



Murder on the Red Carpet

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The last thing Arlena Madison and Penelope Sutherland expect to find while searching for their runaway dog is a beautiful young girl buried in the snow on the side of the road. When the police discover that the murdered girl was obsessed with Arlena, an up-and-coming actress, questions arise about possible connections between the victim and the legendary Madison family. Arlena has just been cast as the lead actress in iconic film director Salvatore Marco's next movie. If she can prove herself as a serious actress, it might just be her ticket out of the cut-rate horror movie world.

Penelope has just gotten her big break, too. Her company, Red Carpet Catering, has booked its first real job on the Marco movie, cooking every meal during filming. She can't believe her luck, working with the famous director and also with her best friend. But when serious accidents begin threatening the lives of the cast and crew, the whole production is in danger of being shut down.

Detective Joseph Baglioni, a childhood friend of Penelope's, tracks the killer who lurks among the stars. His search leads him into the world of celebrity stalkers, aggressive paparazzi, crazed fans, and Hollywood deal makers, all with agendas of their own. In a desperate race to catch a killer, he discovers that past mistakes don't always stay buried and the lies people tell have the power to undo them.

Murder on the Red Carpet Details

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From Reader Review Murder on the Red Carpet for online ebook

JoAnne McMaster (Any Good Book) says

Penelope Sutherland is the personal chef and best friend of Arlena Madison. Arlena is an up-and-coming actress who, up until this point, has always starred in B-movies, but is being given her first big break. She and Arlena share a house in Glendale, New Jersey. On this night, during what may turn out to be a blizzard, Arlena's dog Zazoo has escaped, running out into the snow. Both women go out to search for him, in the hopes they can find him before he freezes to death. After a short time Arlena heads back toward the house in the hopes he may be returning, and Penelope continues on. Soon after, Penelope sees a motionless white furry object half-buried, and is afraid it might be the little dog. Moving forward, she calls his name, and when he doesn't respond, she reaches for him and falls into the snow...but it's not Zazoo...it's a hat, and it belongs to the dead girl lying next to her.

When Detective Joseph Baglioni arrives to investigate, Penelope recognizes him as an old friend from grade school. However, with a dead body at the forefront, there's no time to reminisce about the past. After determining neither of the women recognized the girl, the police leave them to try and get some sleep, and they figure this will be the end of them hearing about the death...but it is not to be.

Once they discover the identity of the dead girl, Holly Anderson, they discover that she has an amazing resemblance to Arlena, but neither woman knows her. It also happens that Arlena's father, a famous actor, has had several wives (not to mention girlfriends) and children who live in different states. While he readily supports all of them, he too maintains he's never heard of nor seen her before, nor does he recognize the name. And when it is discovered the girl was murdered right outside Arlena's home, it soon becomes apparent that there is more to the death than meets the eye.

Then a series of circumstances arise: Arlena's half-brother Max arrives, and finds out about the 'accidents' which have suddenly befallen Arlena, and alerts her father, Randall Madison, who appears almost on the heels of Max.

What ensues is a captivating mystery surrounding the film industry. We meet Penelope Sutherland, a strong, intelligent woman who is beginning to get her Red Carpet Catering company in full swing and doesn't shirk work to investigate a murder. Her friend Arlena Madison is somewhat more fragile; being an actress who is trying to be taken seriously in a business not known for sensitivity, she shows us she has morals (she won't appear topless) and does her best to keep going regardless of what is occurring around her. In fact, the only flaw I found with Arlena was the fact that she was too perfect, as described by Penelope (perfect hair, body, feet, face, etc.). I've seen actresses without makeup or camera touch ups, and none of them have been that perfect. But indeed, this could be only Penelope's perception of Arlena anyway.

For you romantics, there was a bit of a love triangle toward the middle of the book, but nothing that was unbelievable nor distracting to the story. In fact, it only showed Penelope reasoning things out in her mind and making a decision that was right for her at the time. I found Arlena's father Randall to be a hoot, he seemed like such a friendly and happy-go-lucky person who still took his responsibilities seriously, and he's someone I would like to know (on a platonic basis, of course - he does have a way with the ladies).

