



Blue Dahlia

Nora Roberts

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(Librarian's note: The ISBN and other publishing details also belong to the hardcover edition of this book, published in 2004 by Jove.)

Stella has a passion for planning that keeps her from taking too many risks. But when she opens her heart to a new love, she discovers that she will fight to the death to protect what's hers. — Trying to escape the ghosts of the past, young widow Stella Rothchild, along with her two energetic little boys, has moved back to her roots in southern Tennessee-and into her new life at Harper House and In the Garden nursery. She isn't intimidated by the house-nor its mistress, local legend Roz Harper. Despite a reputation for being difficult, Roz has been nothing but kind to Stella, offering her a comfortable new place to live and a challenging new job as manager of the flourishing nursery. As Stella settles comfortably into her new life, she finds a nurturing friendship with Roz and with expectant mother Hayley. And she discovers a fierce attraction with ruggedly handsome landscaper Logan Kitridge

But someone isn't happy about the budding romance...the Harper Bride. As the women dig into the history of Harper House, they discover that grief and rage have kept the Bride's spirit alive long past her death. And now, she will do anything to destroy the passion that Logan and Stella share.

Blue Dahlia Details

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From Reader Review Blue Dahlia for online ebook

Marisa Sauco says

“Dalia azul” es el primer libro de la Trilogía del Jardín.

La historia me gustó (creo que es casi imposible que no me guste alguna historia de Nora Roberts), pero me faltó un poco más de romance entre los protagonistas.

Entiendo que en esta primera parte la autora tenga que hacer la presentación de todos los personajes y ponernos en situación sobre el conflicto principal de la trilogía, pero me faltó emoción y esa química tan característica entre sus protagonistas.

Cyndy Aleo says

Nora Roberts books are a not-so-guilty pleasure of mine. Sure, she technically writes romance novels, but her books are always so well-researched you feel like you are actually learning something. Blue Dahlia is the first novel in her In the Garden series, and the gardener in me LOVES all the references she weaves into the story.

::: In the Garden :::

Blue Dahlia is the introduction to the story of three women who all work at a gardening store called (you guessed it) In the Garden. Roz Harper Ashby is the Southern belle who came from an established family, was widowed at an early age, raised her three boys alone, and opened her own gardening business where she works with her eldest son, Harper. Tired of spending so much time on the nuts and bolts of her business, she hires a newcomer to the Memphis area, Stella, recently widowed herself, and raising two young boys. To get a better feel for whether or not she can trust her business to Stella, Roz has her move into the sprawling old home she lives in with her assistant (and Harper's best friend), David.

Not long after Stella moves in, a distant cousin, Hailey, shows up pregnant and looking for a job. Roz takes her in as well and gives her a job at In the Garden as well.

Soon after being hired, Stella begins to butt heads with Roz's landscaper, Logan Kittredge. Logan is everything Stella is not: abrasive, unorganized, and above all, resistant to change. Of course, you know the two will be attracted to each other; after all, this is a romance novel.

Of course, there's more to the story than gardening and romance; Harper House, Roz's family home has a ghost. And the ghost's story is a mystery that the women are going to need to solve.

::: Planting the Seed :::

Once you get past the extreme set-up, what with the women sharing a house and all, Blue Dahlia is actually one of Roberts' better "first" books. Many times, the first books in her trilogies seem rushed, with too many characters and too much set-up information crowding out the relationship that's supposed to be the central point of the plot.

Roberts does a good job balancing things here, introducing the players, yet still giving Stella and Logan

enough attention so that you feel like the relationship is actually developing in a normal time frame. They aren't rushed, and their arguments and differences seem very natural in their interaction.

Blue Dahlia is a good book on its own, and does an excellent job setting the reader up for the rest of the trilogy, which is one of the better ones.

This review originally published on Epinions: http://www.epinions.com/review/Blue_D...

Patricia says

One review said that next to the ghosty atmosphere and romance, this novel also contains lots of gardening tips.

I don't really do flowers or nature. I mean, I like green. As, maybe, a wallpaper. Or pullovers when children wear them. We used to have a green bird, too. Sweet thing. Obnoxiously loud.

