



Death in Dulwich

Alice Castle

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Thirty-something single mum Beth Haldane is forced to become Dulwich's answer to Miss Marple when she stumbles over a murder victim on her first day at work. To clear her name, Beth is plunged into a cozy mystery that's a contemporary twist on Golden Age crime classics. But can she pull it off? She already has a bouncy young son, haughty cat, a fringe with a mind of its own and lots of bills to pay, as she struggles to keep up with the yummy mummies of SE21. Join Beth in #1 of the London Murder Mystery series, as she discovers the nastiest secrets can lurk in the nicest places.

Death in Dulwich Details

Date : Published May 31st 2017 by Createspace Independent Publishing Platform

ISBN : 9781547040339

Author : Alice Castle

Format : Paperback 218 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Fiction, Contemporary, Audiobook

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From Reader Review *Death in Dulwich* for online ebook

Stephanie Jane (Literary Flits) says

See more of my book reviews on my blog, [Literary Flits](#)

As regular Literary Flits readers will probably have spotted, I am not a frequent reader of cosy mysteries, but I was particularly attracted by the striking monochrome and red covers of Alice Castle's London Murder Mysteries series. I'm very glad that I was! Having enthusiastically devoured *Death In Dulwich* during a single afternoon and evening, I am now looking forward to returning to Beth Haldane's company for *The Girl In The Gallery*.

Death In Dulwich owes its driving narrative to the unfortunate coincidence of Beth discovering, on her first day in her sought-after new job, that her new boss is no more. Spotting his lifeless blood-soaked body abandoned not entirely inappropriately behind a row of bins, is understandably shocking - all the more so when Beth deduces that she must be the prime suspect for his murder. I liked Beth a lot. A single parent after the untimely death of her husband several years ago, she has somehow managed to afford to continue living in genteel Dulwich while raising her cute son, Ben. Beth and Ben are refreshingly normal and I loved that Castle didn't continually direct her readers to admire some brand-name outfit or aspire to fashionable home decor items. Beth is surrounded by people for whom appearance is everything - and having visited this part of London myself I could easily envisage every aspect of Castle's wickedly accurate descriptions - but she isn't blinded by that social anxiety herself. As readers looking through her eyes we get a good outsider's view.

The story itself is exciting and engaging. I appreciated that it always remains completely believable and Castle refrains from having Beth run around in silly escapades. There's a hint of romantic attraction that, again, feels realistic and although the denouement wasn't exactly what I had foreseen - and I had changed my mind a few times on the way there too - it was convincing and satisfying. The excellent London scene portrayals briefly put me in mind of Helen Smith's Emily Castles Mysteries series. If you like those, give Alice Castle's London Murder Mysteries a try and vice versa.

Grace J Reviewerlady says

Widowed Beth Haldane lives with her young son in the much-coveted village of Dulwich where yummy mummies are the order of the day. Beth has no time for such idleness as she strives to earn enough to keep herself and Ben above the breadline. A temporary job of assistant archivist at the posh school of Wyatt's is a godsend to her – little did she know what she was letting herself in for! The story which follows is compelling reading once you begin – who can she trust and, more pertinently, add to her list of suspects? This author has created a very likeable amateur female sleuth, and I've always had a soft spot for a good mystery!

I'm delighted that this book heralds the beginning of a series; it is a well thought out mystery with a great

variety of characters and such accomplished writing. The vocabulary is widely varied and spot on – it was no surprise to read in the author’s bio that Alice Castle comes from a journalism background. Her knowledge of the written language shines throughout this novel.

The ins and outs of this *Death in Dulwich* take right up until the last few pages of the book, finishing this mystery but hopefully leaving a bit of continuity for the follow up, which I am so looking forward to. A fabulous read, and one which I heartily recommend.

I was offered an arc from the author, that was our first interaction and was purely on a professional level. This is my own original, honest and unbiased review.

DJ Sakata says

Favorite Quotes:

The spring sunshine glinted off perfectly tousled blonde hair and the equally shiny metal clasps of a new handbag, the size of a well-fed toddler. Beth raised her eyebrows at Katie. That bag must have cost more than her monthly mortgage payment.

Dr Grover was famously married to a willowy actress– the only factor that kept most of Dulwich’s divorcees at bay. But when had being married ever stopped people? True, if it ever got out, there would be a fuss; not least from the disappointed divorcees.

It was true that the man had had a certain arrogant swagger. She’d just thought it had come from being a guy of a certain age, in possession of a penis. There was a type and a generation of men who thought this simple appendage made them superior to every woman around them, and also, in some very strange corner of their psyche, convinced that all females desperately wanted them to demonstrate their skills with that specific piece of gristle at the slightest opportunity, whether the women demurred or not.

