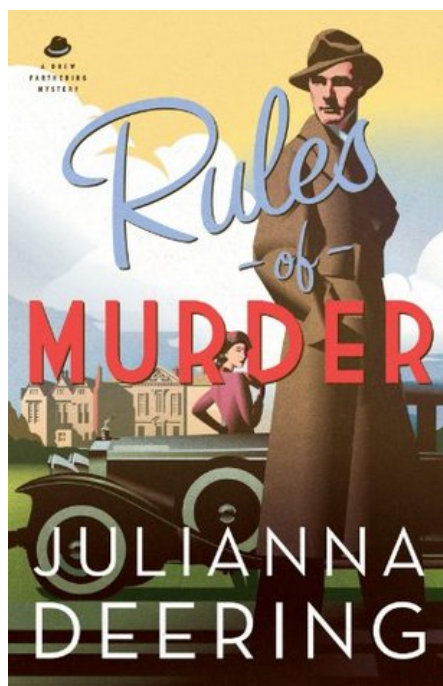




Rules of Murder

Julianna Deering

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Drew Farthering loves a good mystery, although he generally expects to find it in the pages of a novel, not on the grounds of his country estate. When a weekend party at Farthering Place is ruined by murder and the police seem flummoxed, Drew decides to look into the crime himself. With the help of his best friend, Nick Dennison, an avid mystery reader, and Madeline Parker, a beautiful and whip-smart American debutante staying as a guest, the three try to solve the mystery as a lark, using the methods from their favorite novels.

Soon, financial irregularities at Drew's stepfather's company come to light and it's clear that all who remain at Farthering Place could be in danger. Trying hard to remain one step ahead of the killer—and trying harder to impress Madeline—Drew must decide how far to take this game

Rules of Murder Details

Date : Published August 1st 2013 by Bethany House Publishers (first published 2013)

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Author : Julianna Deering

Format : Kindle Edition 337 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Christian Fiction, Christian, Historical Mystery

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From Reader Review Rules of Murder for online ebook

Bill Tillman says

How can a smart lil gal from Texas write such a great murder mystery? Well partner wrap your reines around a hitching post and get ready to be entertained by a Agatha Christie caliber who-done-it! I've read almost all of Christie's novels and this is as good as almost any.

A dashing gentleman of a rich estate and grand house wants to solve not one but two murders, well actually three, no four. The bodies just keep dropping and Drew and his side kick Nick along with the stunning Chicago lady Madeline Parker give first class performances. Plan to leave the light on this will be hard to put down.

Lyssa says

To be fair, I think Ms. Deering captured the breezy attitudes of the time very well. It is not her fault that they grate on me. If I had found Drew's manner charming as intended instead of cocky and shallow and slimy, the book probably would have gotten a higher rating. But unfortunately, if you can't stand the main character, it's probably not going to end well.

Despite trying to give him depth, the constant careless, insincere banter really turned me off.

I thought the romance was kind of ridiculous and unbelievable. Perhaps as a fling, nothing more. Their instant mutual attraction and declarations of love built on nothing was reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet. This is not a compliment; while heralded as the greatest romance of all time, those who of us who recognize it for what it really was (a tragedy), place blame where it is due: on the immature, selfish and unstable lovers. But I digress.

The plot was built well enough, I suppose. Except the end when the villain completely broke character for the sake of explaining any and all loose ends (and there were quite a few). The reader is constantly told, in addition to or instead of being shown, and is never really left to make their own conclusions.

Ranee Clark says

Audience: Adult (Clean)

Genre: Romance, Mystery, Inspirational

Length: 336 pgs.

Rating: ***** (Loved It)

Review: YES. I have read quite a few books that Bethany House publishes and loved them. I can count on them to be good, clean fun. This one surprised me by how good it was! The best way I can think of to describe it was a cross between Georgette Heyer and Anne Perry Lite. So, so fun. Lots of great lines, lots of hilariousness, cute romance, and intriguing mystery. Awesome historical details and so well researched. I'm an absolute sucker for this time period. I raved to my mom (who loves both Georgette Heyer and Anne Perry), telling her she needed to pick this one up as soon as it was available. You should too! And I'm thrilled that there will be many more Drew Farthering mysteries! (I will probably read every one produced.)