For f-cks sake, I'm probably the only human being, next to Bree's sex-addicted boyfriend in Desperate Housewives, who killed a cactus. In cold blood.

I'm a cruel, evil person and I get crazy obsessed when people buy flowers and pretend they like them. Like, if you like them, why let them slowly wither away in your living room? THAT'S NOT LOVE. It's like owning three cats, five dogs, and eating chicken nuggets.

At least, I admit that I'm a cactus-murderer. Except that maybe if it's just about gardening.. which isn't exactly flower-murdering, it might not annoy me as much? Although, I also get crazy over people who talk about flowers.. Like I do right now.. Um..

Wow.. this was such a deep, philosophical discussion. I'm amazed by my own brilliance and reflectiveness.

(No, but the point was that flowers in books make me go crazy and gardening tips make me feel inadequate.)

Update:

I now found the perfect example for my problem with flowers and gardens and where it comes from. It was Erica from Celadon City (?????? or Prismania City) in Pokémon, with all her green little shits. God, how she owned me..

So, now you know it. Dear reader, it was a traumatic experience, but I'm almost sure that no one else'll feel like that and you should definitely give books with flowers in them at least a try, although I won't take it against you if you wouldn't, now that you've heard this dramatic, desperate story of innocent longing, humiliation and loss.

D.G. says

2.5 stars

Like the Bride Quartet, this book is more about women running a business and their friendship. Even the ghost was more important than the romance, which was lukewarm and not very exciting. I never got the impression that the hero and heroine even liked each other, so I'm not sure how they fell in love.

I'm not that interested in gardens so all the talk about plants bored me to death. If I had liked the main character, maybe I could have enjoyed the book more, but Stella was a control freak who didn't understand how people could be different from her. Half the time I wanted to kill her.

The narration was very good. Characters were distinct and the male voices were adequate. I'd definite listen something else by this narrator.

I may continue the series because I liked Roz and Hayley (the heroines of the next two books) but I'll definitely wait a while to read them. I don't know that I can stomach any more talk of plants.

Sombra says

3,5 estrellas.

No puedo y nunca seré imparcial con esta autora. Nora Roberts para mí es de las mejores en el campo de la contemporánea y hay muy cosas historias que ella haya escrito y no me hayan gustado, interesado o entretenido.

En esta ocasión, tenemos una historia entretenida y con un misterioso fantasma de por medio, lo que lo hace más enganchable.

Con unos protagonistas totalmente opuestos, Stella y Logan han tenido escenas de todo tipo, pero sobre todo divertidas, ya que sus personalidades chocan tanto que acaban teniendo conversaciones inesperadas. Su romance ha sido a fuego lento al principio y luego ha dado un salto bastante grande, aún así, puede ser plausible y me ha convencido. Aunque el final haya sido demasiado precipitado para mi gusto.

Ahora vamos a los secundarios. De entre las mujeres, Hayley y Roz son geniales. Así, sin más. Dos mujeres luchadoras, valientes que saben lo que quieren pero a la vez son vulnerables con los que aman. La primera, con apenas 24 años se ve envuelta en una vida en donde ya no solo tiene que velar por ella, sino por el hijo que espera, y la segunda es una mujer madura de más de 40 años que viendo que su negocio es mucho para ella contrata la ayuda de Stella y Hayley, lo quellas convierte casi sin darse cuenta en las tres mejores amigas en las que apoyarse y no sentirse solas.

Harper, el hijo de Roz y Mitch, los secundarios masculinos también son de lo mejorcito y me encanta la parejita que hacen con las futuras protagonistas del resto de la serie.

Sobre la historia, lineal, tranquila, sin más sobresaltos que los que produce esa presencia en la mansión Harper y que imagino durante toda la serie estaremos averiguando un poco más de lo que le ocurrió y bueno, un principio muy duro, no lo vamos a negar.