I also found it interesting that there was an intrigue afoot within the murder. More than meets the eye, as it were. Without giving too much away, I will venture to say this: don't assume that all the questions lead up to one answer.

Ms. Simmons has given us quite a good beginning to a new series; she manages to create characters that are both believable and likable, while weaving in small tidbits of movie-making and what is involved in catering food to a movie crew. I look forward to reading the next in the series. Highly recommended.

I received a free copy in exchange for an honest review but this in no way influenced my decision.

<http://joannesbooks.blogspot.com/2016...>

Lisa Morin says

It's not always easy to give a 5 star review. I am usually known to give 4 stars and it takes a whole lot for me to actually hit the fifth star.

As soon as I read the first few lines in this story, I knew it was destined to receive all 5 stars.

Penelope is such a likeable character, she is strong, independent and loyal. She happens to be the personal chef to film star Arlena, as well as having her own catering business.

Lucky for Penelope, she is working as caterer on the new set of Arlena's movie.

When Zazoo, Arlena's dog runs off during a storm, Penelope begins to search for him and stumbles across a body in the road.

Thinking it must have been an accident, Penelope tries to shake the gruesome image from her head and focus on the job.

When attempts are made on Arlena's life, Penelope begins to try to put the puzzle pieces together. Her reconnection to her childhood friend brings just the right amount of romance to the story.

I am thrilled that I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for my fair and honest review.

I will definitely be reading more books in this series.

The author has done a great job of writing this story and her style of writing makes this an intriguing story.

Debbie says

I loved this little cozy mystery and the characters involved! I think it's one of my new favs to come out of Henery Press. Of course, I get excited about anything that has to do with celebrity. This was my first book by this author and I just loved the writing and the characters. I see that there are more coming on the horizon and I can't wait to read them.

I definitely recommend this first installment. It was short, sweet, fun and very entertaining. Shawn Reilly Simmons has given us new characters that I see only getting better in the future!

Thanks to Henery Press for approving my request and to Net Galley for providing me with a free e-galley in exchange for an honest review. I had such an enjoyable and entertaining time reading this one!

HENERY PRESS PUBLISHING says

“Loved this book! The characters are well-drawn and it’s cleverly plotted. Totally engrossing...I felt as

though I was actually on a movie set. The author is well-versed in her setting and she is able to keep the reader in suspense. I can't wait for the second book in the series.” – Marianna Heusler, Edgar-Nominated Author

Yolanda says

This is an engaging murder mystery with interesting, complex characters. The main character is a caterer who is providing the food for a movie shoot. Her best friend is the lead actress. There is of course, murder and mayhem involved. The writing is fun, quirky and engaging. The character development between the lead character and her love interest is well done and believable. This book has several of my favorite things at the forefront: movies, murder, and food prep. Although I had a few quibbles with some details, as a first novel this is a great read. I look forward to the next installment in the series!

Patty says

What it's all about...

This book is about Penelope and her movie catering company...Red Carpet Catering. This is the first book in the series...although I accidentally read the second book first. Penelope has the ability to get enmeshed in the lives of the people and events around her. In this one she is in New Jersey catering her first movie. Her bestie...Arlena...is the main actress on this movie. While searching for their dog Zazoo in a sudden snowstorm...Penelope literally trips and falls onto the dead body of a young girl. Who is she? Why is she near Arlena's house? And within days it seems as though someone is trying to get rid of Arlena. Several attempts are made on her life. Does this dead young girl have any relationship to Arlena? Arlena's movie star father has had quite a few relationships with quite a few women over the years...with the result of those relationships being quite a few children.

Why I wanted to read it...

I just finished the other book this author wrote with the same characters...different movie...and I loved it! This book has that same nice fast pace. I also like this author's writing style. I am also excited that she has a new book...in this same series...coming out in June.

What made me truly enjoy this book...

Penelope is a lively character. She is a perfectionist and a list maker. I loved the foodie parts and I loved her Nancy Drew like personality. I loved her budding relationship with Joey The Detective. The murder of the young girl as well as the attempts to get rid of Arlena are intriguing as well as believable. I really did not want to stop reading this book.

Why you might want to read it, too...

