



A High-End Finish

Kate Carlisle

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In the seaside town of Lighthouse Cove in northern California, everyone knows the best man for the job is actually a woman—contractor Shannon Hammer. But while Shannon can do wonders with a power drill and a little elbow grease, she's about to discover that some problems aren't so easily fixed....

Shannon's home-renovation and repair business is booming, but her love life needs work. On a blind date with real estate agent Jerry Saxton, she has to whip out a pair of pliers to keep Jerry from getting too hands on. Shannon is happy to put her rotten date behind her, but when Jerry's found dead in a run-down Victorian home that she's been hired to restore, the town's attractive new police chief suspects that her threats may have laid the foundation for murder.

Determined to clear her name, Shannon conducts her own investigation—with the help of her four best friends, her eccentric father, a nosy neighbor or two, and a handsome crime writer who's just moved to town. But as they get closer to prying out the murderer's identity, Shannon is viciously attacked. Now she'll have to nail down the truth—or end up in permanent foreclosure...

A High-End Finish Details

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Author : Kate Carlisle

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From Reader Review A High-End Finish for online ebook

Pat says

Once I started this book it was clear that I wasn't gonna like it.

The main character, Shannon Hammer, has recently returned to her small town to take over a successful construction business from her father Jack Hammer (really, what kind of name is that) after he suffers a mild heart attack. Shannon is perfect in every way. She lives in a gorgeous remodeled Victorian home, has a wonderfully flower and herb garden that was designed by none other than her deceased mother who was a (choke) botany professor and renowned (!) horticulturist. She is tall, hangs with beautiful svelte supermodel-looking friends, but for some reason; was picked on in high school by the "mean girls" and just can't seem to get past that.

One of her friends sets her up on a blind date which ends badly when the guy practically tries to rape her in front of the whole town on the beach. She kicks him and he ends up dead in just a few hours. Then more murder and mayhem follow. Two new characters are introduced - the gorgeous hunk of a Police Chief, who she originally refers to as Thor (seriously) and then later Mac Sullivan, another gorgeous hunk who is a renowned author of, of course, her favorite mystery series. And they both end up vying for her affections.

I had this one figured out long before it was spilled to the reader by none other than a fight on the edge of a cliff by the overly chatty protagonist. When Shannon was describing her little town and all the new age shops it contained I almost had to stop reading and just let it be. Ms Carlisle just went too far. Perhaps the story would have been better if she hadn't gone off on so many tangents setting up the story and making everything so wonderfully perfect. The real kicker, for me, was the preview of the next book in the series at the end. After reading so much drivel how could anyone be expected to read the next installment.

Julie says

A High End Finish by Kate Carlisle is a 2014 NAL publication.

This is the first in an all new series from this veteran cozy mystery author. I was pleased that I was able to find this one in my Overdrive account.

Shannon has taken over her father's construction business, and does all her work with her custom pink tools. She is a staple in Lighthouse Cove, known and loved by most folks in town. But, Shannon's love life has been stalled out for a very long time, which bothers her friend, Lizzie, who wants everyone to be as happy as she is. So, she proceeds to set Shannon up on a blind date, which went horribly awry, with Shannon attempting to kick the man in the gonads, an act witnessed by many dining along the beachfront that night. This situation is embarrassing enough, but it turns deadly serious when Shannon finds the man dead, an obvious murder victim, making her the prime suspect.

Can Shannon find the real killer or will she find herself behind bars for a crime she didn't commit?

I confess I have read the third book in this series, and I liked it well enough to go back and hunt down the

previous installments.

Shannon is a character that is going to develop nicely, so I hope those who may have been a little on the fence about this one, will continue on with the series, because it does begin to shape up nicely a little further along.

However, this first book is a little rough around the edges, and was a little bit of a challenge at times. There are quite a few characters and the story was a little busy at times, but the author did have to cram a lot into this book, in order to get the ball rolling.

Overall, this is a solid start to the series and I am really excited about the possibilities it has. For one, when the story starts, Shannon is going through a very dry dating spell, but by the book's end, she has not one, but two possible love interests! So stay tuned for more adventures in Lighthouse Cove!

3.5 stars

Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

I'm quite excited about this author because although Kate Carlisle is a cozy mystery writer, she does have a good dose of romance in her books so if you're like me and you are a predominately a romance reader who is looking to try something new, Kate Carlisle the is one to check out.

