite; a MUST read. **Dead is the New Black** is a book with NO smut..... That's right no smut, no sex and practically no romance..... So completely out of my reading comfort zone, I nervously began the first book in the Laura Carnegie Mysteries. *I was in the mood for some intrigue...*

It's about the world of Fashion.....

Murder, intrigue, revelations and great characters with various platonic relationships, and a tiny glimpse of a potential romance are all packed into this story.

Laura, our heroine, is a pattern-maker for the famous designer, Jeremy St. James. She drags herself to work early every morning for one reason only... And it's Jeremy, her gay boss?? Murder soon takes place and sends her comfortable routine into chaos.... Who is the killer? Could it be Jeremy? Will Laura be able to help prove his innocence...??? *Is he really gay???*

She wants a relationship with someone but sadly that area of her life is alluding her at the moment.

Feelings

There are quite a lot of characters, essential to a, 'who done it,' and lots of information about the fashion world to take on board, so I found myself trying to absorb everything in the first half. I'm the same when I watch crime drama on TV, it takes me a while to get to grips with everything, so it probably says more about me than the quality of the book. Once I was enveloped in the story the well developed characters spoke for themselves and Laura drew me in with her smart personality. **I love her** and the various relationships she has with her mother, male friend, boss, colleagues, sister... Authentic sibling rivalry was displayed; they annoyed each other but were loyal through and through, a beautiful relationship was revealed to me on the page.

The romantic element was the only thing missing for me, the person I consider to be the hero was not on the page enough, for my personal taste. Obviously I knew this when I embarked on my read but, it's the honest way that I feel. There were lovely romantic glimpses and the really good news is, I think the romantic theme is developed as the series progresses.

"To her, he was pure talent, pure respect, pure kindness, always."

Unrequited love, it's quite beautiful at times.

Dead is the New Black kept me guessing all the way through with it's cleverly woven story. I thought I had it and then it took another twist and turn, with small clues dropped in along the way, all perfectly timed, as you would expect.

One of the reasons I love CD is that she paints pictures with her writing.... She doesn't just tell, she shows, she's a master at it, and this book was no exception. By the end of the story I was invested in Laura, her friendships, her family attachments and her possible relationship with *someone*. I 'm looking forward to the next release in the series.... More Laura and ???? whoever the potential beau may be....

Immerse yourself in the world of fashion and intrigue with Laura and enjoy.

♥ Br with the Deanna

♥ A copy of this book was provided in exchange for an honest review, thank you.

Tima says

Laura is an amazing pattern maker with a crush on her boss. She arrives at work one morning to find him standing over a dead body. The cops think Jeremy killed his financial backer, but Laura just can't picture the man of her dreams doing something so terrible. She sets out to do a little investigating on her own and gets in way over her head. There isn't one person in her life who turns out to be what she thought they were, including her family.

This story was well written, fast paced and fun. I know almost nothing about the world of fashion. But the story was told in a easy to comprehend way. I never felt lost in a world of technical jargon.

The characters were real and Laura was very likeable. The author was able to keep me guessing about the murder because so many of the characters were unlikable. I liked the realness of the relationship between Laura, her mom and her sister.

Definitely a fun murder mystery that I would recommend to my friends.

I received this book free of charge in exchange for my honest review.

A Voracious Reader (a.k.a. Carol) says

Laura Carnegie is a pattern maker for big fashion designer Jeremy St. James. She fell in love with him practically from the day she interviewed for the job and even though they work closely together and she's still in love with him five years later, she's done nothing about it because Jeremy is gay. However, she loves her job and the time in the early mornings that they spend together before everyone else arrives to work, so she continues to love him from afar. Until the morning she's a little late and finds him standing over the dead body of his financial backer, murder weapon in his hand. Uh, oh. That doesn't look good.

This was an excellent mystery! I couldn't figure out who the killer was. I bopped back and forth between suspects and even considered that Jeremy really did kill the bitch, um, I mean, moneybags. Interspersed with a murder to solve, a counterfeit clothing ring to bust, a childhood sibling rivalry to put to rest and a love interest trying to make himself known we are educated on how the big designers and the fashion industry work.

Having no clue and really no interest in fashion didn't stop me from thoroughly enjoying the process in which these exclusive fashions are made, from beginning to end. I've always enjoyed the show 'How It's Made' and this book is a bit like that only with interesting characters, a twisty plot, a murder and a counterfeit clothing mystery thrown in. Most excellent!

