



Death at First Sight

Lena Gregory

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It doesn't take a crystal ball to see that something's not right on Bay Island...

Since she left her psychiatric practice in New York City to open up a psychic shop in her hometown on Long Island, Cass Donovan has given her fair share of readings to conflicted customers. But what she sees in Ellie Hawkins' future doesn't bode well.

When Ellie's mother Marge publicly confronts Cass about the reading, the embarrassment makes her want to curl up and die. But when she later stumbles across Marge's body—and is arrested for her murder—Cass is suddenly the star of Bay Island's rumor mill.

Out on bail, Cass is determined to prove her innocence and save Ellie from meeting the fate in her unfortunate vision. But even with the help of her friends Bee and Stephanie, Cass will have to channel some serious sleuthing instinct to find the real killer...

Death at First Sight Details

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From Reader Review Death at First Sight for online ebook

Marlene says

Cass Donavan has had a rough year but deciding to move back to her small town home of Bay Island from new York seems to be the best option for her. Once she arrives she opens up her little shop Mystical Musings for the tourists as well as the locals. Believing she has an intuition to help guide people but not full blown psychic, she left her psychiatric practice behind for something more practical. She will soon find out how much impact her position in the community and the advice she gives can take a role in so many lives.

Along with her childhood friend, Stephanie and a new friend, a very flamboyant, Bee they are in the midst of putting together a fashion show to showcase Bee's design's. But when one of the board members for the theatre is found dead and all fingers are pointing at Cass, it will take her and the support of her friends to get her out of this lime light and get the show back on.

While Cass is trying to clear her name she comes up against the police chief, who she thought was a friend due to the history he had with her father but his hell bent she done it. She'll question herself rigorously since she can come up with plenty of suspects including - one of her own friends, a client's abusive husband and a southern stranger that will make her swoon and question her own sensibilities. In the end the real killer will astonish her and leave her in her own state of peril.

I found the story very likable and the characters very flavourable. The storyline and plot twists were entertaining. As for characters, I really enjoyed Bee's outrageous personality.

Cozy Girl Reads

Tari says

I had a feeling I would enjoy this book and I was right--and I'm not even a psychic lol. I thought it was a fun concept that a former psychiatrist has taken on acting the part of a psychic and more times than not, she uses her intuition and training to read people than something truly mystical.

Cass Donavan was minding her own business working her own little business and helping out good friend Bee Maxwell with his upcoming fashion show rehearsals when she discovered the body of Marge, a very disagreeable woman that she'd just had a public argument with. Cass had done a reading for Marge's daughter, Ellie and Marge was livid about it. Sheriff Langdon immediately pinned the murder on her but somehow wasn't going to arrest her. Cass needed to get to the bottom of the case and clear her name before she ended up in jail for something she didn't do. That's where her two best friends, Stephanie (who happened to be married to a tough but nice officer named Tank) and Bee, the guy having the fashion show.

I really like all these main characters! Cass has two of the very best friends in the world in Steph and Bee. They're loyal and kind, even though as a police officer's wife, Steph feels she has to warn Cass about investigating. Bee was such a hoot, very flamboyant and dramatic as well as hilarious. I liked the newcomer to town, Luke, who seemed to have a few secrets of his own that I won't spoil. You'll just have to read and find out. Oh and who could forget Beast, who was very well named by Cass and her friends. He was really just a sweet puppy but he could be protecting when he needed to be.

The end twist was pretty epic. I sure never saw it coming and the whole showdown was really awesome. I never would have guessed the killer in a million years, great plot twist. Everything got explained and worked out well at the end. I have the next two books so I'm definitely going to be reading them over the course of this summer.

Peggy R says

I thought this was a well done first in a new series. Cass is an accidental sleuth finding her way to clearing her name with the help of her two best friends. The mystery was solid and kept me engaged and guessing right up until the end. I really enjoyed this book and can't wait to dive into the second book to see what the author has in store next for Cass.