A HIGH-END FINISH is the first book in the Fixer-Upper Mysteries. It's set in northern California and follows a contractor named Shannon Hammer. I really like the concept of this series because it's a little different. Instead of something girly and sweet, Carlisle chooses an occupation that's a little more "manly". Of course women are able to do things just as good as men and Shannon is a perfect example of that with her handiwork.

In this particular book, a man she went on a blind date with is discovered dead in one of the homes she is meant to restore so really, it puts Shannon right in the middle of things. Shannon is such a fun character. She's not so over the top that she's strange but she does have her cute quirks that makes her very admirable and fun.

I like that her occupation is something that I don't much know about because it does keep things interesting for me. I also think Carlisle does a good job of providing readers with the details but not packing the book full with them so it really is a good balance.

I am so glad to have found Kate Carlisle and her books. I'm definitely looking forward to trying out her Bibliophile Mysteries as well as that seems to be the more popular of her books so far.

Mary says

A very fine story!

Shannon Hammer is a contractor in Lighthouse Cove, California. She has come back home when her dad had some health problems. She decided to stay home and she took over her dad's construction business.

She has a few jobs going with a few groups of employees on each job.

Her friend Lizzie thinks she is a match maker, so she sets Shannon up on a blind date.

Shannon has a good time until they go for a walk on the beach!

That is when Jerry Saxton shows his true colors. He thinks Shannon owes him something because he paid for dinner like a lot of guys these days do!

Well, Shannon does not think that and she gives him a run for his money kicking him right where it hurts the most.

The next day is is found in one of Shannon's work places. So she is the chief "person of interest".

The book held my interest and I was guessing right up to the last chapter. I will be looking for more in this series and looking for the Hallmark movies with Jewel.

Grits Helme says

A better-written review is in the works, but I want to spend a little while *not* thinking about how much I didn't enjoy this book. Here are the highlights:

slow-moving; too much telling, not enough showing; goes over the facts of the case too many times, so that it feels like I'm not expected to remember anything

the writing itself often bothered me: too much of the same sentence over and over

main character is petty and not very likeable

side characters (especially the "mean" girls) aren't believable; even the murderer isn't believable! -- I'd expect a multiple murderer who left no evidence behind to actually have well-formed motives

the inevitable explanation at the end is made even longer by the fact that our clever Ms. Hammer has figured out nothing on her own and needs every detail explained to her by the murderer

Ian says

Shannon's blind date.

The date from hell.

Murder.

The new cop on the beat.
Shannon in his sights.
Things aren't looking good.

An author moves to town.
Former Navy SEAL.
Looking better.

Who to choose?
The cop or the SEAL?
...and there's still a murderer on the loose.

Cathy Daniel says

My best way to describe the writing is personable. Easy going, fun and it feels like the writer is talking to you like a best friend. I actually loved this town and the friends. It's easy to see why Hallmark snatched this series up. One (picky) thing annoyed me though. Shannon seemed like a reasonably smart woman. However, after the first time she loudly threatened to kill someone and then he dies and she's a suspect, you would think she would learn something but no. She does it again and the person is killed also. I can shrug that off but THEN a 3rd time someone almost dies and she tells the police (no less) how much she hated this person. My eyes are rolling now. Besides that, enjoyable book. Here's to smarter behavior in the others.

Lisa-Books Smiles says

I've surprised myself by how much I enjoy this book. I'm looking forward to reading the entire series.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

An awesome debut!

With a bit of home construction work in my past and a person who has renovated a house or two I loved this story. Shannon's dad had built up a very successful business and Shannon has stepped to fill his shoes nicely. Her love life is a bit of a mess and she has a friend whose main mission seems to be to find Shannon and any of her other single friends a man. You would think Shannon's last date and the man ending up dead would get her to stop but it barely slows her down. Shannon does meet some very interesting men, the new police chief who is thinks she may have committed murder and a crime writer who first met her when she was looking her absolute worst. If she survives and the murderer is caught there may be some developments in the romance department but first things first. She needs to stay safe and the police chief needs to do his job.

