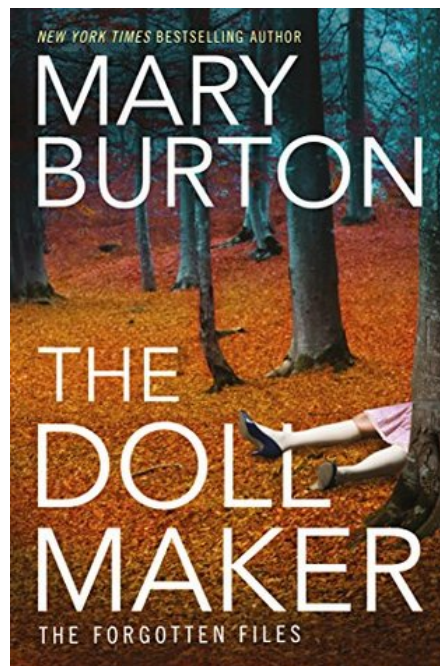




The Dollmaker

Mary Burton

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Dr. Tessa McGowan had never seen anything quite like it. But the mutilated bodies on her exam table tell a stunningly macabre tale: someone with a twisted mind is kidnapping women and altering their faces to resemble real, life-size dolls. As a forensic pathologist, it's her job to aid the agent leading the case—even if that agent is her estranged husband.

Twelve years ago an unspeakable tragedy destroyed Dakota Sharp's world. Haunted by the ghosts of his past, he's devoted himself to capturing killers. His only regret is that it cost him Tessa. Now, as the Dollmaker case brings them together—and raises his suspicions that he's crossed paths with this deranged psychopath before—they may just have their second chance. But it seems Dakota's not the only one who wants to make Tessa his own...

She may be the Dollmaker's next target, but Tessa has no intention of winding up as another toy on his shelf. Can she and Dakota stop this ghastly killer before his next deadly playdate?

The Dollmaker Details

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From Reader Review The Dollmaker for online ebook

Mary says

Dear Reader,

If you're looking for a suspenseful, deeply compelling 'who-dun-it', then this book merits serious consideration!

Dakota Sharp, a man deeply committed to his work as a police agent in Virginia, is hunting down the man responsible for the death of Diane R, a friend of his estranged wife, Tessa.

Not only was Diane found dead, but her face and body were used as a unique canvas, one on which the artist plied his trade, using his special talents to transform her irrevocably, into his ideal image.

Coupled with this, Dakota comes face to face with his estranged wife, whom he loves dearly, but due to the time consuming nature of his work, plus the fact that he is, by nature, a man that finds it difficult to express his feelings and talk about the inherent difficulties of his job, he is now forced to face his demons and decide if his marriage is worth fighting for.

Faced with yet another woman's body being found in a similar state to that of Diane's, Dakota is still haunted by the apparent overdose of his half sister, Kara, twelve years ago. Abducted and found some four days later, he has never fully reconciled himself to her death and the strange circumstances surrounding it.

Can there be a link connecting the deaths of all these young women? Is the fact that they, along with Tessa, attended the same college a mere coincidence or is there a serial killer in their midst?

Dear Reader, this was a wonderful story, one that I found very intriguing, and one that had me eagerly turning pages to discover who the guilty party was.

I loved how, initially, distinct individuals played their part, only for the common thread that significantly and detrimentally linked them together was revealed. Dakota is a dark, sometimes brooding character, and his relationship difficulties were mired in reality.

I loved this story, its 3-D characters and the fast paced plot that ratcheted the tension to the nth degree! Highly recommended!!!

♥Rachel♥ says

The **Doll Maker** is part romance (second chance/estranged marriage), part murder mystery and suspense, and I enjoyed each aspect thoroughly!

Dr. Tessa McGowan is back in town after a rift in her marriage made working abroad seem like a good option. But the months away clarified her priorities and Tessa's back to stay.

Agent Dakota Sharp harbors guilt and anger over the death of his younger sister. Her death was ruled an overdose twelve years back, but his family never accepted the ruling. Dakota feels Tessa deserves better than he's able to give, but his feelings for her are a hard thing to fight.

Two murders connect the past and present, and the fact the killer may be after Tessa as well, force these two to work together, making it impossible to deny the intense connection they share.

