



Down a Dark Road

Linda Castillo

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Two years ago, Joseph King was convicted of murdering his wife and sentenced to life in prison. He was a “fallen” Amish man and a known drug user with a violent temper. Now King has escaped, and he’s headed for Painters Mill.

News of a murderer on the loose travels like wildfire, putting Chief of Police Kate Burkholder and her team of officers on edge. But this is personal for Kate. She grew up with Joseph King. As a thirteen year old Amish girl, she’d worshipped the ground he walked on. She never could have imagined the nightmare scenario that becomes reality when King shows up with a gun and takes his five children hostage at their Amish uncle’s farm. Armed and desperate, he has nothing left to lose.

Fearing for the safety of the children, Kate makes contact with King only to find herself trapped with a killer. Or is he? All King asks of her is to help him prove his innocence—and he releases her unharmed. Kate is skeptical, but when the facts and the evidence don’t align, she begins to wonder who she should trust. Spurned by some of her fellow cops, she embarks on her own investigation only to unearth an unspeakable secret—and someone who is willing to commit murder to keep it buried.

Down a Dark Road Details

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From Reader Review Down a Dark Road for online ebook

Liz says

3.5 stars, rounded up to 4

This is a well done, solid mystery. Kate Burkholder is lapsed Amish, chief of police for a small Ohio town. In this book, a childhood friend who had been convicted of murdering his wife escapes from prison and returns for his children. Kate has gone to the house where the children are and ends up losing her gun and being taken hostage by the man. He later releases her when she promises to investigate his claim of innocence.

There is a nice balance between story and character development. We are given glimpses into Kate's childhood and her thoughts on those episodes. I like that Kate is psychologically healthy, not struggling with drink or pills or damaged in any way.

I have only read one other of the series, which was the first. It works well as a stand alone, I didn't have issues with not having read books 2-8.

I wouldn't call this a fast paced book. But it moved along at a steady clip and kept my interest throughout. The victims are well done, with a variety of strengths and weaknesses. I particularly liked the way Castillo juxtaposed the Joseph of Kate's youth with the adult he became.

One key plot element doesn't bear looking at too closely as it won't hang together upon close examination.

My thanks to netgalley and Minotaur Books for an advance copy of this book.

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

This is one of my favorite series! It is the ninth book in the Kate Burkholder Series. I have read every book in this series. This book was outstanding! Linda Castillo has done it again! Her ability to weave together the Amish life and "Englischers" into an interesting story and then throw a murder mystery in the midst is superb.

I love the characters in this series, especially Kate Burkholder. In this book the characters come to life, you actually care what happens to them. The author evokes different emotions and I just adored Sadie, the five year old. She was so mature for her age and was so smart. I really got emotional for the children.

In this, her ninth book in this series, we are introduced to Joe King who used to be a childhood friend and first crush. Eight years ago he was charged with killing his wife, Naomi, and sentenced to prison. However, at the start of the novel, he breaks free and is holed up in his relatives' house with his five children. As all

hell breaks lose, Kate tries to use her personal connection with him to solve the issues without any fatalities. He insists he did not kill his wife and begs her to help uncover the truth. But what really is the truth?

The book has insight on Kate's past that helped the reader understand just a bit more about this complex character. As each book is written another layer unravels and at the same time the characters are developing a more detailed and robust storyline. I can't wait till the next one. I love how the author uses twists and suspense, which makes it a page turner and hard to put down!

I recommend this series highly.

I want to thank Netgalley, the publisher and Linda Castillo for a copy of this book in exchange for a honest review.

Brenda says

Let me get this out of the way first. I criticized a previous Linda Castillo book for glaring editing errors. There's one in this book, very near the end, that unfortunately broke my concentration during a great scene. Made me look back a couple of pages to check something, and then shake my head. I hate when that happens, but I'm not letting that affect my feelings toward this book. So here we go...

I didn't plan on spending all of yesterday reading (and we did manage to go out for lunch), but this book sucked me into its pages and I couldn't get out until The End.