Tenía ganas de una serie así, donde no hubiera conflictos graves, ni giros sorprendentes en la trama, solo una historia de tres mujeres que, por azares de la vida y el destino viven juntas y encuentran todo aquello que siempre han deseado rodeadas de plantas, invernaderos llenos de flores y hombres muy interesantes.

A por el siguiente de cabeza.

Kristen says

In Nora Roberts's *Blue Dahlia*, she introduced to three women who came together to work in a garden nursery in rural Tennessee. First, there's Stella Rothchild, a recent young widow with two young sons have moved back to her hometown to be closer to her family. She met Roz Harper, who owned the Harper House and ran the flowery nursery. She wasn't intimated by her, since she tried to escape the ghosts of the past. As she settled down into her new life, she met expectant young mother Hayley and formed a friendship with her as with Roz. Later she met and fell in love with Logan Kittridge, the handsome landscaper. She couldn't help becoming attractive to him. But someone wasn't too happy with this coupling, the Harper Bride ghost. They've dug deep into the ghost past's of rage and heartbreak as she haunted Harper House.

Amber says

Stella Rothchild's life comes crashing down on her when her husband Kevin dies in a plane crash. Willing for a fresh start, she uproots her boys and takes them back to her home place of Memphis, Tennessee to be closer to her father and Stepmother. Stella goes to Harper house where she is hired on by lady of the house Rosalind Harper to work in her nursery *In the Garden* as a manager. Her only condition is that Stella and her children must live in Harper House for the first months of her employment. Stella agrees and later learns that the house is haunted by a ghost known as the Harper House bride. Stella quickly butts heads with the nursery's landscaper Logan who turns her life topsy-turvy and tries to make a social acquaintance something more not knowing that the Harper House Bride hates men. Also moving into the house is Hayley Phillips who is a cousin to Roz Harper who is expecting a child in the future. Will everyone living in Harper House be able to survive the wrath of the Harper House Bride ghost and find out who she really is? Read on and find out for yourself.

Blue Dahlia is the first book of the *In the Garden* trilogy and my first Nora Roberts book that I read for the Enchanted Garden reading challenge where you read books with flowers in it. It was also a pretty good read and I look forward to checking out the rest of the trilogy in the future. If you enjoy supernatural romance books, definitely check this out for yourself. You can find this book at your local library and wherever books are sold.

Obsidian says

Nothing really to say except that I love this series. After trying to start the inn series by Nora Roberts, I ended up seeing so many similarities to "In the Garden" that I happily DNFed the first book in the inn series and decided to re-read this one.

I love gardening and the outdoors so this series was always fun to me. We have some romance and some characters that I actually enjoyed enough to revisit through three books.

"*Blue Dahlia*" is the first book in the series and follows single mother and widow Stella. I actually enjoyed how Roberts sets this book up. When the book begins we have Stella enjoying her life with her husband Kevin and their two boys who she loves, but who drive her up the wall at times. When an accident occurs

leaving Stella widowed she honestly doesn't know what she's going to do. The book moves on a few years later, and Stella has relocated to Tennessee to be near her father and her stepmother. She wants to settle down in a new place that doesn't remind her of her former live and give her boys something strong to latch onto. She goes and works for Roz Harper in her home and takes over as manager running her "In the Garden" nursery that is onsite. Throw in a ghost and a romance she was not looking for, and "Blue Dahlia" may satisfy your need for a romance with a light mystery.

Stella's love interest in this, Logan, is a bit much. I honestly at first found him annoying. Him finding Stella rigid because she likes things organized and wants items inputted into a spreadsheet (oh the horror! The horror!) made me want to brain him. But, he does grow on me. I think I liked it because you get to see Stella not change the way she's made up to fit Logan, but you do see Logan adjust more for her. Which I loved. Most romances this days seem to be about uptight women who just need a man to remind her to let her hair down. I liked that Stella thought first and foremost about her sons and how any changes she makes in her romantic life would impact them. And I loved that there were honest conversations about her first marriage (Stella was happy and her husband loved her and vice versa). Thank goodness where was no third hour retconning of their marriage to make any love she had with Logan be the best thing ever. And thank goodness that Logan gets it (about Stella's marriage) and being an adult about that (looking your way Virgin River book #1).

