



Murder Most Maine

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It's springtime on Cranberry Island — and love is in the air. It seems like every woman has the hots for buff trainer Dirk De Leon. He and his equally-gorgeous business partner, Vanessa Black, are leading a weight-loss retreat at the Gray Whale Inn — forcing innkeeper Natalie Barnes to lighten up her butter-laden breakfast menu.

The mood on the island darkens when two grisly discoveries are made. The first is a skeleton walled up at the island's lighthouse. The second is a corpse of the fresh variety — the handsome Dirk! Could the spirit that once embodied the skeletal remains — perhaps the lighthouse keeper who disappeared a century ago — be responsible for Dirk's death?

The police pin the blame on Natalie's boyfriend who — to her dismay — had a long-ago fling with Vanessa. To find the true killer and ease her own aching heart, Natalie must untangle the knot of jealous girlfriends and spurned admirers that once surrounded the hunky trainer.

Murder Most Maine Details

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From Reader Review Murder Most Maine for online ebook

Betsy says

In *Murder Most Maine*, we are once again transported to charming Cranberry Island. A weight-loss program has brought an interesting group to the Gray Whale Inn for a retreat. The group includes a former friend (or should that be that girlfriend) of our favorite innkeeper's boyfriend, John. Natalie, with the help of her cohorts, not only has to use her detective skills (and snooping ability) to solve this murder before she loses business but also has to keep an eye out for the beauty's advances toward John. Another great plot with the additional history sideline story. As usual, there are also some yummy recipes included. The writing of Karen MacInerney is always a treat. I am ready to visit the island again in her next book. 5 stars.

IslandRiverScribe says

With this story, MacInerney brings us the third entry in her Gray Whale Inn series, following "Dead and Berried." The action begins approximately 8 months after the conclusion of that 2nd novel.

Natalie Barnes, owner of the Gray Whale Inn, is providing accommodations and food service for a week-long retreat run by a company specializing in weight-loss techniques. When the participants arrive on the afternoon mail boat, John Quinton and Natalie go to meet them. John has four roles on the island. He is the town's chief deputy, he is a wood sculptor, he is Natalie's next-door neighbor and he is Natalie's boyfriend of nearly a year. The moment the boat docks he takes on a fifth role – he is the retreat leader's ex-boyfriend, a fact here-to-for unknown by Natalie.

From this point on, Natalie's life, both personally and professionally, deteriorates at an exponential rate. From the moment the gorgeous and lithe Vanessa steps foot on the dock, John gravitates to her like a moth to a flame. Within 24 hours, Vanessa's business partner, who is also a former lover, is missing and then found dead of ingested poison. Less than a day later, the police shut down Natalie's kitchen, which threatens to put her out of business. And then it just gets worse from there.

The mystery portion of this novel is well crafted. The characters, the motives, the play-by-play descriptions leading to the climax and the murderer's identity are paced, clearly written and realistic.

But, I feel that this author does not have the touch for writing a romantic component into a story. For instance, back in the previous book, Natalie has only been dating John for a few weeks when her ex-fiancé shows up. That storyline did not progress for very long before I was pretty irked at the unrealistic manner in which the author has Natalie respond to the machinations of her ex-fiancé. In fact, MacInerney managed to write the romantic equivalent of the college coed going down the basement stairs in a slasher movie. You can see right through it, you know that nothing good is going to come of it, and you can't believe that the heroine doesn't see that the words and the actions of the ex-fiancé don't match.

Well, shampoo, rinse and repeat – only this time the aggravating storyline falls to John. At the first sight of Vanessa, it's as if a switch is tripped. Everything seems to be about Vanessa and Natalie seems to become a mere afterthought in John's existence. Eventually, John's explanation is that those actions were his way of keeping a major secret that Vanessa had told him. However, he did not have knowledge of that secret when Vanessa arrived, so that story does not even come close to explaining the fact that, from the moment he sees

Vanessa, John is shoulder to shoulder with her, has her feet in his lap on the sofa in the Inn's parlor, hugs her intimately and even calls her "sweetheart," all right in front of Natalie. Again, actions and words do not match and the make-up scene does not adequately resolve the issue. And even though that scene is clearly intended to be quite romantically dramatic, it actually comes across as forced, trite and unrealistic.

A second problem with the romantic element is that MacInerney has Natalie constantly refer to John as "my neighbor." Yes, he does live right next door, but they have been dating for nearly a year. To have her refer to him as simply her "neighbor" rather than "John" in her internal monologues is off-putting and actually feels symptomatic of a third and nastier problem with MacInerney's writing.