These characters are absolutely wonderful. Shannon, her friends, neighbors and co-workers all look out for

each other. That what small town life means. Sometimes it means a lot of gossip but most of the time it means helping in any way they can. Her dad and uncle can't always be around because when the fish are calling it is time to go fishing. The chief just needs to get to know everyone better and the writer seems to be settling in just fine. She also gives us some very interesting unsavory characters, the creepy Jerry and a man who comes to Lighthouse Cove for 2 weeks every year and no one in town wants him as their guest. Sadly Shannon drew the short straw this year and he is staying in one of the suites above her garage. He is one who believes the customer is always right but he is so very wrong.

I especially enjoyed all the descriptive details of the houses, the lighthouse and the town of Lighthouse Cove. It is so important to have the foundation of the setting as the series continues.

As for the plot, there was a lot of action, plenty of suspects and a few surprises. It was a captivating cozy and thankfully we don't have long to wait for the next installment. This Old Homicide: A Fixer-Upper Mystery comes out January 27. This girl, who had her own set of pink tools, gives this story 5 starfish!

Elle's Book Blog says

Release Date: November 4, 2017

Genre: Cozy Mystery

Series: A Fixer-Upper Mystery #1

I love a good cozy mystery so I was thrilled when I saw this one on sale for \$1.99. So thrilled in fact that I gobbled it up as fast as I could! A High-End Finish is the first book in the series. There are a few more that have been released after this one, so if your looking for a new cozy series to get into this would be a good one as there aren't too many books to catch up with. Also, Kate Carlisle does a fantastic job at mixing a little bit of romance with a great mystery. So, you can't go wrong with this one if you are a fan of one or both of these genres!

In this installment, readers will meet Shannon Hammer- a female contractor who lives in the small town of Lighthouse Cove. Does this name sound familiar to you? If so, think Hallmark Movies and mysteries. Because this book is now a movie! Wohoo! Anyway, Shannon leads a pretty docile life in Lighthouse Cove- she has friends, family, and a great job, but she tends to keep to herself instead of dating because all the dates she goes on ends in disaster. The most recent one leads to an assault and murder which spirals her life right out of control. Luckily for Shannon, she has her good friends on her side, plus the sexy detective and the bestselling and handsome author on her side.

Overall, I truly enjoyed this one and will be picking up the other books in the series. I can't wait to see what kind of shenanigans and mysteries that surround Shannon next. On top of this, I look forward to reading about her love interests and see where those go!

Jonathan says

I've wanted to read this book for awhile, it was one of the priorities on my tbr list and so when I finally got it I was ecstatic, and I can honestly say that I wasn't let down.

The MC was extremely likeable, and unlike the protagonist in many other cozy mystery series you actually saw her doing work during the book. It was a refreshing change. The rest of the characters were also great, but the author seems to be setting up a love triangle. Let's hope that gets dropped.

Really there's nothing bad in this book. The chapters were a bit long but besides that a great mystery, setting, and characters. I can't wait to read the next one!

Mark Baker says

Shannon Hammer loves her life and her job of working on the many Victorians in Lighthouse Cove. She's agreed to go on a blind date with Jerry Saxton, but he turns out to be a complete jerk. To Shannon's horror, she finds his dead body in one of her houses a couple of days later. With the police looking at her as the prime suspect, she has to build a case against someone else. There are no shortage of suspects, but who did it?

More than a mystery with clues and red herrings, this book is a series of mysterious events, with Shannon reacting to the latest. There are some interesting twists, but the lack of true investigation bothered me. Still, the book does come to a logical climax. I loved these characters. Shannon has a strong group of friends and family, and I really liked them.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Fred says

A High-End Finish is the first book in the A Fixer-Upper Mystery series and a wonderful new series, too.

Shannon Hammer has taken over her families restoration/renovation construction business in Lighthouse Cove, a small community near San Francisco where everybody knows each other. One of her close friends, Lizzie, fixes Shannon up with a blind date with Jerry Saxton. A good time was had until they went for a walk along the beach, near a pier. Jerry made some unwanted advances on her and she ended up kicking him and threatening to kill him if he tried it again. Unfortunately it was to a cheering crowd on the pier above. Then when Shannon goes to a house they are renovating, she finds the body of Jerry in the basement dead. He has been killed with one of wrenches. Once the handsome and single police chief, Eric Jensen, begins "grilling" her, she knows that needs to, with the help of her friends, begin to look for clues as to who the killer is. As she begins to look into Jerry's past she soon learns that he is abusive and has affair with many of the women in Lighthouse Cove, so it will be a long list of suspects for her to go through.