Due to the first book having to lay a lot of ground work we do move around to other perspectives. We get Roz's, her son Harper's and Roz's cousin Hayley included in this first book. It is pretty easy to see who the other couples will be in this series. And besides Hayley, I enjoyed everyone. I always found Hayley's whole backstory to be a bit much and I actually kind of loathed what she did and why. I probably will skip re-reading "Red Lily" this time through cause I recall going eh okay when I read it years ago.

The main part of the book is full of Stella getting used to Roz's business, but also the three women and some of the men trying to find out what they can about Roz's ghost, called the Harper Bride. I kind of shrugged about Stella and Hayley wanting to investigate the ghost more until you get towards the middle and end of the book and realize that the ghost is at times dangerous to be around and the whole family wants to put the spirit to rest.

Can I say that Roz is my favorite character though? She really is. I loved that this woman had a lot to deal with (she's also a widow and she raised three boys) and then when she gets older marries a POS man and manages to rebuild again.

The book makes for a relaxing day at the beach or sitting in your garden if you have time.

Cyndi says

A good romance and beginning of the trilogy. The hero is a bit hard to fall in love with, and the beginning is terribly sad, but the story comes around. Of course, It's Nora Roberts so its well written and the characters are developing perfectly.

Stella moves back to Tennessee after losing her husband. She wants to raise her two sons closer to her father. There she lands the perfect job and makes some wonderful friends. But when she moves into the Harper House, she meets the Harper Ghost.

Nora gives more hints to the reader than she does the characters so its fun watching them uncover the mystery. Also it was fun figuring out which romances were going to blossom. (Get it? Blossom...flowers?)

Lol) ???? (well, I thought it was funny.)

Anyway, one of my favorite parts in the book were watching the friendships develop between the women. Nora always has a knack for stressing the importance of women standing for each other and helping each other. ?

Jane Stewart says

2 1/2 stars. Not enough story. Not enough plot. Characters were nice people but not compelling enough for a story.

My mind kept wandering. A lot of conversation about ordinary things. Characters did not interest or intrigue me. Stella likes to organize and manage things. Logan is creative and artistic with his landscaping but appears disorganized in other things. I wasn't drawn to the relationship. The sex scenes didn't do anything for me.

The plot surrounding the ghost was not well developed and not finished. They hired someone to go through old records to discover the story behind the ghost. He started, but the book ended before he worked on it.

The narrator Susie Breck was ok.

DATA:

Narrative mode: 3rd person. Unabridged audiobook length: 10 hrs and 46 mins. Swearing language: strong including religious swear words, but rarely used. Sexual language: none. Number of sex scenes: two briefly described. Setting: mostly 2004 Memphis, Tennessee, with some back stories from 1892 and 2001. Book copyright: 2004. Genre: contemporary romance with a little paranormal.

Celeste says

I know I've read this series before, but it's one of the few Nora Roberts trilogies that I don't remember clearly. Which meant that I needed to reread them immediately!

This isn't my favorite Nora series, but it's still fun and sweet with just enough mystery to add some flavor to the narrative. In the Garden is a nursery business set up by Rosalind Harper on her family estate, and she's on the hunt for a manager. Stella Rothschild would give her right arm to become that manager. She and her boys have had a rough few years since the death of Kevin, her husband and the boys' father. Working at In the Garden would be just exactly the fresh start the shattered family needs. Thankfully, Rosalind (Roz) agrees, and hires her on the spot. The catch is that Stella has to move herself and her boys into the sprawling Harper House, but that's not exactly a hardship. The only kink in Stella's plans is Logan, Roz's landscape designer. He's rude and disorganized and drives Stella completely insane. The fact that he's disgustingly hot doesn't help matters.

Blue Dahlia was a sweet love story, with the humor and passion I've come to expect from Nora, with the added bonus of adorable and funny kids thrown into the mix. There was also the added mystery of the Harper Bride, the ghost who haunts the house and sings any children in residence to sleep at night. She's mostly benign, but hell hath no fury like a ghost ignored when it comes to single mothers getting

romantically involved.