Read more reviews at <http://raneesclark.blogspot.com>

Shantelle says

Um ... now I remember why I don't read murder mysteries. *Rules of Murder* by Julianna Deering had some rather good parts - tender faith theme, fun romance, some humor - but overall, it wasn't worth reading for me. Not my thing, friends. As much as I enjoyed Drew Farthering and was interested in reading more of him in the rest of the series, I believe I shall stick to my usual reading habits.

Allison says

I was able to ignore the gushing faith references and get into sorting out the clues most of the time - until the mystery was solved by prayer. If it wasn't an ebook I would have thrown it.

Jamie says

I don't watch a ton of TV, but the shows I do watch, I am a committed and loyal fan. A couple of my favs? Criminal Minds (although these days I can't watch it when it's dark) and Sherlock. If there is a crime to be solved, I am in! And reading? Whether its Agatha Christie, Sherlock or Sue Grafton, mysteries provide the opportunity to use my investigation skills I like to pretend I have.

Enter in this fabulous mystery! Rules of Murder by Julianna Deering was such a great read! Drew is absolutely charming and one of my favorite male leads to date. It was like Downton Abbey and Sherlock rolled into one. I want to be in this novel! Maybe I'll make it in the next one. I bet the clothes would be fantastic.

Drew Farthering loves a good mystery, although he generally expects to find it in the pages of a novel, not on the grounds of his country estate. When a weekend party at Farthering Place is ruined by murder and the police seem flummoxed, Drew decides to look into the crime himself. With the help of his best friend, Nick Dennison, an avid mystery reader, and Madeline Parker, a beautiful and whip-smart American debutante staying as a guest, the three try to solve the mystery as a lark, using the methods from their favorite novels.

Soon, financial irregularities at Drew's stepfather's company come to light and it's clear that all who remain at Farthering Place could be in danger. Trying hard to remain one step ahead of the killer—and trying harder to impress Madeline—Drew must decide how far to take this game.

And this? This definitely was the type mystery that shocked me and kept me guessing till the end. In classic 1930's style, I wanted to join Drew and Madeline as they tried to find the killer before more lives were lost. Plus the ever lovable Nick makes the story even better.

I had plenty of theories throughout the book and I'm pretty sure about zero panned out. Although, I had inklings that some characters weren't who they portrayed, but I couldn't have fully predicted everything that happened. Sneaky, sneaky...

One of the final twists at the end had me saying "WHAT? Did I just read that wrong?" So yes, if you love

mysteries, this one is for you!

And now I'm ready to work on my Sherlock skills (and for the series to come back on). This definitely revived my love of the mystery genre. I might have to go pick up some Agatha as I wait for the next murder solving shenanigans of Drew, Madeline and the 'o so sweet Nick! (Which is February 2014, if you're curious).

(Thank you Bethany House Publishing for the review copy!)

booksandbeverages.wordpress.com

Carissa says

- I received a free, advance copy of *Rules of Murder* from Bethany House Publishers in exchange for an honest review.

Drew Farthering, wealthy heir to the Farlinford Processing company, adores murder mysteries. He even has the latest Agatha Christie novel on standing order from the local bookstore. But he never imagined that murder would show up on his own doorstep on the night of a glamorous party, and not just one murder, but two. And now, since murder has assaulted his homestead (huge though it may be), Drew takes it upon himself to put his nose for mystery to good use. With his closest friend Nick Dennison (son to the Farthering's family retainer) in tow, Drew determines to outwit the criminal mind wreaking havoc on his family. Add to the mix the lovely Madeline Parker (niece to Drew's stepfather) and the author has created the perfect concoction for a 1930s English mystery.

For anyone who enjoys the era of Wodehouse's *Jeeves & Wooster* or Agatha Christie's *Poirot* this book offers the highest appeal. The author knows the vernacular used in 1930s England by the young and horrendously wealthy, and particularly understands how to take a young man like Drew Farthering (would-be-detective) and make him interesting and fun. Because Drew is fun. He and Nick are such delightful pals, scampering around and trying to solve the murders that crop up on Drew's estate. The characters are likeable, from start to finish. Of course, loving Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster as I do, it only made sense I would adore such ridiculously playful characters as Drew and Nick. To some, I'm sure, they will seem silly and immature, but to me, they are delicious.