This series has a wonderful cast of characters in addition to the feisty Shannon. Jane and Lizzie are two of her closest friends and are very protective and supportive of Shannon. When Shannon is returning from checking out the house at Lighthouse Cove's lighthouse she is rescued by the handsome Mac Sullivan, a crime novelist. Mac was able to get confirmation that the brake cable on her bike had been cut and was actually an attempt to stop her investigation.

In the dating department, which will make Lizzie and Jane very happy, it looks like Shannon will have the handsome crime writer and the equally handsome police chief knocking on her door.

My Westie thinks the Robbie needs to have a larger role in future books.

Definitely looking forward to the next book in this series. It's a wonderful addition to her Bibliophile Mysteries series.

Linda says

I loved this story! Lots of action and thoroughly entertaining! In the lovely seaside town of Lighthouse Cove, California, Shannon Hammer is a home-renovator and contractor, complete with pink-handled tools! She enjoys life with her dog, Robbie, her cat, Tiger, and several close female friends she hangs out with. Her dad, uncle, and crew members all live close by, too. Shannon is a strong, yet vulnerable woman. After a disastrous blind date with a local realtor and his groping hands, (during which time I wanted to reach through the book pages and smack the guy across his big, stupid head) her friends gather around for support and mostly just her pride is injured.

Shannon's home renovation biz is booming. Life's good until she finds Jerry Saxton, the slimy realtor, dead in the basement of a clients old home. Bad news--he's been killed with her pink-handled pipe wrench. Shannon meets the new police chief, handsome Eric Jensen, and has mixed feelings about his personality. With suspicion cast on her, it's almost the last straw when a despicably rude, snobby, animal-hating renter shows up to stay in one of her garage suites for two weeks. He turns out to be the bane of the town's existence. Shannon and her friends are desperately searching for clues as to who the killer is in their midst. Rescued by a sexy, new town resident who pretty much rocks her world, Shannon's life is threatened more than once. Until the final, dramatic confrontation, I had five suspects in mind as to the identity of the psychopathic killer could be. Read "A High-End Finish" yourself, and see if you can nail the killer before the author reveal!!

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the author. I voluntarily posted an honest review.

Rachael says

Shannon Hammer owns a contracting company and she spends her time happily restoring Victorian houses in her hometown Lighthouse Cove. The day after the worst blind date of her life she stumbles across her date Jerry murdered in the basement of one of the houses she's restoring. And the murder weapon is one of Shannon's tools. When the new police chief makes Shannon the number one suspect in the murder investigation, Shannon knows that it's up to her to find the real killer.

Shannon's heart was broken by her high school sweetheart. She thought they were going to spend the rest of their lives together but he broke up with her because he had knocked up the school's mean girl. Okay, that sucks, but Shannon doesn't react like any normal woman should under those circumstances. Somehow in the scenario of her boyfriend cheating on her, the other girl is to blame because Tommy's such a nice guy. When she moves back to town, she makes a point of rekindling her friendship with him and making sure that the past wouldn't prevent them from being friends. In her very first interaction with him in the book, she kisses him on the cheek as a thank you for something so insignificant I can't even remember what it was. And then we find out that she hasn't dated anyone seriously since him. That is the kind of woman this author wants me

to relate to?? I don't think so. That information was shared in the first chapter or two and it was all I could do to continue the book after that.

The mystery isn't very mysterious. There's a huge list of characters that was difficult to keep straight and none of them really presented themselves as a viable suspect. The big reveal at the end wasn't revealing to me since I had guessed pretty early on who the killer was. But Shannon was completely blown away which actually wasn't surprising. All of her "sleuthing" involved getting secondhand information from her friends or going on her own prejudices formed in high school.

There's also the introduction of a stereotypical love triangle. The new police chief looks like Thor and doesn't put himself in Shannon's good graces by presuming to even suspect that she might have been involved in the murder. But they slowly warm to each other and it isn't long before Shannon starts feeling comfortable and safe around him even while he scolds her for investigating on her own. Meanwhile, a sexy and mysterious crime writer Mac has moved into town and is immediately attracted to Shannon. He wastes no time making his interest in her known and then playing absolutely no part in the story whatsoever. The author plays up both of the guys and it's easy to see that Shannon will spend the next however many books in the series stringing both of them along. I cast my vote for Thor-like police chief.

The series was just too cookie cutter and the main character too unlikable for me to even be interested in continuing this series.