One thing I admire about Nora is the vast amount of research she puts into each and every occupation featured in her novels. Each of her series has a theme; sometimes that theme revolves around magic and saving the world from a potential threat, but just as often the theme centers around an occupation. For this series, it's all about plants. I've never had any interest in gardening, but my mother loves it. She's always happiest with her hands in the dirt, giving a cactus or succulent or an ivy a new home, or tending to those that weren't properly cared for and restoring them to health. So anytime I read a book featuring a garden or nursery or florist shop, I think of her. Especially if that book happens to be written by Nora, who is without a doubt my mom's favorite author.

All of that being said, this isn't my favorite book by Nora, simply because I don't have all that much interest in gardening. But I'll definitely be finishing the series, because it's still an incredibly enjoyable, easy to read series featuring strong relationships, be they friendships, romances, or family ties. And those relationships are what always bring me back to Nora's work.

Original review can be found at Booknest.

Karen Syed says

This one is a keeper. It's one of those books that I don't think I would have normally read, but I was going on a trip and needed an unabridged audio for a long trip. I am totally pleased with the end result. Blue Dahlia is a fun and invigorating read. Logan is a great hero, and Stella is a delightful thorn in his side.

When Stella's husband dies in a freak accident, she is forced to take on a new type of life. She moves back to her birthplace in Tennessee and takes a job at Harper House. Her new boss is great and her life seems to take on new meaning. Too soon, Logan a fellow employee, roars into her life and turns everything upside down.

And if that isn't enough, Stella finds herself haunted by the Harper Bride. The trouble is, no one knows who the Bride is or why she doesn't want Stella and Logan together.

My trip ended before my CDs and I found myself sitting in my car once I got home just to listen to a few more tracks, and even making small needless trips to listen more. The character development is some of Nora's best and I am looking forward to the rest of the series. Engaging plot, enough emotional tug to keep you hoping it won't end.

Alba Turunen says

3'5 Estrellas, pero se queda con 4 porque el romance de los protagonistas, y sobre todo Logan, me han encantado.

Con "Dalia azul" comienza la trilogía del Jardín, una serie ambientada en una gran mansión colonial en Tennessee, cuyos dueños, los descendientes de la rica familia Harper, se dedican al cultivo y venta de flores y plantas.

Nuestra protagonista, Stella, es una mujer que lo tenía todo, una familia normal, con su marido y sus dos hijos pequeños. Pero la tragedia llamó a su puerta y se encontró viuda y joven con dos niños a cuestas. Un tiempo después de enviudar, decide hacer las maletas y comenzar una nueva vida en un sitio nuevo, y esto es cerca de Memphis, el lugar donde nació y donde aún viven su padre y su madrastra.

Así es como Stella llega a la casa de Roz, la dueña del Jardín, para pedir el trabajo de la dirección de la empresa. En seguida, Stella se hace con el trabajo y sus hijos congenian con su nuevo hogar. Aunque esta nueva vida traerá sorpresas; agradables, y otras no tan agradables. La mansión Harper, tiene sus secretos, y en su caso es el fantasma de una mujer que nadie sabe quién es, pero se aparece por las noches en la casa cuando hay niños y los canta nanas ¿Quién es éste fantasma y cuál es su historia? Por lo que parece, toda la trilogía versará sobre el misterio de la Dama de Harper.

¿Y el romance de los protagonistas? Muy del estilo de Nora Roberts. Stella es una mujer centrada, ordenada, muy planificadora, es la mujer perfecta para el tipo de trabajo que desempeña. Logan es todo lo contrario, es concienzudo pero un desastre, rudo, bruto, desordenado, es un hombre muy hombre, y choca mucho con la personalidad de Stella. En nuestros dos personajes tenemos el cliché de los polos opuestos se atraen.

