



Death of a Butterfly

Margaret Maron

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An award-winning mystery novelist and New York Times Bestseller, Margaret Maron uses her North Carolina background when writing the popular Judge Deborah Knott series.

But before Deborah Knott, there was Lt. Sigrid Harald, a homicide detective with the NYPD. Death of a Butterfly is the second book in this series. In this book, Lt. Harald investigates the death of Julie Redmond, a beautiful but cold, self-centered and demanding woman. Sigrid digs into Julie Redmond's past, untangling a web of blackmail and murder and half a million dollars' worth of stolen gems, revealing a ruthless mastermind whose cruelty has finally caught up with her.

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine has said, "Harald is no stereotypical policewoman....Getting to know her is a pleasure;" while the San Diego Union-Tribune says, "Maron combines a lighthearted style, surefooted suspense, and a captivating cast."

Death of a Butterfly Details

Date : Published 1988 by Headline (first published 1984)

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Author : Margaret Maron

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From Reader Review Death of a Butterfly for online ebook

Jayne says

Sigrid Harald is growing on me, and I love mysteries! This was a good one!

Debbie Maskus says

This is the second Sigrid Harald novel, and I must say that I enjoyed this novel so much better than the first book, *One Coffee With*. I felt that Maron expanded on Ingrid's character in this novel. The characters are better developed, in relation to their relationship with Ingrid. Margaret Maron builds up the intensity in the search for the killer of Julie Redmond. A few loose clues point to various people involved in Julie's ending, but when Ingrid discovers the real killer the reader feels disbelief and sadness. Is this the real killer? Many of the characters wiggle into the reader's heart. Will these characters survive until the next novel, or will they disappear?

Abbey says

The second of the Sigrid Harald series, this early book from Margaret Maron (1984) is nonetheless well-crafted and surprisingly deep psychologically. A woman you love to hate (steals from, cheats, and/or blackmails several folks, and emotionally bullies her child) is murdered and Sigrid can't seem to make all the pieces fit.

There's a pretty elaborate timetable element here, and the writing is a mite awkward, but strong enough to pull you through. The real richness is in the characters - multifaceted and mostly likable, Maron shows a sure hand and a kind heart as she slowly develops her regular cast of characters and introduces us to the current cast of suspects.

I love this series, and am rereading it as preparation for the newest book just out, in which it is rumoured that Sigrid will make an appearance - the last novel of the Harald series itself was 1995, and Maron has stated she will write no more in that series but is allowing both her characters Deborah Knott and Sigrid Harald to meet in her new Knott book. Sounds good to me.

Bottom line: a good, solid mystery, with a strong plot and great characters, only slightly diminished by a rather melodramatic ending that doesn't quite "work" for me the second time around; the first time, although I can't really remember it, I suspect it did work beautifully - it's a sentimental and powerful ending, it just didn't "ring true" to me this second read-through.

Ed says

#2 in NYPD Lt. Sigrid Harald series.

Murder is very definitely the business of New York policewoman Sigrid Harald. It is not the tragedy of Julie Redmond's death that involves her; it is Redmond's life that becomes the center of interest, her death only highlighting the scars this woman left on those who are still alive. For as Lieutenant Harald quickly discovers, there are plenty of people who could have motives for killing Julie Redmond, who was a beautiful but cold, self-centered, and demanding woman. There are her next-door neighbors, who have provided Julie's son, Timmy, with the love she never gave him. And then there's Mickey Novak, Julie's criminally adept brother to whom Julie never offered much sisterly attention. With the help of a precocious fifteen-year-old sleuth, Lieutenant Harald untangles a web of blackmail and murder and half a million dollars' worth of stolen gems, revealing a ruthless mastermind whose cruelty has finally caught up with her.

Barbara says

Not finding this series as satisfying as the other series by this author - the Judge Deborah Knott series. Sigrid, a police detective, is a sympathetic character, but not as easy to like as Deborah Knott. She's a much more reserved, controlled, almost cold person; but she's really not cold - she just appears that way to most people.

These books also (I must admit, though, that I've only read two so far), don't seem as fleshed out as the Deborah Knott series. However, I've still found them satisfying so far.

I'm not excited however, about the series, so it remains to be seen how far I will continue.

Elizabeth says

I enjoyed this book just as much and maybe more on this second (maybe third) reading. Lt. Sigrid Harald of the NYPD comes across as a very real person who may seem to be repressed to many. Actually she is a quiet deep person who is just now starting to unfurl her petals.