Ms. Deering's writing style is simplistic and minimalist, just as I like it. No absurdly big words that require a dictionary, or long sentences where the reader forgets where the author was headed. She utilizes active descriptors instead of passive, helping the reader place themselves right in the thick of the action. And her characters are flawlessly designed. Drew and Nick, despite being cut rather from the same playful cloth, or unique from one another in character design. Madeline is a likeable heroine instead of annoying. I cheered for her and Drew. She brings out the best in him and that is what every heroine is called to do with her hero. Even his constant use of "My Darling" was rather adorable instead of irritating!

It isn't easy following in the footsteps of the great mystery writers like Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers, but Julianna Deering makes an exquisite go at it. I admit, she had me going. Not so much that she had me fooled, but she fooled me into thinking she *hadn't* fooled me. I was disappointed for awhile, thinking I had the mystery all figured out long before I was even halfway through the book. There were too many cliches running around that made me originally think the novel mediocre at best. But the ending was a slam-bang finish and had me slapping my palm to my forehead in impressed disbelief. It's not easy to surprise a mystery connoisseur and I applaud her for managing just that!

I now salivate at the thought of a second book and wish Ms. Deering the best possible success!

J.P. says

The author is obviously a fan of Dorothy Sayers as the protagonist is modeled after Lord Peter Wimsey. But a number of problems arise early on in this whodunit. First we are introduced to so many people in the first chapter it's hard to keep track of the players without a scorecard. You can tell who the first victim will be from a mile away. As the story progresses, it seems as though no one could be the murderer. The characters are all one-dimensional and the story lacks suspense.

The basic writing is not bad, and there's an occasional bit of humor but the plot gets unnecessarily convoluted. It's a X pretends to be Y but in reality he was Z type of mish mosh at the end, and the reader is left wondering why some characters were even involved in the first place.

Not much here except women dissolving into tears, geezers having heart palpitations, and Drew of the manor strolling arm in arm with someone. There are better books of this genre on the market.

Ruth says

4.5 Drew Farthering, society playboy and heir to the Farlinford Processing fortune, returns to the family estate in Hampshire seeking a respite from the meaningless whirl of social obligations -- only to find his home playing host to one of his mother's parties. The guests include one very unwelcome David Lincoln, who inherited his position on the Farlinford Processing board at his father's death, his increased intimacy with the Fartherings' business soon giving way to rumors of an affair with Drew's mother, Constance. But Drew is soon distracted from David's odious presence by the arrival of his stepfather Mason's American niece, the beautiful Madeline Parker. Drawn to Madeline's warmth and wit, Drew begins to hope that he's finally met a woman of depth with whom he could plan a future, one to give meaning and purpose to his directionless -- albeit privileged -- existence.

But when Drew and Madeline discover the mangled body of Lincoln during a party, the two are drawn into a web of deceit and danger that casts a shadowy pall over their blossoming romance. A longtime mystery aficionado, Drew determines to launch his own investigation with the help of Madeline and his best friend and valet Nick. But real-life detective work is nothing like the fiction he loves, his amateur efforts breaking every rule of crime-solving in the book. His investigation casts a shadow of suspicion over family and friends, soon calling into question everything he thought he knew about himself. The more Drew persists, the greater the danger, and after second and third tragedies strike, all that stands between him and those he loves may just be his unconventional thinking...if only he can uncover the truth in time to unmask a killer before he strikes again!

At the risk of waxing hyperbolic, please indulge me when I say that I have been waiting for this book for the better part of my adult life. As a teenager I cut my mystery-loving teeth on tales of murder and mayhem by the Queen of Crime, Agatha Christie, in due course expanding my reading scope to fall in love with the works of her contemporaries such as Rex Stout and Dorothy L. Sayers. Whether in print or on-screen, memorably portrayed by actors the like of David Suchet as the inimitable Poirot or Geraldine McEwan as Miss Marple (my personal favorite portrayal of the character), I've long devoured classic mysteries and the film versions remain some of my consistently favorite television. This type of storytelling, told with intrigue,

intelligence, and panache, never gets old -- but I began to lose hope of ever discovering an author capable of telling a tale in the vein of the masters in the inspirational fiction market.