This book has many well-written emotional moments. We get a look into Kate Burkholder's past and her first stirring of teen love with Joseph King before his family moved away. Joseph, by all accounts, turned out to be not such a good man. After a history of run ins with the law, he was imprisoned for killing his wife. He claims he didn't do it. The author did an excellent job of creating Joseph and allowing me to see him as Kate did. In spite of his past, I liked him. Adding to the emotional impact are Joseph's children, especially Sadie. I'm still worried about all of them and how their lives will turn out.

Kate and Tomasetti's love grows stronger in this book as demonstrated by the many tender moments. I know they are worried about fraternization, but how can their co-workers not see what's going on?! C'mon, just announce your engagement already!

Supporting Kate through thick and thin are her deputies Glock, Pickles, Skid, T.J., and dispatchers Mona, Lois, and Jodie. I think this is all-important because I feel a storm brewing.

Linda Castillo has stepped up to the plate and hit a home run with this book. I think it's one of her best. It also presents several possibilities for future plot lines and/or new recurring characters. I'm excited for the next Kate Burkholder book!

Kaceey - Traveling Sister says

A fantastic addition to one of my absolute favorite series.

Joseph, an Amish father of five, is sent to prison for the murder of his wife. One year later he makes a daring escape to reunite with his children. Soon he crosses paths with his neighbor and childhood friend Kate Burkholder, now the police chief of Painters Mill. He desperately claims his innocence and pleads with her to look into the case and clear his name.

A very fast paced book that balances a great police procedural with a behind the scenes look at the Amish culture. The focus is on Kate's pursuit of finding the truth behind the murder. Even if that points back to Joseph! But there is also a revealing glimpse into Kate's childhood, growing up in an Amish family. Through flashbacks, we see her relationship with her siblings as well as her first crush on the boy next door!

I love this series, and this book was no exception. Unfortunately, I guessed most of it early on, but still enjoyed the entire story-line. I did find some of Kate's thinking and behavior a bit naive. After all, she's the chief of police. Oh well, sometimes you just have to go with it and enjoy the ride!!

Looking forward to the next in the series! Definitely recommend for all fans of this series.

Copy received through Goodreads giveaway and Minotaur Books.

Julie says

Down a Dark Road by Linda Castillo is a 2017 Minotaur Books publication.

Another solid addition to this outstanding series!!

Do you ever really forget your first crush?

For Kate, Joseph King was the first boy she ever had tender feelings for. But, eight years ago, he was convicted of murdering his wife and sent to prison. However, he has managed to escape, and although it's foolhardy, the first thought in his mind is his children.

Apprised of the situation, Kate isn't convinced Joseph would come back home, but when he ambushes her, a standoff ensues, with tragic results. But, Kate soon comes to believe Joseph might not be the person who killed his wife.

Compelled to investigate the matter out of respect for her old friend, Kate manages to stir up a hornet's nest, putting her career on the line and maybe even her life.

I love cold cases and this storyline fits neatly into that category. The author once again does a terrific job of portraying the Amish community and how it is contrasted with the 'Enlischers'. Kate, of course, understands both sides of the equation, which is a big help in many ways, but also works against her in some cases.

Her past friendship with Joseph complicates things for Kate. Not only are her loyalties questioned, but she is also in danger of losing her hard won battle for respect in the law enforcement community. It looks like the odds are against her, but Kate is determined to get to the truth. In the meantime, some shocking revelations

spill out, with repercussions, no one could have seen coming.

I will admit I was onto parts of the game, early on in the story, but the well -placed revelations and twists still kept me on my toes.

As always, the characterizations are stellar, and my familiarity with the cast only makes that even more impressive. The story is well constructed, deeply absorbing, with just the right blend of emotion, action and suspense, with the added personal touches capping everything off.

This is one of the best mystery series out there right now. Kate is a balanced character that makes her identifiable and likeable, but her background and the darker aspects of her life, also makes her a complex character with many layers.

The roadblocks and difficulties of communicating with the Amish, takes away the usual avenues of investigation at times, and the team must resort to old fashioned leg work to solve the case, while working around some deep -rooted suspicions and peculiarities of the residents.

This setup never fails to fascinate me, with the only drawback being I finish the book too fast and have to wait too long for the next one!

Overall, this was a very satisfying installment in this superb series!!

Stacey says

Down a Dark Road is #9 and another great addition to the Kate Burkholder series. I like how Castillo weaves the Amish culture into all of the novels with Kate having grown up in an Amish family and leaving that lifestyle as an adult. She knows how they think and can get them talking. This is one of my favorites because it hits close to home for Kate Burkholder. She straddles the line between personal and professional which makes this an exciting read.