My Review:

I took a gamble and decided to read an unfamiliar author with a three-part British mystery series, a genre I haven’t indulged in for ages. While still on page one I was struck by the refreshingly comfortable and amusing writing style, allowing me to relax into my chair and settle in for a cozy treat. The storylines were slowly developed yet easy to follow, engaging, and character driven. I relished Ms. Castle’s dry wit and use of vibrant descriptions and amusing details, which often brought and kept a smirk to my lips. A young widow and single-mom, Beth was having the worst type of first day of a new job with the disheartening realization that her new boss was a loathsome leech, only to be the one to find that loathsome leech dead a few hours later while on her way to lunch. Yikes. Talk about bad luck... Beth had no alibi and being the snoop sort, she felt compelled to launch her own inquiries for fear she was the top suspect. Although her efforts to clear her name were vaguely thought out and she tended to dither, I adored her anyway. I am eagerly looking forward to more of her hapless adventures and am ready to gobble the next installment, which is currently idling on my kindle.

Eva says

Welcome to the village of Dulwich. Where appearances matter a great deal. From wonderfully maintained homes to the yummy-mummies at the school gates and children with a multitude of extra-curricular activities that will surely catapult them into a future that holds big mansions, flashy cars and lots of money and status.

How inconvenient then that Beth Haldane, on her first day at a new job, should find a dead body near the bins on the playground of the top local school, Wyatt's. Since Beth has no alibi, she worries she may end up being the prime suspect and she sets out to investigate on her own to try and find the culprit of this crime.

Beth is one of those characters you warm to from the moment you meet her. There's something incredibly likeable about this thirty-something single mum. Thrilled as she is to land the job of assistant archivist at Wyatt's, she also fears she's not up to the job and wonders how on earth she got it in the first place. However, she's determined to make a good go of it, hoping the money she earns can be put aside to give her son the best start in life.

Death in Dulwich is a wonderful introduction to a new cosy crime series. Alice Castle really brings the village to life and there is always something fun about an ordinary person finding themselves in extraordinary circumstances. The mystery itself kept me guessing until the end. I couldn't at all figure out who the killer was, especially because it seemed the victim wasn't particularly liked so the list of potential suspects was quite long.

I thoroughly enjoyed this cosy mystery. If gore and gruesomeness isn't quite your thing but you do like a bit of crime fiction, then this is for you. I'm sure Dulwich and its residents have many more stories to tell.

Whispering Stories says

Book Reviewed by Stacey on www.whisperingstories.com

Beth Haldane's first day at her new job working as an assistant archivist at the prestigious Wyatts Private School hasn't gotten off to the best start. After finding herself stuck in a room with no windows for three hours waiting for her boss, she decides to go and look for him. She eventually finds him but not quite how she was expecting. Dr. Alan Jenkins the senior archivist at the school is lay behind the bins, dead. It looks like he has been stabbed.

With enquires into his death ongoing, it would seem that some people are quick to point the finger at the new girl. Well, she was the person who found him and statistics show that the finder is often the culprit! Using her journalistic skills she acquired from a previous job, she sets out to clear her name and discover who the real killer is. However, by doing so she has just put herself in danger too?

Death in Dulwich is a classic cosy murder mystery set in a middle class picturesque rural village in England – Think *Murder She Wrote* meets *Midsummer Murders*. The list of suspects is long. Everyone seems to have a reason to want Dr. Jenkins dead so Beth clearly has her hands full.

The book is told mainly from Beth's point of view as she tries to unmask the murderer whilst at the same time clear her name. She is a wonderful character, even if she does go on with herself a bit too much

sometimes. I did wonder in real-life how far she would really get with her investigations until the police would come knocking and tell her to stay out of it, but I can understand her wanting to stand up for herself and not be blamed for something she didn't do.

If you like straightforward murder mysteries then this is the perfect series for you. I now can't wait to get started on book two, 'The Girl in the Gallery'.

Berit??? says

4 Cozy Stars ????

This was a fun very readable cozy mystery... set in the uppercrust community of Dulwich... where your child's success is based on how many instruments they are learning to play and how many hours of tutoring/coaching they have per week.... glad to see Americans aren't the only ones to go a little overboard on this, and I am as guilty as anybody else! The author did a wonderful job of drawing a picture of this community I could just picture it... I could just feel the judgment, LOL

Beth starts a new job at a posh school as a assistant archaeologist... on her first day on the job she finds a dead body... not a great first day! As in all good cozy mysteries Beth takes it upon herself to play amateur sleuth especially after her house has been broken into.... really likes Beth she was a wonderful single mother just trying to give her son the best life possible... loved her best friend Katie and Katie's passion for yoga...

The academic setting was filled with eccentric characters, some of who you would not want to see at your child's school! Plenty of suspects that allowed me to play amateur detective right along with Katie... and it is a good thing she was there, because I did not figure this one out! Looking forward to reading the next book in the series...