Doward Wilson says

Cass Donovan has left her life as a psychiatrist in New York to return to her hometown of Bay Island. She has opened Mystical Musings and started giving psychic readings. When she senses terrible happenings in her client's future she does her best to ignore it but knows that she won't be able to for long. Then her client's mother confronts and threatens her for interfering in her daughter's life. When the irate mother's body is found, Cass becomes the prime and only suspect in Police Chief Langdon's investigation. I really liked both the characters and the background setting of the story. The twisted plot was extremely well done, making the ending a shocking surprise. This is the first book in a new series and I am looking forward to reading the next one.

Leo Knight says

Warning, spoilers ahead!

Confession: I like psychic mysteries with feisty heroines, but I had a difficult time reading this. It seems to be the author's first published novel, so I hate to be harsh, but here goes.

Cass Donovan owns a little occult shop on fictional Bay Island, off Long Island. She sells crystals, and fragrances, and does psychic readings for tourists. The book doesn't make clear if Cass truly has a psychic gift, or if she merely is skilled at cold reading. Perhaps a bit of both. While doing a reading for Ellie Callahan, she sees a shadow, which may portend approaching death. However, Cass doesn't want to upset Ellie, who is already beset by a domineering mother, and an abusive, philandering husband. Cass keeps her insight to herself. Soon, Ellie's mother Marge turns up dead, and Cass winds up at the top of the list of suspects. She turns to her trusty friends Stephanie, whose husband happens to be a policeman, and Bee, a flamboyantly gay fashion designer, and decides to do some sleuthing to try and clear her name. Along the way, she runs into a sexy bad boy named Luke, who has secrets of his own.

For a mystery heroine, Cass doesn't seem very bright, or able to plan anything well. She is continually late, disorganized, and clumsy. She makes poor choices. Early in the novel, concerned for Ellie, she visits and breaks into Marge's house, by breaking a window with a tire iron. Now, put yourself in Cass's shoes. You have just found a dead body. The police chief doesn't like you, and considers you a prime suspect. Against

any better judgement, you go to the murder victim's house, and hear a noise. Does breaking a window to gain entry seem like a prudent move? But I suppose most mysteries wouldn't happen if the main characters behaved rationally. To top it off, Cass finds and keeps the murdered woman's dog. Aside from chewed up furniture, and the occasional icky mess (he's still a puppy), this causes her almost no disadvantage. Late in the novel, we learn she used to be a psychiatrist, which, given her flighty nature, I found very hard to believe.

Some of the writing is repetitive. Cass has headaches, which come on suddenly when she's under stress, which is most of the book. She winds her hands in her long blonde hair. The breath whooshes out of her. Heat rises in her face. Each of these phrases gets repeated throughout the book, with minor variations.

The mystery itself does proceed at a fairly even pace, and I enjoyed the final resolution. Some puzzling behavior suddenly became clear once the identity of the killer was revealed. I also enjoyed the byplay between Cass and her friends. The cover tells us: "First in a new series!" and we get a teaser for the second novel. Hopefully, the next installment will get over some of the teething pains in this one. The teaser for novel #2, "Occult and Battery," felt more confident and assured. In spite of my criticism, I did wind up liking the characters. Perhaps Cass will find her mojo as the series progresses.

Kathleen says

The main character in this book is too dumb to live (TDTL). There is an intense climax scene but those few pages have a hard time balancing out the rest of the story. Cass, the main character (MC), keeps holding her head because of constant headaches. I had one too just from screaming at her...

What is with the police chief taking in Cass for questioning within five minutes of finding the body? Afterwards, why on earth does she break into the home of a murder victim, especially when she knows she is the chief's prime suspect? And who nowadays doesn't know better than to leave fingerprints all over the house if you do? Then there is the over-the-top description of the token love interest. Good gosh, Cass practically drools each time she sees him, from day one! It gets old fast for the reader. The worse one is when Cass goes out at 3 a.m. to meet a suspected murderer on a remote part of the island, in a bunch of bushes near a deserted parking lot. On top of that she leaves a voice mail message with her friend about the meeting but doesn't have the consideration to follow-up (view spoiler). She abuses her friendships with both Bee and Stephanie, by repeatedly taking advantage of them.