Her first crush has been convicted of murdering his wife and has escaped prison and returned to Painters Mill. He pleads his innocence to Kate despite the overwhelming evidence against him. After hearing his side of the story and personally knowing him, she has doubts that he did commit the crime, but is she too sentimental to look at this objectively? She starts digging and starts to uncover sinister acts within the police force. Culminating with a tense stand off, Down a Dark Road delivers. I recommend!

Jean says

Two “fallen away” Amish adults cross paths in Down a Dark Road, Linda Castillo’s ninth mystery novel featuring police chief Kate Burkholder. Kate left her family and the Amish community after her rumspringa, the period when teens are permitted to experience the “English” way of life. That is the time when they can decide whether or not they will remain Amish. Due to some difficult circumstances, Kate chose to leave. She studied and worked hard, and now she commands a tiny police force in the small tourist town of Painter’s

Mill, Ohio. Her Amish background has been useful in solving cases on numerous occasions.

The second important figure in this story is Joseph King. He is a man convicted of murdering his wife, and law enforcement has been notified of his escape because he is from the Painter's Mill area and may return to see his children. Oh, by the way, he and Kate were neighbors as kids. He has a history of citations for drunkenness and arrests for drug possession and domestic disturbances. Among his Amish family and neighbors, there are few who believed him to be innocent of Naomi's murder. The five young children have been living with their aunt and uncle, and some believe that Joseph will try to see them.

Not Kate. She thinks he will head for Canada. Why do we *know* she's wrong? She keeps watch outside the farm nonetheless, and – surprise! She's ambushed. The scene inside was not your usual hostage scene. How many cops have that kind of history with their captors? He releases her after insisting that he is innocent. Despite her reservations, Joseph leaves Kate wondering if perhaps he *might* be innocent. After all, she knew this person and cared about him when they were kids. While inside the home, she witnessed his interactions with his children and doesn't feel that he will harm them. Could there be some truth there, despite the damning evidence?

The strength in each of Ms. Castillo's Burkholder books is in the tension and the balance she creates between the English and Amish communities. There is always a level of distrust among the Amish, especially when it comes to the police. On the other hand, Amish people are portrayed as misunderstood, even ostracized by "Englishers" for their appearance and customs. That's where Kate comes in – she speaks the language and respects the culture, even though she doesn't practice any longer. Often she finds herself unwelcome, but at other times, she manages to get some degree of cooperation. In this book, it is little Sadie, the smart five-year-old daughter of Joe King who opens up to Kate and trusts her wholeheartedly. Kate risks her reputation, her career, and her life so that the King children can know the truth. The truth may not be what she expects. What Castillo shows us in book after book is that people are people. There are good, kind people and bad, dangerous people everywhere. It doesn't matter if they're Amish or "English," cops or farmers, male or female.

I also like how strong and supportive Kate's deputies and office staff are. They are hard-working folks who will put in overtime, even though they know they won't get paid for it. They believe in their boss, and they'd do just about anything to back her up. Same goes for John Tomasetti, BCI investigator and Kate's live-in lover. These guys are all like family to Kate.

If there is one negative, it's that sooner or later, you just know that Kate is going to get herself into deep, deep muck. It's quite predictable. She's so intent of helping someone, so gung-ho to prove someone innocent or to save somebody that she gets careless. Other parts of the story weren't too difficult to figure out either, but that didn't matter, really. Watching the layers peel off and seeing the bad guy(s) revealed is a pleasure.

My favorite parts of *Down a Dark Road* were Kate's dreams and memories from her childhood. You can take the girl out of the Amish world, but you can't take the Amish world out of the girl – at least not all of it. It's made her who she is, and she seems to be finally coming to terms with that.

4.5 stars

John Culuris says

Disclaimer and an Apology: This book was awarded free through a Goodreads giveaway and due to unforeseen circumstances I'm only getting back to the novel now, over three months later. I will not abuse the privilege again.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

When I was a vendor and travelled the country as part of a group of five or six people, two my colleagues enjoyed romance novels. When one would finish a new book, she would grade it for the other. The scholastic letter grades they used were not much then the Star system we use here, and for the most part it is sufficient. Look at almost any Goodreads profile and you'll find more books rated than reviewed. Reviews usually serve to reinforce or reiterate recommendations or warnings. Except when they don't. Sometime your purpose is to clear the minefields so others can have a more enjoyable trip.