I've read a lot of mysteries in the past, and even though I did think of the murderer in passing as a possibility I was surprised by his/her identity in the end. There were plenty of twists that kept me guessing. **The Doll Maker** was a well plotted mystery with a very creepy edge! I read it late into the night and ended up lying in bed a little spooked envisioning all the sinister possibilities beyond my bedroom door!

A copy was kindly provided by Montlake Romance via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

THE DOLLMAKER is the second book in The Forgotten Files series, but you can read this one without having read the previous book. I know because I haven't read THE SHARK. However, I do want to read it now after finishing THE DOLLMAKER. I do have some issues with this book, mainly it's very predictable, the whole case, the identity of the first woman, how the Dollmaker chooses them and the identity of the Dollmaker.

READ THE REST OF THE REVIEW OVER AT FRESH FICTION

Sabrina says

NOW LIVE!

*Amazon US*Amazon UK*B&N*

3.5 Stars

For Dr. Tessa McGowan her past starts to twine it's way around her future when a new and bizarre case lands in the medical examiners office. The body of a young woman is found dressed like a doll, with makeup tattooed on her face. And not only is the Detective on the case her husband who she's been separated from for months, but the victim is an old friend of hers, taking Tessa back to her past. As more secrets come out the more Tessa and Dakota realize the killer is someone Tessa knows, and she's his next "perfect creation."

The Dollmaker was an intriguing and suspenseful book that I found myself captivated by from the beginning. I loved how the mystery was slowly built up until the end and had me guessing who the killer was for the majority of the book. I actually didn't guess who it was until the end, right before we were told. I love when a book can surprise me and keep me guessing. It sadly doesn't happen too often that I don't guess the killer, or secret, before it's revealed so I'm always happy when I'm kept in the dark.

The characters were easy to like, and I was rooting for them to reconcile the whole way through their story. I actually wanted more of them and to get more of their backstory. I felt like since they were the main characters we should have known more about them and gotten more of them together. I liked the moments that we did get, but I wish there was more of them.

Overall, if you're looking for a suspenseful story full of twists and turns, then this is the book for you. It's not

necessary to read the first book before starting this one and the first characters are only mentioned once or twice.

ARC kindly provided in exchange for an honest review.

Anita says

Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) provided by the Author and Publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an fair and honest review.

The Forgotten Files series by Mary Burton is Suspense with a dash of Romance. In this book you have a Forgotten File from 12 years ago that comes alive again with two current cases. Second chance romance is my favorite kind, but it takes two people to put the past aside and make a new future and for most of the story it was Tessa giving her all and more and Dakota taking and giving nothing in return. Not fair and balanced at all.

Dakota is all about the job and when he is on a case he is there 100%, 24-7 if needed. It doesn't leave much for a personal life, but Tessa knew that going in. When one case ended and Dakota just didn't return to normal, she took off for an 8 month internship in Vietnam as a forensic pathologist. She did some heavy soul searching and decided that she loved Dakota and would take whatever he was able to give her and be happy.

She returns to Richmond and gets a job in the Medical Examiners office where she has contact with Dakota on a professional basis. Tessa lets Dakota know in no uncertain terms that they are far from done with each other. Then they become involved in a case that has similarities to the death of Dakota's sister 12 years ago. 3 1/2 Stars

D.B. Reynolds says

A gruesome but intriguing and well-crafted story.

Linda Strong says

Dr. Tessa McGowan is a forensic pathologist. She can hardly believe what she is looking at. A young woman, completely hairless, and her face totally tattooed to make her look like a doll. Once he's done and he kills them, what he does is unspeakable until he leaves the bodies where they may be found.

Unfortunately, Tessa knows this victim .. they were in college together and another of her friends has gone missing.

Agent Dakota Sharp is investigating. His sister died 12 years ago of a drug overdose. He has never accepted the cause of death ... he has always felt there was something more.

It has nearly cost him his marriage ... to Tessa McGowan. He's not the easiest man in the world to live with, but Tessa wants to try again. Dakota is just not sure .. he let her go once, he's not sure he could do it again.

And even if they can't make the marriage work, he will certainly do everything in his power to protect her. More bodies are falling .. and it looks like the Dollmaker has his eyes set on Tessa to become his next playmate.

I've read the books in this series out of order ... but no problem. Each one is a stand alone. With this author, I have no worries grabbing any new book of hers to come out. I always know it's going to be well-written, highly suspenseful and a balance between the crime and the romance. The characters are memorable and fully developed.

