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Rules Of Murder: Drew Farthering, Book 1



Synopsis

From the tip of his black Homburg to the crease in his cheviot trousers, he's the epitome of a stylish 1930s English gentleman. His only problem? The body he just discovered. 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. With the help of beautiful and whip-smart Madeline Parker, a guest from America, Drew proposes to use the lessons he's learned reading his mysteries to solve the crime. Before long, he realizes this is no lark, and no one at Farthering Place is who he or she appears to be - not the butler nor blackmailer, the chauffeur nor embezzler. Trying hard to remain one step ahead of the killer - and trying harder to impress Madeline - Drew must decide how far to take this dangerous game.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rules of Murder is a 1930s murder mystery, and the first in the Drew Farthering Mystery series, by Julianna Deering. Drew Farthering returns home to his English countryside estate of Farthering Place just in time for one of his mother Constance's weekend bashes. And his room is occupied by one of the guests. But ever the stylish gentlemen, he removes the unwanted visitor from his room promptly and at the prodding of his kind stepfather and estranged mother, joins the party. Things take a turn, however, when a body is found. A lover of mysteries on the page, Drew finds it a bit more difficult in real life - but enlists the help of his best friend Nick, son of the butler, and as-intelligent-as-she-is-beautiful Madeline, the visiting American niece of his stepfather. Together

they try to piece together the clues to what could have happened on his otherwise peaceful grounds and realize that murder is no game...I am a huge fan of Agatha Christie. I adore her murder mysteries, which are so intricately crafted and feature such excellent sleuths/detectives! I have nowhere near read them all, but I hope to someday. Rules of Murder sounded like it was nostalgic to those novels, and there's even a blurb on the front cover (a cover I quite like, actually) that specifically stated that ardent fans of Agatha Christie would be satisfied in this book. I'm sure that's true... of some. Personally, I wouldn't go that far. Rules of Murder had a feisty start with just enough detail to let my imagination go to work on Farthering Place. It had a fun, large estate feel. Quickly the tone was enjoyable and light, but sometimes lacking in weight.

A suitable setting for the cozy mystery genre, the novel takes place in England in the 1930's. Ellison Andrew Farthering, alias Drew, returns home to his estate to find his mother and stepfather hosting a house party and business meeting, with guests from America arriving the next morning. While Drew squires his stepfather's American niece, Madeline Parker, about the grounds later on, they stumble upon the dead body of one of the house guests. Embezzlement, blackmail, and red herrings abound as Drew, his best friend Nick, and Madeline investigate the murder, with the help of the local police. I should like to point out that while I never skip ahead to read the end of the book, occasionally I do skip ahead to the author's note, if they have one, as it usually includes a bit of historical or otherwise interesting information relating to the book, and usually it doesn't include key plot points to ruin the story. Thus I found out the importance of Father Knox's Decalogue of Detective Fiction (10 commandments of mystery writing) before reaching the end, and thus was enlightened as to why it featured so prominently in the text. Naturally other authors have deliberately broken all the rules of mysteries before, but Deering manages it in a highly amusing and almost satirical way, given Nick's running commentary about it. Being a mystery and not a suspense, this novel is not written to thrill or scare, but to lay out sufficient clues to solve the murder yet still hopefully surprise the reader. I thought myself so clever early on, having caught on to a glossed-over clue, but while it was highly important, I still interpreted it wrong and didn't beat Drew to the murderer. Good job, Julianna Deering!

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