Well, "minefields" is a little strong in regards to *Down a Dark Road*. There's a lot to like here, starting with the protagonist, Kate Burkholder, the sheriff of Painters Mill, a small northeastern Ohio town. Each time we watch her interact with someone in her life, we get an excellent sense of who they are and of Kate's relationship with each of them. The first time she enters her police station, we're as comfortable in the place as she is. And that's the key to enjoying this work. Accept everything at face value and you'll be rewarded for following Kate through this particularly interesting and stressful portion of her life.

Joe King, Kate's childhood crush, escapes prison. Two years earlier he had been convicted of the vicious murder of his wife in a county about two hours away. The five children, now orphans, are adopted by the family of King's sister-in-law and live on a farm just outside of Painters Mill. Cruising the farm that night in cooperation with the neighboring sheriff and strictly as a precautionary measure--most believe King will head to Canada--Kate is ambushed by King through no fault of her own. A full-blown hostage situation ensues.

These are the most interesting moments of the novel: two people, both raised Amish but having also left the religion for different reasons, find themselves under intense pressure, each with their own agenda, each trying to understand the other while constantly fluctuating between who they were and who they are. Flashbacks throughout the novel to Kate's childhood memories involving King also add greatly to this dynamic.

You **must** accept all of this at face value for the novel to work. It's allowable for you to do this because *Down a Dark Road* is not a mystery. There are no hidden clues, no twists, no surprises. Straight investigation, moving from point A to point B and eventually to point Z, is how Kate arrives at the solution.

A good thing, too. There are some serious structural problems with the beginning of this book. In essence, Kate--a trained investigator--and Linda Castillo--veteran of eight previous Kate Burkholder novels--fail to ask obvious questions. Such as:

1) Kate is ambushed by King. Why? Why was he out in the woods instead of inside with his kids? If he was expecting someone to come along, as subsequent dialogue suggests, how did he know when? Was he out there all night? And what was the point? He gained nothing from the resulting standoff. Some explanation is needed.

2) A picture is taken during the hostage situation that finds its way into the newspaper and onto the internet. How did anyone get close enough to take that photo, a cordoned-off area where bullets could start flying without warning?

3) There is a brief exchange of gunfire after Kate is extricated and leaves to find loved ones who might help in talking King out. She is informed upon returning that King took a shot at a deputy. By now she has suspicions that King might have been framed by the police of his county. Since many representatives of many jurisdictions have converged on the scene, including the sheriff of that police force--who presumably brought at least one deputy with him--you must find out who was involved in the skirmish. It may not have involved the officers in question, but the information can only help clarify Kate's thoughts.

The answer to "Why didn't . . . ?" is often what I think of as TPRI. The Plot Required It. And it's okay because this plot is not about any of that. It's about Kate's journey: from her past to the present, and from her present to closure--and all the emotions and interactions that result. If I can allay the idea that there is any other purpose and make clear that some obvious inconsistency are irrelevant, I believe I can provide something of a service. By clearing the minefield, it is my hope that my three-and-a-half Star journey can allow someone else to have at least a 4-Star experience.

Brenda says

When Chief of Police Kate Burkholder was informed that Joseph King had escaped from prison, she wasn't sure he'd return to Painters Mill. Joe's Amish lifestyle had fallen apart when his Datt was killed while he was just a teen...

After Joe's conviction for murdering his wife, his five children were taken in by his wife's sister and her husband. They now lived on a farm outside of town. But taking his children hostage and then capturing Kate as well, had the police from around the countryside surrounding the farm. Joseph begged Kate to investigate his case, steadfast in his denial of guilt. He then released her unharmed.

Kate's confusion and uncertainty had her conducting an investigation on the quiet. And she wasn't sure who she could trust after what she started to unearth. Was she putting herself in danger?