*Red Adept provided a copy of this book to me for review. Please see disclaimer page on my blog.

Bekah says

Lauren is a fashionista turned amateur sleuth. As a patternmaker in New York City's garment district, she gives us a close look at how high-end clothing is made, from cutting on the bias to picking the right thread to sew on a button. Think along the lines of "The Devil Wears Prada" or "Project Runway".

The story begins about a week before a major fashion show. Her whole office is in a whirl preparing. Hardworking Lauren comes into work on a weekend, only to find her boss (the dashing gay man she's crushing on) standing over the dead body of his financial backer. Talk about a monkey wrench!

The list of potential perps gets a little confusing, as the number of minor characters is long. A few side trips into Lauren's relationship with her sister, a beat-down by pseudo-mobsters, and a kiss from her long-time pal Stu add to the confusion.

As Lauren and her sister chase down one lead after another, she gets closer to the surprising truth, and danger.

This was a cute story, and I liked the fashion industry backdrop. However, the plot lines were too complex for such a simple idea, and the various characters/motives were too plentiful to really make sense.

Albert says

Overall Feedback: The author of this book contacted me on Facebook to see if I would be interested in reviewing it. She did caution me that "I hope it is not too girly for you". Understandable seeing that my favorite author is Stephen King and well I am a guy (last I checked). Well first and foremost Christine, it was not too girly and thank you for the gift of a well woven tale of mystery in the fashion world. I was entertained and I learned something to boot. This one will have the reader thinking they have the whodoneit but missing the mark. The descriptions of the fashion scene may not appeal to the average reader but for those of us that like detail in our story this will rock your world. Christine obviously knows the inner workings of the fashion scene and she flaunts it for our entertainment. You will learn to love to hate the main character but in the grand scheme of the fashion world, does she not fit? I enjoyed every "girly" word of this novel and will be looking at more of Christine's work as should you.

Point of View: Laura, seemingly pretentious b****, but accurate example of my idea of a "Fashionista". This may make me falling into a stereotype but they are there for a reason. You as the reader will hate to help Laura but she is the lead in this tale so get used to her.

Voice: Having too much is never enough. That is what I take from it but I could also see that having that attitude shall break your soul.

Character Development: When an author can cause me to hate the lead character but drive me to finish the story then I say the character development is spot on.

Plot: Although this would classify as a stereotype, I can see this happening in the real fashion scene and so could you if you are honest with yourself.

Dialogue: Not being in the fashion scene but understanding enough to get by, I would say that I could see each and every point as true to what have been if this was in the real world.

Pacing: I have never learned so much in a hour. As that is how long it took me to read this and even if you do not read like a mad bibliophile you shall not find yourself lost in thought during this read.

Setting: Not being in the fashion world, but now being learned, I would say that I could see this really really happening. Watch the headlines folks!

Continuity: Closed up nice and tidy without a crack in the plot anywhere. Once again Christine bravo and I will look for more from you.

Dianne says

If you love sewing, "The Devil Wears Prada" or just want to know how clothes are made from the ground up (and I really mean from the ground up)...then this may be your book. If you want to know what a pattern maker does, then you will most likely enjoy this book.

BUT if you are looking for a mystery that makes sense, then you may want to take a pass.

The mystery in this book takes second stage to all the folderol that goes on behind the scenes of a fashion show. It can be interesting to read what goes into the making of an outfit, but when I had to look up too many unknown words and phrases to follow along with the story (for instance, I needed to look up just what does a rabbit have to do with pattern-making) I just stared getting bored.

The time line behind this book makes no sense, the characters are annoying, dis-likable, biased and prejudiced. The mystery is mysterious only in that there are so many red herrings and other people doing dastardly deeds that you just can't keep your mind on the original murder.

Cresta McGowan says

Before I launch into this review I want to share a little anecdote: I had just finished reading *The Green Shore* by Natalie Bakopoulos (who emailed me just the other day!) and was looking for something a little lighter. I try to alternate my literary fiction with some "chick-lit" or easy reads, just to give my brain a break. I had stock-piled many books downloaded on my Kindle for free and was excited to dive into the selection. I started and stopped FIVE DIFFERENT BOOKS before stumbling upon *Dead is the New Black*. The other five books, of which I won't name, were so terrible I couldn't read more than one chapter. The ending was obvious, the writing was poor, and the clichés were endless. I wanted some light reading, not bad writing! Anyway, when I started *Dead is the New Black*, my hopes weren't high, but I found myself in for a nice surprise. I kept reading.