Absolutely recommend to all fans of the cozy mystery! This one checks off all the boxes for things you love and expect from a wonderful cozy mystery!

*** many thanks to the author and Rachel at Rachel's Rado Resources for my copy of this book ***

PS: the idea of a company that does school projects for you is brilliant! I hate school projects! ?

Roughseasinthemed says

This was a somewhat languid read for a mystery murder book.

Our heroine starts a new job only to discover the body of her boss at lunchtime. Needless to state, she sets about solving the murder on her own despite the ongoing police investigation.

The writing is readable, and there are minimal proofing errors, although there are a couple of inconsistencies in the story.

What it lacked was any sort of pacing or tension, and characterisation was weak. We had the ever-smiling

supportive friend, a wooden police inspector, and the only mildly interesting ones were two staff at the school where Beth works, mainly for their eccentricity.

There are no red herrings or fascinating denouements, and the likeliest suspect becomes obvious fairly quickly.

Still, an easyish read, and will suit readers who like their murder stories on the slow and plodding side.

3.5 but is nearer 4 than 3.

Katharine Johnson says

A must for lovers of cosy crime fiction. Widowed single mum Beth Haldane gets a job as an archivist in a prestigious school in aspirational Dulwich Village. But her first day doesn't quite go according to plan and that's putting it mildly – she discovers the body of her boss who has been brutally murdered. Aware that she must be one of the suspects she sets out to unmask the murderer. This is a good old-fashioned whodunnit with a great cast of characters. Beth felt absolutely real and was very easy to sympathise with. I can't wait to see what her next case will be

Roland Clarke says

The descriptive opening with its Dulwich setting and the centuries-old school swept me into a change of reading direction. I tend to read more hard-boiled mysteries, but when a cozy grabs my attention like *Death in Dulwich*, I am hooked.

Single-mum Beth Haldane did more than that. She's both a determined and an amusing protagonist whose priority is her son. But stumbling over a murder victim on her first day at a new job adds to her impressive daily juggling. She realises that she is a prime suspect so delving into the secrets hiding in leafy SE21 is logical.

Except to the police who have their way of dealing with crime. I sensed that the Inspector will be making a re-appearance in Beth's life when she is faced with her next case. As a writer of police procedurals, I questioned the authenticity of his actions – but only for a moment, and I want to know more.

Beth holds to her priorities - Homework must come before murder investigations and getting your son to school on time is vital. Even harder when you are surrounded by 'the yummy mummies' with aspirations for their little darlings.

Alice Castle paints a humorous picture of the upwardly-mobile world, yet she makes the subtle competitiveness work alongside. The characters all feel realistic, from the staff at Wyatt's – I remember some from my private school days – to the suspects driven by...well, that would be spoiling the fun.

Let's just say that suspects can get desperate, and there are red herrings plus direct challenges for Beth that test her resolve. Never underestimate a determined sleuth or a devious writer. Some of the structural twists

fooled me as well.

This mystery that kept me grinning and thinking. Recommended for those that want a neat cozy read. I may not join Beth immediately for her next case, but *The Girl in The Gallery* is a Must Read.

4.7 stars upgraded to 5.

Story – five stars

Setting/World-building – five stars

Authenticity – four stars

Characters – five stars

Structure – four stars

Readability – five stars

Editing – five stars

LJ (On The Shelf Reviews) says

Beth Haldane is a single mum, just about scraping by after the death of her husband trying to provide for her nine year old son Ben. She lives in the affluent Dulwich Village, surrounded by yummy mummies with far too much time on their hands. When she's offered an archivist assistant job at Wyatt's, a much sort after boys school in the area, she jumps at the chance. Unfortunately for her on the first day she finds her boss, Dr Jenkins dead.

Feeling that she's the only suspect, she embarks on finding the real culprit, much to the annoyance of dishy DI Harry York.

This book puts the cosy into cosy mystery! It's a good old fashioned style whodunnit, with plenty of suspects, red herrings and mystery. It really reminded me of the Agatha Raisin series by MC Beaton which I absolutely love.

I was quite surprised that Dulwich Village is actually a real place in South London. I honestly thought before I started reading it that it was entirely out of the writer's imagination but now I want to go and visit it although I don't think I'd want to live there, not with all those yummy mummies hanging around!

I really liked Beth. She's hard working, a little stubborn with an OCD streak and has a tendency for bouts of low self esteem. I think any mum, single or not, would understand the constant struggle of trying to do your best for your child or children that Beth goes through on a day to day basis. The way she butts head with DI York, who seems a little cold and formal, was a nice touch and I look forward to their relationship growing.