I got to wondering if the publishing powers (TPTB) insisted that the book contain psychic ability and a dog. How else to explain the few references to the first and the unexplainable addition of the second? As to her so-called psychic tendencies, the first perception of a cloud of darkness is weak at best, as even she admits. The aborted use of an Ouija board later on was just weird. It is unclear exactly why Cass steals/borrows the dog from the home of the first victim (see break-in mentioned above). She doesn't seem to like dogs or even have the remotest idea on how to care for one. Both the dog and the psychic sensitivities are too obviously an excuse for moving the plot forward. That and the TDTL actions of the MC are, in the end, examples of weak writing. You know a story is bad if I am wondering about TPTB's marketing dictates halfway through the book.

If I could I'd give the author, any readers, and Cass a headache powder. Since I can't I'll just move on to something better, with great relief.

Melodie says

I enjoy cozies with a little "woo woo", so I was disappointed when that's NOT what I got here. The main character is a former psychiatrist turned "psychic". But not really. Not impressed and why do all the characters any more have to have a flamboyantly gay sidekick? I like gay characters and have gay friends and relatives, but this has become a major cliche'. Will try the 2nd one, but if I don't like the characters better won't go further than that.

Jessica Robbins says

Book one of the Bay Island Physic Mystery series. Meet Cass who runs a physic shop on Bay Island where she grew up though she left for 17 years before coming back after her parents passes away (natural causes). Cass does not get along with Marge even having a run in with her after giving her daughter Ellie a reading much to Marge's dismay. This places Cass as the main suspect after she finds Marge dead the following day. When the head cop decides she is only suspect even ignoring evidence to the contrary she finds herself trying to solve the case in order to clear her name. The physic stuff added some light hearted details, and her two friends balance the characters quite nicely. I liked the writing style but felt that things moved at little slowly at times. Still a cute little cozy though is that is what you are looking for (I really enjoyed the antics of the dog). Technically I would give it 3.5/5 stars but since Goodreads does not have that option I gave it 4/5 stars there

Lisa says

I really enjoyed this cozy! I liked the characters, especially Bee, the flamboyantly gay fashion designer. Nice mix of silly and kind-of-serious. The only thing holding me back from another star is that there wasn't enough fur. I like my cozies to be heavy on the fur babies. To me it's almost as important as the murder. It's what makes a cozy a cozy. There was a dog, and a great dog, but he wasn't very prominently featured. Cozy authors: don't forget to lay the fur on thick! But a great cozy read nonetheless. 4 stars.

Linda says

Cass Donovan is a divorced psychiatrist who's moved to tranquil Bay Island, NY for a slower pace of life. Inside her beachfront shop, Mystical Musings, she tells fortunes, although; she's not psychic in the traditional sense. Her two best friends are fun to be around--Bee, a gay clothing designer; and Stephanie, whose police officer boyfriend, Tank, is invaluable helping Cass clear her name of murder. The victim, Marge Hawkins, is an unfriendly, rude woman. Cass believes Marge's daughter, Ellie, is in imminent danger. Ellie's cheating husband, Jay, acts suspiciously and begins to threaten Cass. As the plot unravels, so do some of the characters!

I found the story fast-paced and well-plotted. I didn't realize who the murderer was until the author reveal. The ending is an edge-of-your-seat event! A great fur-character who provides many comical scenes throughout the storyline is Beast; a huge Leonberger puppy. I really enjoyed this debut Cozy mystery and look forward to book two.

June says

After one of her psychiatric patients commits suicide, she goes home to find her husband with another woman. Cass returns to her hometown on Bay Island and opens a psychic shop. When the Mother of one of clients who didn't like her Daughter going to her for a reading is murdered, she is the prime suspect. Cass is lucky to have the help of her friends Bee and Stephanie and they are on the hunt for the real killer. To make it even more interesting there is a stranger in town who is good looking and has a bulge under the back of his shirt that looks like a gun. There is also a dog that belonged to the dead woman that the Daughter doesn't want and asks Cass to take it to the pound. Cass takes the dog home with her and finally names it Beast because of its size. When left alone too long it tears her place apart, but when she is threatened is there and protects her. This book has it all, humor, romance and a murder to solve. I won this book on Goodreads.