Al principio del libro estaba algo mosca porque el protagonista tarda bastante en aparecer, si bien no me importó demasiado porque la historia engancha desde la primera página. Una vez que se conocen tienen escenas y conversaciones la mar de divertidas, que han hecho que el libro sea muy entretenido. Pero si hay algo que me ha gustado es que los protagonistas no tienen nada que ocultarse, Logan es un hombre divorciado tras un matrimonio desastroso y lo que menos quiere es enamorarse, pero no puede evitar enamorarse de Stella, una mujer que es totalmente distinta a lo que a él le gusta. Mientras que Stella tiene la espina clavada de su primer matrimonio, un hombre al que realmente quiso, y que de repente desapareció. Actualmente Stella está centrada en su nuevo trabajo, y su prioridad son sus hijos, no tiene tiempo ni ganas de enamorarse de nuevo, tiene miedo. Lo cierto es que los sentimientos de los protagonistas me han parecido muy acertados y verosímiles si el lector empatiza con sus circunstancias.

La guinda del pastel la ponen los personajes secundarios, empezando por los niños de Stella: Gavin y Luke, especialmente Luke. No suelen gustarme mucho las novelas donde hay niños, sobre todo si estos son repelentes, repipis, o actúan como adultos. En este caso los niños de Stella son niños, hablan como niños, se comportan como niños, y sencillamente son niños. En cuanto a las demás mujeres de esta serie, también han tenido su importancia, sobre todo Roz, la dueña del Jardín y la supuesta descendiente del fantasma; ya estoy viendo su futura historia con el escritor al que han encargado la investigación del fantasma, pero si algo me llama la atención de este futuro romance, es que ambos son mayorcitos y en la cuarentena bien avanzada, un hurra por Roberts por atreverse con una pareja madura. Y para terminar, Hayley, esa joven, casi una niña y embarazadísima, que aparece en la puerta de la mansión solicitando trabajo. En el caso de Hayley, también la estoy emparejando: con Harper, el hijo mayor de Roz ¡Y cómo me ha gustado Harper! Una mezcla de científico despistado con rockero ¡Qué ganas tengo de leer su historia!

Para finiquitar, “Dalia azul” es una novela muy correcta, muy entretenida, no es una joya, pero se lee de una sentada, y lo pasas bien mientras lees, el gran plus ha sido los personajes, todo los personajes, tan bien caracterizados y tan bien definidos, y su historia, además del romance de Stella y Logan, y por supuesto el misterio de la Dama de Harper. Si a algo tengo que ponerle una falta es al final, tan rápido, abrupto y poco desarrollado, me ha parecido algo inconcluso, pero claro, es una trilogía, y se supone que lo demás vendrá a continuación.

Majo's Library. says

Dalia Azul... ¿Qué pensar después de leer este libro? Simplemente me encantó.

Primero que nada, y admitiendo que no soy una (gran) fan de la literatura rosa, considero este libro como sumamente dulce. Si, no puedo calificarlo con otro adjetivo. De una lectura extremadamente fácil y rápida, con personajes sencillos y trama (aunque también simple) sólida.

Roberts no se equivocó al optar por los clásicos personajes que intentan no caer en una relación relativamente “difícil” por circunstancias similares entre ambos (edad, condición social, relaciones pasadas) y que al final no resisten encontrándose de cara con el amor que les salva la vida.

Un aporte que me encantó y sacó a este libro del típico cuento de novela romántica fue la implementación de un personaje al que se lo podría considerar un tanto... extraño, dentro del contexto de la pink literature y fue nada más ni nada menos que El Fantasma.

Interesante el modo en el cual la autora lo funde dentro de la historia sin hacer que este parezca un objeto extraño metido dentro de la trama. La fusión de los elementos dentro de la clásica historia de amor me gusto mucho, y de haber podido ser una aburrida historia de amor (¿?) lo convirtió en una animada novela que funde las ideas más simples de felicidad y búsqueda legítima junto con un toque de humor, suspense y misterio.

?Karlyn P? says

Started off great, even made me cry after the first few chapters. Then the story moved ahead a few years and it went downhill from there. Just slow, touchy-feely fluff in a small southern town. That may appeal to many, but it became boring for me.