Readers who love a great cozy mystery will really enjoy this book. Foodies will love this book, too. I liked the relationships. I liked the plot. I liked the real ness of this book.

Niyati Em says

This was such an amazing book! I could not stop reading it! It was so well written!

I feel bad I didn't take the others when they were up on NetGalley. Pen seems like the best character ever and I want to read her adventures even further.

Absolutely enjoyed this one. This is a light and well written cozy.

Lola says

I received a copy in exchange for an honest review

The catering business combined with the cozy mystery genre make me think this would be a fun read. Too bad it fell a bit flat for me. The catering business was something I did like, it was interesting to get a view of how that worked and I liked that the main character was a chef and business owner. I also thought the movie filming setting was interesting as I know very little of that it was interesting to get a glimpse of that work. I also thought it was fun with how the main character actually was more of a side character if that makes sense, her best friend was the one who played in the movie and where the killer was after and she was more on the sidelines, which I liked and made for an interesting perspective.

So someone get's killed close by where the main character and her best friend live. The main character finds the body and wants to know who killed her. Then her best friend seems to keep getting in accidents and they suspect it's not really an accident maybe. There are a few clues the main character picks up and she helps solve the mystery a bit, but I wasn't really a fan of how the mystery was handled. It felt like it stayed a bit on the sidelines and the actual resolution to the mystery felt a bit lame. The reasonings where a bit far fetched and it made me a bit sad a girl was killed because of that, it just felt silly. I had guessed correctly who the murderer was and thought it was kinda obvious with how that person acted.

I liked the characters well enough, but didn't really care for them. I did like how the main character was a chef and owned her catering business. I didn't really care for her best friend. There is a big cast of side characters, but they all stayed a bit flat. I never felt like I really could connect with them or cared about them. So that made it hard to fully enjoy this book.

There is a bit of a romance, but it doesn't really pick up until the end of the book and I think it will be more important then. There was a hint of a love triangle, but it was obvious who the main character was interested in. So I wasn't really sure why the other guy was necessary and I felt a bit sorry for him. There are some actions of characters and scenes that felt just a bit off, a bit unrealistic or weird. same with the romance

there's this scene she kisses someone and someone else notices it and then they never talk about it anymore.

Also something worth mentioning is that this book was pretty different from most cozy mysteries I read, most of those have a small town setting. This one didn't really focus on the setting, but more on the jobs of the characters and their relationships. It was an interesting approach, although I would've liked to get more of a feel for the setting and it lacked that cozy and comfortable feel as it was set in a big city instead.

To summarize: This book didn't fully work for me. I liked the catering business and movie filming part of the story and learning more about those two topics. The mystery felt a bit flat to me, there wasn't much focus on the mystery and I guessed early on who the murderer was. I didn't really care or connect with the characters, which made it a bit more difficult to get into the story. There's a hint of romance, which probably will be developed more in the next book. I thought it would go into love triangle direction for a bit, but by the end of the book I was pretty sure it wouldn't go there. The setting isn't a small town like most cozy mysteries, but a bigger city. I would've liked to get a bit more of a feel for the setting, but it was interesting to have a mystery book set there. It did lack the cozy and comfortable feel a bit. It's more a 2.5 stars, but rounded it up as I didn't really dislike it, but more that I didn't really care or get into the story.

Betty says

The first book Red Carpet Catering and personal cook Penelope Sutherland for a movie starlet, Arlena stumbles over a dead body near their home. Events spiral out of control and accidents on the set continue to bother the movie set. The dead girl resembles Arlena. I found this book hard to put down. The changes that occurred made figuring the answer difficult. It surprised me.

Disclosure: I received a free copy from HENERY PRESS through NetGalley for an honest review. I would like to thank them for the opportunity to read and review the book. The opinions are my own.

Clare O'Beara says

Deep snow in New Jersey is almost enough to obscure the body of a teen girl. Chasing her runaway dog, a caterer comes across the body.

Our protagonist provides what sounds like great food to a film set. Baked salmon, salad plates, roast lamb with rosemary and garlic roast potatoes.... Getting stopped at four in the morning by a policewoman determined to prove that she's driving to work drunk doesn't help, while the publicity attached to filming, and catastrophes like a star actress being run over, don't help.