Down a Dark Road is #9 in the Kate Burkholder series by Linda Castillo and another brilliant episode. I love this series and always wait keenly for the next installment. The twists, intrigue and suspense have me on the edge of my seat, and this one was no different. Kate's police team are great to catch up with each read; supportive of Kate and a great crew, while the relationship between Tomasetti and Kate is getting stronger. *Down a Dark Road* is one I have no hesitation in recommending highly.

KC says

I would like to thank NetGalley, Minotaur Books, and Linda Castillo for the advanced digital copy in exchange for an honest review. Painters Mill Ohio Chief of Police Kate Burkholder discovers her Amish childhood friend, Joseph King, has escaped from prison. Kate, a former member of the Amish community herself, feels a great urgency to inject herself into the situation. King, imprisoned for killing his wife, kidnaps Kate and holes up in a house where his 5 children are living during his incarceration. She pleads with him to do the right thing and turn himself in, but he insists on his innocence. Tragically, he is shot down by SWAT and killed in front of his children. She begins to investigate his allegations that someone else murdered his wife. As Kate digs deeper into the case, she begins to uncover secrets to King's past. She must find the truth quickly, for her safety and career are becoming increasingly threatened.

Thomas says

4 stars

Last year I won Among the Wicked, book 8 in the series, in a Goodreads giveaway. The publisher, Minotaur Books, sent me this book instead. I contacted them and asked if they would send me Among the Wicked. They apologized for the mistake and sent me Among the Wicked. They also said I did not have to worry about reading or reviewing Down a Dark Road.

This is book 9 in the series, and I recommend reading them in order, although I started with book 8 because of the giveaway. I have since read books 1 and 2 in the series. Kate Burkholder is the police chief in a fictional small Ohio town with a substantial Amish population.

The prologue sets the scene with the murder of an Amish woman.

Then the main part of the book opens with a lyrical description of the fictional Tuscarawas covered bridge in Painters Mill. I know it is fictional because my wife and I have visited 575 covered bridges with the help of her World Guide to Covered Bridges. This one is not listed in her WGCB. However, many of the cbs that we have visited are about 150 years old.

This book has Kate taken hostage by an escaped convicted murderer, Joseph King, who was her first teenage crush. He insists that he is innocent. She agrees to look into his case. I won't go into spoiler territory, but it is an absorbing read.

Thanks again to Minotaur books.

Diane S ? says

This author does such a great job of blending the Amish culture with that of our own, or as the Amish say, English. Burkholder, now sheriff, was one Amish, and her family, brother and sister, still belong. This case will take Katie back to her childhood, a time filled with chores, but also a great deal of fun. A man, who she last saw as a boy, will be the focus.

I love how this book goes back and forth in time, learning a little more about her past, small glimpses and insights into the Amish way of living. Secrets, held both by the Amish and people in authority, will turn out to be key. I actually figured out some of the answers quite early in the book, but still enjoyed the process and the journey of watching Katie get there. There were still a few surprises. A good and thoughtfully put together series.

ARC by netgalley,
Publishes July 11th by Minataur

Corina Book Twins Reviews says

4.5 chilling stars

I have been following this series since 2009. I don't know anymore how I found this author, but her books have pulled me back year after year. The most fascinating aspect of these novels is the premise and location. I've never read anything about the Amish culture before Kate Burkholder. I'm from Germany so I understand some of the Amish that is being used in these books, but sentence structure is often very different and the culture is a world apart to anything I've ever known.

These books, again and again, make me wonder and curious about the differences in cultures, religions and beliefs.

Now, don't think that these books are about nice little endeavors into the country. Oh no!!! Kate Burkholder is one touch sheriff, who has to be witness to some very cruel and gruesome acts. You wouldn't think that these terrifying events could happen to such peaceful people, but even peaceful people have skeletons hidden somewhere.

Linda Castillo's books are CHILLING, THRILLING, CAPTIVATING, and ADDICTIVE.

I read Down a Dark Road in one sitting. There was no stopping me. At the end it was close to 1 am when I finally finished this book, with a satisfying THE END. As always Kate Burkholder was as riveting and fascinating as always. I truly adore her. Kate, was a woman in a man's world. As a sheriff in a community with a 1/3 amish population, her background was hindering as much as helpful. She was seen as the one that left the community and faith, an ENGLISHER, excommunicated, distrusted, and a police officer to boot.