To wit, from a romantic standpoint, MacInerney has written a "clean" novel. There are no sex scenes and the kissing scenes that do exist are brief, non-detailed and essentially "sweet." But beneath the cleanness is an underlying sense of judgment implying that sex is somehow dirty. The main characters are seemingly chaste and the only people engaged in sex are having extra-marital or clandestine affairs. In actuality, the feel goes beyond the idea that the author is trying to write a clean romance. It feels as if the author does not perceive the difference between loving passion and sensational erotica, but knows that some level of physical romance should be included in order to market the book.

I have the next book in the series in my library already, acquired at a good sale price. I will read it, but if the handling of the romantic plot does not improve substantially, it will be my last read for MacInerney.

Mary Beth says

This book is more of the same. Natalie is still cooking constantly, getting head injuries and worrying about whether the inn will make it. B-O-R-I-N-G!

Jill says

Not one of the best in this series. It was very obvious who the killer was. I really enjoyed the first two in this series and will continue on with the 4th with hopes that the plot isn't as predictable.

Ksb Nh says

A fun Maine cozy mystery.

Linda says

Murder Most Maine by Karen MacInerney is an entertaining cozy mystery. Part of a series (Gray Whale Inn Mysteries), this was my first MacInerney book. Her book has a lot of things that cozy mystery readers like me look for: likable characters, a close knit community--Cranberry Island, and a perplexing murder. Innkeeper, Natalie Barnes, gets involved when a weight-loss trainer from a group retreat staying at her Gray

Whale Inn, is discovered dead. Natalie's "kinda" boyfriend is a suspect and that motivates her to solve the mystery. There are other secrets and a discovery at historic Cranberry Point Lighthouse. I think cozy mystery readers will like this book and want to read other books in the series like I do!

Britney says

I didn't like this one as much as the second one but it's still good. I really liked finding out about the late 1800's mystery that happened at the lighthouse.

Liz V. says

Not a fan of amateur sleuths who engage in illegal and/or dangerous activities.

Annette Boersma says

I really enjoy this series! Makes me daydream of owning a bed and breakfast, and I hope to try the recipes at the end.

Julie Cribb says

Another Great Cozy Mystery!

Another thoroughly enjoyable Gray Whale Inn mystery in the series! So much is happening there, that I must complete the whole series! Now, if I could really reserve a vacation there...!!

Britt, Book Habitue says

Dear authors considering love triangles-- don't. Just don't. Especially if the previous book had an extremely similar love triangle. Love. A. Duck. So ridiculous.

Not as much of a hot mess as book 2, but I can't decide if I really want to put myself through more of the insanity.

Stacy Hedges says

It's a fun read with some good plot twists. Very easy to get caught up in the story.

Julie says

Kindle

Sarah "Kat" says

Really an enjoyable read even though for ONCE I was ahead of the protagonist with the clues that were given. They were pretty obvious. But all the same, loved the images of Maine that I conjured up and made me want to live on the Maine island. Have the 1st in the series and will surely read and seek out others.

Lady says

More Than She Bargained For?

This series must be read in order. The first book is Murder On The Rocks. The second book is Dead And Berried. This is the third book. I can't wait to read Berried To The Hilt!

It has been a year since Natalie opened The Gray Whale Inn. Life on the Island is becoming second nature to her (even if she still isn't used to the cold) and people are more and more accepting of her. Marge is even coming around, and had become a model employee, since their harrowing ordeal together at her (soon to be ex) husband's hands. Nothing bonds people quite like torture and near death experiences! A luxury weight loss retreat seems like the perfect way to put the Gray Whale on the map as a destination so she agrees to rent the whole place for a week to Lose It All. Can she pull off a full service Inn for dieters? Or will her love of sweets and carb loading be her downfall? Can adding lunch, dinner, and turn down service really be that much more work? Will she be able to keep her resolve and diet right along with them? Is her relationship with John the real deal? Or will they hit another unforeseen snag? Has she truly found her place and her calling or will something go wrong yet again?

From the delicious recipes and charismatic characters to the murder mysteries both past and present, this series had found a special place in my heart! I can never wait to get engrossed in Natalie's next adventure. For a small island with only 100 year round residents, Cranberry Island is never short on drama. The addition of paranormal twists only makes the series more appealing. I will read this series as long as the author keeps writing it :)