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

4.5 stars TOP PICK

Mary (Bibliophile) says

I found this cozy mystery pretty formulaic with all the standard elements present, such as young, single woman who has a bad experience and returns home to open a shop. For a former psychiatrist Cass is pretty timid and indecisive. Though the book implies psychic elements, it's murky if she is psychic or just good at reading body language. Cass spends little time at her shop, can't handle confrontations, and races off putting herself in dangerous situations, making her TSTL (too stupid to live). The author constantly reminds us that when Cass is stressed, she gets headaches and pulls her hair. This constant repetition grows old pretty fast.

I did like the mystery and the resolution. Hopefully, this series will improve as it progresses.

Kim Reads (Read Your Writes Book Reviews) says

I will admit it that it took me awhile to get into *Death at First Sight*, the first book in Lena Gregory's Bay Island Psychic Mystery series. I initially felt like the characters were part of a clique like in high school and I was the new kid in school. The book read like a sequel and I felt as though I was missing something. I shouldn't have fretted. The back stories of the characters come out throughout the book, some of which are surprising.

Cass Donovan is a former New York City psychiatrist turned psychic, who owns *Mystical Musings*, a small shop located in her hometown of Bay Island. She definitely has her skeptics. I would equate her to Patrick Jane from *The Mentalist*. She uses her observation skills to read people and figure out what they need.

While doing a reading for Ellie Hawkins, she gets a very dark feeling. She tries to suppress her reaction and

chooses not to pass her fears onto Ellie. Eventually, Cass has a very public run-in with Ellie's mother, Marge. The next morning, Cass discovers Marge's lifeless body in the theatre. All clues point to Cass, but she's having a hard time getting the police to believe she had nothing to do with the murder.

With the Police Chief gunning for Cass and seemingly not looking for other suspects, she decides she has to find the real killer herself. Could it be Marge's own daughter who is always trying to please her or her son-in-law who despises her? Or perhaps it's the new stranger in town who doesn't really answer any questions directed at him. One thing is for sure, Cass isn't going to stop until she finds the actual killer.

Told in third person, Death at First Sight has a handful of characters who are easy to fall in love in with. Lena Gregory has created a world that's easy to get lost in. Once you start reading, you aren't going to want to put the book down. I found myself attempting to figure out who the murderer was but still wasn't totally sure. I will say Lena created a mystery filled with surprises and a mind-blowing reveal.

I can't wait until April when Occult and Battery comes out!

Received a copy from the Penguin ~ Berkley Prime Crime and reviewed the book voluntarily.

Yvonne says

I was excited to see a cozy mystery set near where I live. That was the first hook that drew me in before I even opened the book. Once I started reading, the mystery kept me at the edge of my seat until the last page.

I found it intriguing that the main character had been a New York City psychiatrist, but chose to leave it all behind and move out to eastern Long Island to open a psychic shop. That's a pretty big drop in a career, as well as financially, but you have to admire her for doing what she wanted to do. It's something most people only dream about doing, although there are circumstances that lead her to her decision - I don't want to spoil it though, so I won't go into those. Still, giving up a career as a psychiatrist to read fortunes in a psychic shop is a huge jump.

Not only was the main character well developed, but so were the secondary characters. Cass' support team of her two closest friends, Bee and Stephanie add to the fun. They are like the three Musketeers.

The storyline itself kept me guessing to the end. I had my suspicions, but I didn't put all the pieces together until around the time Cass did.

For me, this book had it all – a location I can more than identify with, a strong-minded main character, a quirky supporting cast, a dash of the paranormal, and a captivating plot. The book had a sneak peak at the second book and it looks to be just as good. Great way to start a brand new series!

FTC Disclosure: I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book. I was not required to write a positive review. All opinions expressed are my own.