When it comes to period mysteries, I want pitch-perfect historical detail, smart, fast-paced plots, and sparkling dialogue -- and *Rules of Murder* delivers on all fronts. Deering is clearly passionate about the genre and has done her research, not only translating the feel of a classic Christie mystery into Drew's world, but her narrative shines with period detail, mannerisms, sparkling dialogue and a wry, self-deprecating sense of humor. The latter quality is reminiscent of the classic Hollywood equivalent of a Christie mystery -- the Thin Man films that showcased the memorable sparring between William Powell and Myrna Loy as high-class amateur sleuths Nick and Nora Charles. Drew is every inch Nick Charles (sans the ever-present drink), from his razor-sharp intelligence to his perfectly tailored suit, with the added bonus of a British accent.

Deering not only takes a stab at deconstructing the tropes of classic mysteries but manages to succeed at incorporating a very subtle faith thread through Drew's character arc -- an aspect that could have easily tanked the narrative flow of the storyline, stripping its characters of their charm and the mystery of its effectiveness. Drew, Nick, and Madeline either consciously address or accidentally break most of Ronald Knox's "Ten Commandments" for detective fiction. I loved having these fictional "contemporaries" of my favorite authors referencing and deconstructing the works that would make them famous. And the manner in which Deering touches on issues of faith, belief, and identity is masterfully done, staying true to Drew's personal and social position, using Drew's aristocratic status to explore the idea of how one who to all appearances *should* have it all approaches the concept of faith and belief.

This marks my second time reading Drew's first adventure, and I loved it every bit as much as my first introduction. Deering is a master at incorporating period detail and best of all, the whip-fast dialogue patterns of the time, forever memorialized in the films of the 1930s. I was struck afresh by her facility at incorporating faith into the storyline in a wholly believable, generic fashion, that succeeds in not feeling forced and refreshingly authentic to Drew's character and social position. Authors, take note: Deering's subtly drawn incorporation of faith is all the more impactful and effective for its understated, emotionally authentic arc as Drew grapples with the concept of evil, betrayal, and his own shaken sense of self.

With *Rules of Murder* Deering has established herself as a voice to watch in period mystery fiction. The characters are established, the beginnings of a love story suggested, and the tantalizing promise of secrets hidden within Drew's past, sure to be explored in further installments of the series. Drew is an utterly charming hero, and the cast of supporting players peopling his world are well-developed. I loved Madeline's humor and depth -- I do hope that in future volumes she develops a bit more of the *His Girl Friday*-style spark and energy heroines in classic mysteries are known for -- a mix of Nora Charles and Christie's Tuppence. Deering's mystery debut is a charmer from start to finish, replete with delicious period detail, effervescent, bubbly dialogue and well-drawn characters. This book is, at the risk of sounding dramatic, a bit of a dream come true for this mystery-lover. Bravo, Ms. Deering -- I cannot wait to discover what you have in store for Drew & Co. next!

Note: This is a slightly edited version of my original review, first posted in August 2013.

Suzannah says

An eminently unassuming and satisfactory whodunit, a nice homage to golden age detective stories, featuring mostly pitch-perfect writing, a saucy disregard for the rules, and moments of humour. Not brilliant, and featuring some of the usual Christian fiction tropes, but expertly handled.

Pamela says

Oh what a jolly good, cleanly written, classic whodunit! *Rules of Murder* was a delight to read. Such a bang-up start to a debut series. Sure to please Agatha Christie fans and/or readers fine tuned to Holmes and Watson vintage romps.

Old fashioned gentile sensibilities blended with a splash of romance, a smidgeon of cheeky humor, a wee dram of tomfoolery, and a good many twists and turns - up and down stairs, across the English countryside, and all around the town - which will keep one fully engaged and guessing until the very end.

The dashing handsome Drew Farthering and the plucky, "whip-smart" Madeline Parker from over the pond, make quite the sleuthing team (and romantic pair) when joined together with their good old pal, Nick, the witty and wry son of the butler, as murder and mayhem threaten to destroy the Farthering dynasty and the well-heeled energy producing company it founded.

Within the first few pages, I thought: *I see where this is going; a classic love triangle gone south - deadly south*. Oh! but not quite exactly so. Not everything, or everyone, is as they seem. Reading a few pages more, the apple cart upturns. My theory is looking iffy. A few chapters more, my cart is smashed to smithereens. By books end, what I had presumed to be apples, weren't apples at all - but rather.....

Mums the word. Spoilers I shall not bequeath. Except to say, no apples or carts were injured in the making of the book. Well, I presume they came to no harm. Apples and carts being merely a metaphor and all. Moreover, Julianna Deering seems far too delightfully charming and wordsmith genteel to be the sort to go around smashing things while she writes.