Dead is the New Black by Christine DeMaio-Rice is a great story that combines the fashion industry with a kicky murder mystery all set in The Big Apple. Laura, the novel's protagonist, is a pattern-maker for Jeremy St. James, a fashion mogul (whom in all respects, is gay). She worships the ground Jeremy walks on knowing there is no way he'll ever return her affection; love is blind. And, much to Laura's delight, she is the only member of Jeremy's staff that he doesn't treat like scum beneath his feet. It has something to do with her immense talent as a pattern-maker. I didn't even know what this was until I read this book. A pattern-maker takes the design and perfects it on paper and then recreates it on a mannequin until it is absolute. Apparently, this is a career that takes a lot of skill and is quite literally the backbone of major designers' entire lives. Who knew? I guess it's always the "little people" that make the biggest difference in most situations.

One morning, as Laura is arriving extra early at the office so she can have coffee with Jeremy and no one else, things take a nasty turn. Her coffee is spilled over her desk, the place is in disarray, and Jeremy St. James is standing over Gracie, his financial baker, holding a piece of material that was used to strangle her. OOPS! A dead body, and of course, an important person being literally over-shadowed by another important person. Jeremy St. James looks as guilty as O.J. Simpson (we all know he did it!), but Laura just can't believe the man she loves would do something like this. Thus begins her quest to prove the man she most admires innocent of the murder charge that sends him to jail.

Demaio-Rice tells a great story. The characters are fleshed-out and realistic. She throws in just enough twists and turns to steer you away from the killer's identity, and although I figured it out long before the end of the book, I kept reading for two reasons: 1) It was well written and a good story. 2) I had to be sure I was right.

The book is fully of witty writing with lines that made me laugh out loud: "You were supposed to take off the label when you got home. Those people were just too stupid." Seriously, how many times do you want to say this to someone?

I learned a lot about the fashion industry in this book, too. There is so much work that goes into a runway show, more than you could even imagine. I have a newfound respect for people that work in the garment industry.

Dead is the New Black is a book I'd recommend others to read. While it falls predominately into the "chick-lit" category, it has enough grit to be a great detective story, too. I would give this book 3 out of 5 stars, and the only reason I pull back to 3 is because I thought the killer was a bit obvious; but that's just me. I look forward to other books by this author.

Christine Deamaio-Rice has worked in the fashion industry for 20+ years. She is a graduate of the USC Screen Writing program, but has decided novels are her genre. I look forward to other books by her; if I understand what I'm reading correctly, this book is the first in a series.

I love this picture of the author, too. The main character, Laura, is obsessed with getting her scissors back throughout the entire book. A quirky, fun little detail.

Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says

A garment show in a week, late hours, working on the weekends, and then a dead body shows up. Oh no.....a very unwelcome setback.

Jeremy was the one who was standing over Gracie when Laura walked into the office that Sunday morning. Could he have killed her or just found her on the floor with a scarf wrapped around her neck? Hmmmmm.....with material fragments on his hands and clothes, and his being the only one in the office, who else could they suspect? No one for now, but Laura couldn't believe Jeremy killed Gracie, and since Laura was in love with him she tried to find out who really did strangle Gracie.

Regardless, the police arrested Jeremy, and their investigation continued while he was in jail. Laura also was conducting her own investigation, but it wasn't going very well for her. She kept trying to figure out who besides Jeremy would have a reason to kill Gracie. Perhaps Carmella killed him and not Jeremy for no other motive than a good old-fashioned garment district reason? Or how about her husband who found out about her affair. Or more likely what about Mario who may have done it out of sheer jealousy. And....there definitely was a lot of jealousy and competition in the office and throughout the entire garment industry from what I could see.

The book allows a glimpse into what goes into the preparation for a garment show and the mindset of the garment industry's men and women. If you are a "fashionista" you will definitely enjoy this book. The clothes sound marvelous. There are also funny scenes...one particular one was when Laura and her sister were trying to get into an upscale restaurant without reservations.

Miss Demaio-Rice is a talented story teller. She will make you laugh, have you sympathizing with the characters, make you wonder about some of them and what they are thinking, make you believe that you have the mystery solved, and then she throws something in to get you off track.

She will definitely make you want to be part of the craziness and fun going on in her book and make you

want to be friends with all of characters or at least work with them.

The book was first-rate in terms of humor, characters, and plot. DEAD IS THE NEW BLACK is a witty, entertaining book you won't want to miss. 5/5