This has been a terrific series for anyone who likes Romantic Suspense. 5 Stars for the book --- 5 Stars for the series.

Hannah says

ARC REVIEW

Mary Burton does it again, she creeped me out and had me fall in love. Sadly I missed the release of *The Shark* the first book in the *Forgotten Files* series but worry not it was not necessary to read it to read this one.

Firstly the romance aspect of the story was probably the easiest part of the story, Tessa and Dakota have been estranged for about half of their marriage. Tessa was best friends with Dakota's little sister who was murdered in college and it was never solved. Tessa and Dakota didn't meet up again until years later and then had a whirlwind romance and quickly got married, but after being married for some time and a very difficult case that hit a little too close to home for police detective Dakota they started having issues. Not knowing what to do Tessa gave an ultimatum, and when Dakota doesn't give in she leaves for Vietnam, identifying the soldiers in unmarked graves. But after eight months Tessa realizes what went wrong and is back and wants to start over with Dakota. Dakota is scared that Tessa will just leave again like she did last time. He isn't good about showing his emotions or anything and as much as he loves Tessa he's scared he'll get hurt again.

Now the good part, someone has been kidnapping women and keeping them until finally kills them and he leaves them in a place they will be easily found but they are tattooed and dressed up to look like dolls. It's sick and twisted in its own right but Tessa makes the connection that the victims were all connected and that she falls into that connection. With Tessa at risk Dakota steps up and does everything he possibly can to protect her. The more they try to find out about *The Dollmaker* the more they discover that it goes farther back than they think.

Overall, Mary Burton is quickly becoming my go-to author for creepy and intense suspense with a touch of romance. I know I talked a bunch about the romance but I didn't want to spoil too much about the serial killer. This was a great one and I can't wait for more.

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

This was so good! Another book that met the WoW factor.
This is the second book in *The Forgotten Files* series.

Dakota Sharp, Virginia State detective and Tessa who is a forensic pathologist are husband and wife but

currently separated. Dakota has unresolved issues surrounding the death of his step sister Kara, who was missing for four days after leaving a Halloween Party 12 years ago, which is a cold case.

Then the story goes into the present, where there are two more eerie bizarre deaths of two other women, whose faces are made to look like living dolls.

Dakota Sharp and Tessa are on the hunt for The Dollmaker.

The Dollmaker is a freaking creepy serial killer who tattoos women's faces into living dolls. Do these women have something in common that makes the Dollmaker kill them?

But it seems Dakota's not the only one who wants to make Tessa his own...

She may be the Dollmaker's next target, but Tessa has no intention of winding up as another toy on his shelf. Can she and Dakota stop this ghastly killer before his next deadly playdate?

I really love a good serial killer story. This is a psychological thriller. It is so chilling and kept me turning the pages while trying to guess the outcome. There are twists, turns and suspense that made me wanting more. I just can't seem to give this book the justice that it needs. This book is not for the faint of heart. There is a lot more to this story. It is a dark thriller that was almost too much for me in the beginning.

There is a third book that comes out soon and I can't wait to read it. It is called The Hang Man and will be coming out this month.

Mary Burton loves writing suspense, researching forensic and law enforcement procedure, baking, books, and tiny dachshunds. Not necessarily in that order.

She also enjoys hunting down serial killers, which she does in her New York Times and USA Today bestselling novels of suspense and romance. She's tracked them down in stories set in her hometown of Richmond, Alexandria, Austin and Nashville that have been praised by readers and reviewers. Her work has been compared to that of James Patterson*, Lisa Gardner** and Lisa Jackson***.

Research is a favorite part of Mary's work day. She never tires of learning more about police work, evidence collection and analysis, and doesn't hesitate to take a hands-on approach, whether it means interviews with those working in the field, forensic seminars or lessons at the firing range.

Carrie says

Tessa McGowan is a forensic pathologist and her latest case has been quite disturbing. Young women are turning up dead made up to look like real life dolls. Working with her estranged husband, Dakota Sharp, the pair team up to track down a killer which they find may have hit a little too close to home for the pair.

The Dollmaker is the second book in the Forgotten Files series by Mary Burton. Each book in the series though could be read as a standalone since they both feature completely different cases with only a bit of carry over with character information.

This particular book starts off when a teen getting talked into making a drug drop off and recognizing the buyer which costs him his life. Then we have the murders of a serial killer which then also ties into a past case close to our main characters. A lot going on throughout the book so as to never have a dull moment and to keep the pages turning.