The writing is at times very realistic and absorbing. We see the work behind the glamour. And we try to figure out why the dead girl sent away for a DNA test and who killed her.

I spotted one of my pet peeves, 'she discretely removed her gun' when this should read discreetly.

I was sent an e-ARC by Fresh Fiction. This is an unbiased review.

Mary says

I enjoyed it very much!

The story was very good! Penelope is just starting a new business, and her new friend Arlena is trying to help her out. She tells Penny that she can come and live with her in her big house in Glendale, NJ, Penny can start her business with Arlena's help and not have to pay rent. She will be working on the movie that Arlena is working on so they will have the same schedules.

It looks like everything will be working out for both of them. Everything seems to be going ok until a dead body is found on their front lawn in the snow. Once the body is identified things start to fall apart.

The book is very good and keeps everyone's attention until the killer is identified at the end of the book. I would recommend the book to all my friends and family. It is well worth your time to read it.

Susan Johnston says

Princess Fuzzypants here:

Some series can be read out of order as a one-off. Others will confuse you completely if you read them in any way but chronological order. I have had the pleasure of reading and reviewing books that were written after this one but this is the first time I picked up the inaugural story. It is still a series that could be read stand-alone but I must admit knowing the backstory gives an added appreciation of the characters.

If being a chef to the stars on movie sets wasn't enough, being the best friend, personal chef and room-mate of a big star provides lots of opportunity for adventures..

Penelope runs Red Carpet Catering and when she finds a teenage girl dead in a snowdrift outside of the home she shares with her best friend, things go from bad to worse as attempts on the star's life nearly shut down the movie set. The one good thing is reconnecting with a childhood friend, a local copy. True course of true love and criminal investigations never runs smoothly and there are lots of ups and downs before the mysteries are solved and murderer revealed.

I like that Penelope helps but does not try to solve the crimes thereby putting herself and everyone around her in danger. She is smart and savvy and grounded. The other characters including the Hollywood stars come across as real as well, albeit some of them have some major idiosyncrasies. One recurring theme in this book is that actions have consequences that were never considered when decision were made. There is always a price to pay.

Now that I have caught up with the origin story, I am looking forward to future tales even more. I give this four purrs and two paws up.

Ann says

Penelope Sutherland and her Red Carpet Catering company are doing the meals for a new film. When she goes outside to hunt for Arlena's missing dog she discovers a dead body in a snowdrift. When major accidents start happening on the set it seems Arlena is the next target and Penelope must find out who's sabotaging the movie before they both end up dead. The food they serve sounds delicious and hopefully the book will have a few recipes. I enjoyed the story and liked how Ms. Simmons weaved the food and movie industry into a nice cozy mystery with lots of drama and clues to follow. Will look for more of her books, this was the first in the Red Carpet Catering series.

Dana Busenbark says

This is a very interesting book right off the bat. We find that Arlena and Penelope are friends, but even more than that, Penelope is Arlena's personal Chef who runs her own business as well catering to movie sets. Typically the ones that Arlena works on primarily. When the power goes out one night, and Arlena's dog gets out, what happens? Who ends up coming into, or is that back into Penelope's life? Who are Sam and Max? Things get really interesting as more information about Holly Anderson comes to light. What incidents have happened on the set of Arlena's new movie that she's the principal actress in? Who is behind all that is going on? Why are they doing it? Who are they trying to hurt? What happens? You're going to need to read this really interesting book and find out what happens. It was a real treat to read (pun intended), considering one of the primary players is a Chef. Enjoy it! I did. Cannot wait to read more!

Mark Baker says

Penelope Sutherland is beginning to build her catering company, and landing the job catering the movie her best friend Arlena is starring in is a plum gig indeed. That is until a dead body is found outside the house where the two women live and accidents keep happening to on the set that appear to make Arlena the target. What is going on?

I love movies as well as mysteries, so this combination of the two was right up my alley. It's a very fun book as well. The pacing was a bit off, but never for very long at a time, and the mystery led up to a great solution. The characters are strong and human, not the over the top characters we can get somethings when movie stars are involved. I'm definitely looking forward to the next in the series.

Read my full review at [Carstairs Considers](#).