Her struggle with her past and getting answers from people that distrusted her was palpable. Kate's thorough police work, her dedication and never-ending willingness to find the truth is what draws me to these books. The authors way of spinning an engrossing tale, chilling murder cases, authentic and genuinely like-able characters, and a fascinating Amish community makes this series a ONE-OF-KIND!!

If you are interested in THRILLERS – go and pick this one!! I can't recommend it enough!!

ARC generously provided in exchange for an honest review.

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Sheri says

Another great book in the Kate Burkholder series. I enjoy this series for many reasons but a primary reason is that the author always keeps the action going, even in the paperwork parts of the investigation, the forward momentum is still there. I don't feel like I have to slog through lengthy descriptions to get back to the action. The characters and setting are developed in a succinct and relevant manner. Not much of the supporting characters in this installment, but that is okay as this is very much Kate's case to solve. I enjoyed the glimpses into her childhood and I'm already looking forward to the next book and learning more about Kate's Amish past.

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

EXCERPT: I haven't seen or heard from Joseph King in twenty years, but I heard the stories. Not only from the Amish, but from law enforcement as well. Evidently, King was a troubled man with a marriage on the rocks, a litter of kids he didn't want, and a loose interpretation of his marital vows.

I vividly recall the day I learned his wife had been found dead—and Joseph was arrested and charged with first-degree murder. I couldn't believe the kid I'd known—the one with the toothy grin and big laugh—could do something so horrific. But no one knows better than me how profoundly life can change people—and that too often those changes are not for the best.

I'd wanted to talk to him, ask him myself if he'd done it. But I knew it was only that tiny part of my heart that remembered what it was like to be thirteen years old and in the throes of my first crush. The part of me that was loyal to a fault and still believed people were fundamentally good. I never went to see him.

I did, however, follow the investigation and trial. Joseph King, his wife, and their five children lived on a small farm near Middlefield, Ohio, which is about two hours northeast of Painters Mill. The night of the murder, King claimed to have gone fishing on Lake Erie. Since his destination was too far to travel via buggy, he'd paid a local Yoder toter to drive him to a cabin. During the night, someone walked into his unlocked home, picked up his shotgun, and shot his wife in her bed while their five children slept across the hall. Come morning, the children discovered their mother's body. Two days later, Joseph was arrested and charged with murder.

THE BLURB: In this electrifying new thriller in the New York Times bestselling series, a convicted murderer is on the run and Chief of Police Kate Burkholder must catch him before he strikes again.

Eight years ago Joseph King was convicted of murdering his wife and sentenced to life in prison. He was a "fallen" Amish man and, according to local law enforcement, a known drug user with a violent temper. Now King has escaped, and he's headed for Painters Mill.

News of a murderer on the loose travels like wildfire and putting Chief of Police Kate Burkholder and her team of officers on edge. A nightmare scenario becomes reality when King shows up with a gun and kidnaps his five children from their Amish uncle's house. He's armed and desperate with nothing left to lose.

Fearing for the safety of the children, Kate leaps into action, but her frantic search for a killer leads her into an ambush. When King releases her unharmed, asking her to prove his innocence, she begins to wonder whether the police are hiding something, and she embarks on her own investigation to discover the truth.

MY THOUGHTS: I hadn't read a Linda Castillo book in a while, so I was excited to find Down a Dark Road

in the audio section of my library service. Her books, and I admit to only having read some of her Kate Burkholder series and out of order at that, are fast paced, gripping and realistic.

There is a great blend of police procedure with Kate's personal life. I particularly like the way she still has respect for the Amish way of life, although she has left it behind, and the conflict she feels about the lack of relationship with her brother and sister and their families, who have remained in the Amish community.

In Down A Dark Road, Kate follows her heart rather than her head, putting her position as Chief of Police in jeopardy. We get to take a look at her childhood through flashbacks, and we learn a lot more about what makes Kate the woman she is.

An extremely satisfying reading/listening experience.

I listened to the audio version of Down a Dark Road by Linda Castillo, narrated by Kathleen McInerney, via OverDrive. All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own. Please refer to my Goodreads.com profile page or the 'about'page on sandysbookaday.wordpress.com for an explanation of my rating system. This review and others are also published on my blog sandysbookaday.wordpress.com
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