Overall, another great read from Mary Burton, lots of twists and turns and action all throughout as the characters chase down the killer.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress....>

Caz says

I've given this a B+ for both content and narration at AudioGals, so that's 4.5 stars

The Dollmaker is the second book in Mary Burton's *The Forgotten Files* series, but it works perfectly well as a standalone. It's my first time listening to a book by this author, and it definitely won't be my last, as the mystery is tightly-plotted and suspenseful and the main characters, while perhaps somewhat stereotypical, are nonetheless well-drawn and likeable. The mystery element of the book is very much to the fore, although there is also a second-chance romance between Agent Dakota Sharp of the Virginia State Police and his estranged wife, pathologist Dr. Tessa McGowan, brewing in the background.

While attending the funeral of his step-father, Roger, to whom he wasn't close, Dakota Sharp is approached by Douglas Knox, the former local police chief who investigated the death of Sharp's half-sister, Kara, some twelve years ago. The cause of death was an overdose, but Roger was never convinced of that and spent the last decade or so trying to prove she was murdered. Knox now tells Sharp that there may have been more to Kara's death and offers to send him his case files. Sharp is sceptical, but, to humour the old man, accepts the offer and asks a colleague to look over them, feeling he's too close to events to do so himself.

You can read the rest of this review at AudioGals.

CD {Boulder Blvd} says

Why is it when I don't like a book I have so much more to say then when I do like a book?

I liked The Doll Maker by Mary Burton and enjoyed reading it. It was a well-paced book with a good plot and characters. The book's description is very accurate - so no need to repeat here. This is book #2 in The Forgotten Files series but can be read as a stand-alone. The setting and some characters are recurring but the plot and the primary characters have their own complete story. This is the kind of series I love to read.

The plot that pulls together both current murders and a 12 year old cold case was good. The cold case was Dakota's (the male MC) half-sister who he adored. Her death really impacted him and has affected his decisions and who he has become. Although there were some easy guesses, I still enjoyed Ms. Burton's writing and the way she pulled the story together.

The relationship of Tessa and Dakota was interesting. 8 months ago Tessa ran from a marriage in crisis and disappeared in an overseas assignment. That Tessa seemed immature, but the Tessa who returns in someone you can get vested in. Dakota doesn't believe the marriage can be saved but Tessa fights for it which I liked. Dakota was really likeable from a professional standpoint as the guy who can get the job done. From a

personal standpoint - he needs help. Tessa is now mature enough to realize that and fight for the man beneath the wall he has built around himself.

This is a romantic suspense novel, but for readers who love more romance than suspense they may end up wishing for more romance. I'm on the other end of the spectrum and like more suspense plot than romance - so for me it's a perfect fit.

I like Ms. Burton's writing and The Forgotten File series and will be looking forward to her next novel.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

RATING: 4 STARS

(I received an ARC from the PUBLISHER via NETGALLEY)

(Review Not on Blog)

Several years ago I read Burton's Senseless series and I liked but found the suspense and romance a bit flat. That didn't stop me from still adding her books to my "want to read" list. While I found the chemistry of the characters flat, Burton does write well. And, damn this series just knocked me off my feet. When I requested the first book, the Shark, I was expecting a good read, but instead I found myself in an awesome romantic suspense. I felt like I was reading Karen Rose or Allison Brennan. After a few pages into The Dollmaker, about a killer dressing and making up his victims up as dolls, I was hooked. I enjoyed the past and chemistry of Dakota and Tessa but it was the killer that had me flipping the pages. If you are looking for a satisfying romantic suspense thriller, read this series (please note it is graphic).

LadyJBookishNook says

See all of my reviews at <http://ladyjbookishnook.blogspot.com>

The library labeled this book as a romance but it sure didn't read like any romance I want to be a part of. Ha! The book cover gives you a clue that it is pretty creepy. It's one of those books that make you think you hear things outside at night. More than once I got up and turned the outside light on to see if anything was there. So if you are jumpy at night, read this one in the daytime. The bad guy is a real creepazoid. It was sort of easy to figure out the identity of the weirdo but you didn't know for sure until the very end. I got it right for once.

Mei says

I had the same problems with this as with the first one...

Maybe I'm watching too much Criminal Minds, but sloppy and naive don't work for me...