But who knows? Her characters did their share of thrashing and smashing. Decoriously written, though. And at times, humorously too. The scene involving a rather large window, a pair of wingtip shoes, heavy brocade curtains, and a jolly good fistfight was hysterical! With a capital 'H'.

Oh yes, a jolly good whodunit all the way around. There wasn't anything, except one small niggle, that didn't suit my fancy.

I'm not a big fan of "eyelash fluttering" romance. **Rules of Murder** wasn't melodramatic through and through. But there were moments.... In all fairness, however, the romantic drama wasn't the obnoxious, ridiculous, eye-rolling sort. Nor was it out of sync with the overall story and/or tone. So really, a personal niggle on my part. And just a small one at that.

FOUR ***** Jolly Good, Cleanly Written, Classic Whodunit, Noteworthy Debut Series ***** STARS

Melanie says

Rules of Murder was a different read. Not bad, but not as good as I was hoping. The mystery was a bit confusing for me to follow at times and I'm not even sure why. I did really like the characters and I feel like as the series continues it will just get better and better.

All in all, a fine read and I liked it. Some parts were stellar, other moments just okay. I look forward to

reading the next book in the series.

I receive a complimentary copy of this book for my honest review. As always, all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Amy says

Oh, I wanted to like this one so much! It started out so promising and occasionally dropped the names of so many of my favorite authors (like Dorothy L. Sayers and Agatha Christie!)

But it just didn't do it from me. The romance, while cute and flirty at first, quickly became intense and descended into horrendous insta-love. The plot kept throwing in more characters and side tangents and tangling everything up. I didn't particularly care about anything or anyone...which is too bad, as the body count in this book pleasantly surprised me. It kept things going. But some of the plot contrivances, such as the Asian valet's accent, caused me to physically wince.

By the climax I had only a dim idea of what was going on and I cared even less to figure it out. I kept with it to the end, however, in honor of the charming beginning that sucked me in.

The Christianity laced throughout the story, while light, felt awkward.

I feel disappointed but resigned.

Ivonne Rovira says

I was so predisposed to love *Rules of Murder*, set, like *Downtown Abbey*, among the British aristocracy between the wars, and endowed with a cozy mystery. What's not to like? Too much, unfortunately.

Let's begin with our protagonist, Drew Farthering, a devil-may-care man about town in 1932. He's handsome, clever, fun — but not so fun as to be blighter — perfectly mannered, heir to Fathering Place and the Fathering fortune. He's too perfect even for fiction! And his sidekick, Nick Dennison, son of Fathering Place's butler, is even worse: He's so idealized that he'd need another dimension to be two-dimensional. And this is 1932: the universal acceptance Nick gets in class-conscious England doesn't strain a reader's credulity, it breaks it.

I'm sure Drew, Nick and Drew's pretty and madcap American pal Madeline Parker have a fun time with the mystery, but I didn't stick around to find out.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

RULES OF MURDER

(Drew Farthering Mysteries: #1)

Written by Julianna Deering

(aka: DeAnna Julie Dodson)

2013, 336 Pages

Genre: mystery, historical, fiction, romance

(I received an ARC from the NETGALLEY in exchange for an honest review.)

★★★★

Drew Farthering and his childhood friend, Nick return home to Farthering Place to find Drew's mother and stepfather hosting a weekend party. Before the weekend finishes there is a murder at the country estate and the police are unsure where to turn. Drew and Nick love a good mystery and decide to try their hand at following the clues. In between leads Drew is also trying to woo Madeline Parker, niece of his stepfather, and fellow mystery addict. The clues seem to lead them closer to home and the killer may be someone they know well.

I have a new favourite for cozy historical mystery - The Drew Farthering series. This is the first book in the series and it is set in a British village in 1932. Much of the writing, characters and plot reminds me of Dorothy L. Sayers, Agatha Christie and Patricia Wentworth. (Deering is the pen name for DeAnna Julie Dodson who writes Christian fiction. The Drew Farthing series is also considered Christian Literature but is quite mild). I like the light banter between the characters, the romance between Madeline and Drew and real-life mystery author references. Both Drew and Madeline love mystery novels so we see them fight over the newest edition. It is a predictable story but I enjoyed the characters and go on the ride with the characters.

k (My Novelesque Life)