In this outing she is investigating the murder of a attractive young woman who at first glance had the appearance of a butterfly as she lay crumpled on the floor surrounded by a colorful wrap. Sigrid needs to find out what kind of a creature she really is before she can solve this murder.

The touches of feminism or anti male chauvinism set this story in a particular era that younger readers might appreciate even if they did not live through it.

Linda Baker says

Lt. Harald is called to the murder scene of Julie Richmond, a young divorced woman with lots of secrets and even more people who might want to see her dead. Sigrid and Tillie (her partner) have to puzzle their way through all these motives, but as seems to be usual, Sigrid's flash of intuition solves the case. There is a lot of emphasis on a timeline in this case-not a favorite plot device for me. I tend to get bogged down in timelines!

I would probably give this entry in the Sigrid Harald series closer to 3 1/2 stars if I had the option. I became interested in the series after reading Three-Day Town in Maron's Deborah Knott series. The first two books

have been short, fast reads with a mystery to solve and lots of character development. Since character development is important to me, I am happy to watch Sigrid open up and blossom away from the repressed and solitary young woman of the first book. Oscar Nauman (who we know is destined to become her lover) is present only peripherally in Death of a Butterfly. His influence in the background is considerable however. All the secondary characters are vivid and well-drawn.

I'm looking forward to Death in Blue Folders.

Lynda says

This is the first Sigrid Harald mystery I have read. I love the Deborah Knott series and thought I would try this series by the same author. Sigrid, a New York City detective is entirely different from judge Deborah Knott. She is reserved and doesn't seem to have close friends or much family. She is good at her job. This novel involves the death of an unpleasant single mother with many possible suspects.

Nell says

Excellent mystery. The NYC setting for this mystery with a police detective as the main character is unusual for a cozy mystery yet Maron pulls it off. This one is set on one floor of an apartment building. One of the occupants is murdered and as the story unfolds she is revealed as an amoral person who committed despicable acts. Still it is the detective's job to identify the culprit and she does so brilliantly. The author plays on our presumptions to hide a killer in plain sight.

I really like the main character. The backstory of her personal life, her social awkwardness and professional competence. Enticing nuggets in each of the first two novels concerning her personal history portend of turmoil to come. A personal relationship growing despite her prickly denials and interactions with colorful characters in her life set the stage for scenes that are LOL.

A delightful read. Glad this older series is available again in ebook format. I've already downloaded the next one.

Ellen Moore says

This was an interesting mystery--the second I have read (but not in order) in the Sigrid Harald series. The main character, Sigrid, is extremely reserved and private. She reveals very little personal information to anyone including the reader, and I find it difficult to relate to her. In fact, at times in both books I have read, I have the distinct impression that her assistant Tillie is doing the majority of the investigating. I still find it almost impossible to believe that this series and the Deborah Knott series are written by the same author since they are so different.

Richard Brand says

This is a nicely crafted tale of a nasty young woman and her death. It has a lot of "asides" with Sigrid's romance and new roommate. Her back story of her lack of physical beauty, her southern family, and her

father's death. Maron updates the read in all her stories. This is one of those modern mystery stories where the end is known but there is no "justice"

Crystal Karre says

Rich in a story of amazing depth.

Kilian Metcalf says

I'm not a big fan of police procedurals. I am a big fan of Margaret Maron and her Deborah Knott series. Eventually these two women are going to meet, so I am reading the Sigrid Harald series to become familiar with her character to enhance my enjoyment of their meeting. There's nothing wrong with the series, so if you enjoy police procedurals, you might like them.

Betty says

Roman Gets a Seat at the Table

Another murder. Sigrid and Tillie are untangling the web of suspects. They make a good pair. Tillie is methodical and detail oriented which serves Sigrid well. Sigrid is more cerebral and intuitive. As Tillie's partner and superior, she never pulls rank or makes an issue when he is mistaken for being in charge.

Book 2 allows further character development without overwhelming the reader. A more thorough editing would have prevented the annoying distractions. Not sure what title has to do with murder victim, certainly not dainty, delicate, and beautiful as butterflies.

As cozy readers go, a fully developed Sigrid and friends will become familiar reads.

Roman finishes chair.

Erin says

Really starting to learn more about the series characters in this book and I'm definitely wanting to read more about them. The mystery was pretty good, but I didn't much like the conclusion. This was one of those tough mysteries where you find out that the person who was killed pretty much deserved it, so bringing the perpetrator "to justice" just doesn't feel right.