I did feel that Beth's friend Katie seemed a little too perfect, even though she's meant to be the so called 'normal' one like Beth and she was just there as a bit of a plot device to move the story on but of course that's just my opinion!

A fantastic start to the series that I would recommend this book to those who love a good cosy mystery.

Nancy says

I really loved the setting as described- the fabulous old school of Wyatt's with its stunning architecture, as privileged as you could ever get and then the author comes to describe the location of the (no spoilers) action at the beginning of the novel. That description prompted the first laugh of the story, and I found a good few more. If you want a quick entertaining read that's a cosy murder mystery, then Death in Dulwich will tick the boxes but you'll have to add a few more because Beth is a bit different from some other sleuths I've read about. She's quite unflappable, very inquisitive, at times sneakily persuasive and prone to entering situations she's not exactly planned for. I was just getting to know that nice man Harry York, the real detective, when the story ended and he'd be nice to know even better.

Of course, maybe a read of Book 2 will help with that?

?Dani? ?Touch My Spine Book Reviews? says

I am crazy about this series! What, What! I really enjoy books based in London even there's some nasty murder to go with it. I also love that the sleuth was a single mom battling issues that us moms can relate to.

?I also can see why reviewers are saying she's the modern Miss Marple and have even compared her to one of my all time favorites, Stephanie Plum!!!?

?

There wasn't loads of gore and violence in these novels, just great murder mysteries that are sure to captivate many readers with their witty and charming characters and portraying a story that has you antsy waiting for the next novel to arrive. I wish there was more mysteries like this. There was the perfect blend of a fun cozy feel and a murder mystery that keeps you turning pages late through the night! #WorthIt!? I loved the characterization in these novels and loved the steady pace that captured my attention from beginning to end! I highly recommend this series to anyone who loves a good murder mystery with great characters are that great added bonus. I give the first two novels in The London Murder Mystery Series a definite 5+ out of 5 freakin' fantabulous stars!

Stephanie says

A Death in Dulwich is a good introduction to this cozy crime series. Beth is a character I liked, she was shown to be independent, with a slightly sarcastic opinion on some of the people she met and especially of life in Dulwich. I don't know the area at all but I can imagine that there are plenty of areas like it. Her new job is one that I would love, I would have the time of my life in that poky, untidy little office! Finding a body, not so much.

It is cozy crime but there is a darker thread to the mystery, some of which is revealed as she tidies the archives and also the murder. It isn't the main theme in the novel though. The author goes out of her way to make the reader have an interest in the characters. There are a few I'm hoping to read about in book two. Including the cat, Magpie, strangely enough.

Kath Middleton says

Beth's first day in her new job as archivist at Wyatt's school is memorable for the wrong reason. Her immediate superior Dr Jenkins, the senior archivist, sees her into her office then disappears for the morning. She goes for lunch and finds him dead. Both Beth and Detective Inspector York are determined to find out who killed him. The case is surprisingly not straight forward. Nobody liked Dr Jenkins and the delightful village of Dulwich is quite put about.

Beth is intelligent and curious. She takes it upon herself, as the finder of the body, to try to solve the riddle of the death. Yes, she should have left it to the nice policeman. But really, would you? This book was full of gentle humour and sharp observation and I enjoyed it very much, despite having a bit of an idea before the end of whodunit. A great read in the cosy mystery genre.

I received a review copy of this book.

Breakaway Reviewers says

Life in yummy-mummy land

Beth Haldane has landed a job against all the odds as assistant archivist at Wyatt's, the most sought-after independent secondary school in Dulwich. She is a widow who struggles to bring up her son, Ben, after her husband's untimely, early death. Life is tough and although she feels there must have been other, more highly-qualified, applicants for the job she is hardly going to turn down this life-saving opportunity.

Her intention to investigate who else applied for the job and to determine why she was the successful candidate is overtaken by much more dramatic events on her first morning of her new job which leads to her investigations being directed elsewhere.

I should admit immediately that this was not my favourite kind of murder mystery. Beth's meddling would not have been tolerated by the investigating authorities and her actions are illogical for the type of personality she has. The book is written from her point of view except for rather strange, short episodes written from the investigating officer's POV regardless of the fact that he hardly appears in the plot.

The saving grace of this book though is the author's acute observations of life in Dulwich. Middle-class angst shines through and is at times even amusing. I am sure it is just prejudice but I share the active dislike of the type of person she paints so well. Those who, just because they have made squillions on property in London, seem to think that this makes them better or more superior to anyone else on the planet. I have too had to dodge the 4x4 SUVs driven through narrow London streets by (mostly) women who haven't yet found that the vehicle possesses a reverse gear.

This novel, therefore, raised many a smile but, in the end, and despite being well-written, is a fairly meaningless romp of an amateur detective - with the stress on amateur.

mr zorg

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.
