



Pray for Silence

Linda Castillo

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New York Times bestselling author Linda Castillo delivers an electrifying thriller in which Chief of Police Kate Burkholder must confront a dark evil to solve the mysterious murders of an entire Amish family.

The Plank family moved from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to join the small Amish community of Painters Mill less than a year ago and seemed the model of the Plain Life—until on a cold October night, the entire family of seven was found slaughtered on their farm. Police Chief Kate Burkholder and her small force have few clues, no motive, and no suspect. Formerly Amish herself, Kate is no stranger to the secrets the Amish keep from the English—and each other—but this crime is horribly out of the ordinary.

State agent John Tomasetti arrives on the scene to assist. He and Kate worked together on a previous case during which they began a volatile relationship. They soon realize the disturbing details of this case will test their emotional limits and force them to face demons from their own troubled pasts—and for Kate, a personal connection that is particularly hard to bear.

When she discovers a diary that belonged to one of the teenaged daughters, Kate is shocked to learn the girl kept some very dark secrets and may have been living a lurid double life. Who is the charismatic stranger who stole the young Amish girl's heart? Could the brother—a man with a violent past, rejected and shunned by his family and the Amish community, have come to seek out revenge? As Kate's outrage grows so does her resolve to find the killer and bring him to justice—even if it means putting herself in the line of fire.

Topping her own bestselling debut, Linda Castillo once again immerses us in the world of the Amish with a chilling story that is both a fast-paced thriller and intriguing psychological puzzle.

Pray for Silence Details

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From Reader Review Pray for Silence for online ebook

Jenni Boyd says

Police chief Kate Burkholder, receives a call in the middle of the night of a shooting at an Amish farm. The moment she steps inside the darkened house, her senses first smell the stench of blood, before the beam of her flashlight reveals the carnage within. Desperately searching for any survivors, she follows a trail of blood, finding more victims until she reaches the barn, but nothing can prepare her for the horror that she discovers inside.

With no clues, no evidence, Kate is baffled as to why someone would want to murder an entire family who were pacifists, until the autopsy of one of the young girls reveals something startling, causing Kate to conduct her own thorough search of the farmhouse, where she uncovers a journal hidden beneath the floor boards in the girls room, it was written by the youngest girl Mary.

Upon reading the journal, Kate discovers Mary had a secret, and the further she digs, the more she uncovers, soon forming a bond with Mary through her journal, and in her quest to find the perpetrator, she treads the fine line between justice and revenge.

Despite this book being the second in the Kate Burkholder series, I feel it could also be a stand alone book, and one I highly recommend. I look forward to reading more books by Linda Castillo.

Licha says

This is the problem I have with series. The repetition of what happens in the first or previous book, the replay of each character's personality. It becomes annoying after a while. Why does all the information have to be repeated all over again? If someone wants to start with the second, third, etc book, then that's the risk that person runs of not having a full understanding of the storyline. However, for those of us who choose to start series from the beginning, I don't want to have to have it explained to me all over again in the second book what happened in the first. This made it very hard for me to focus on this story line and enjoy it all on its own. Instead, I found myself picking it apart. My mind began to drift and think that if I actually met the main character in real life, I probably wouldn't particularly like her too much. This in turn made me start feeling like the author was trying to make the reader admire what a strong woman Kate Burkholder was, how vehemently she felt for the victims, how human she was... It started becoming more of a chore to finish reading this book. The plot seemed too way-out for me to actually buy into. Snuff films/Amish girls. Come on. The love story between Kate and Tomasetti never really plays out and never really explains where it has gone between book one and two or where it's going to go. I don't know if that's to play it out into the next book, but it never really makes me believe what bond these two have besides the fact that both have gone through some horrific pasts. I don't think I will be reading the third book in the series.

lebe.liebe lese [Tina] says

Erneut ein unfassbar brutaler Fall, aber die Geschichte an sich war für mich nicht ganz so stark wie Band 1..

Jim says

“There are monsters living among us. People who look no different than you and me. But they lack a fundamental component of the human species: a conscience.”

This is the second book in the Kate Burkholder series and it is a thriller. Officer Chuck "Skid" Skidmore is working the graveyard shift. After one too many cups of coffee at the diner where he was checking out the young waitress he pulled his cruiser over in a farmers field to answer natures call. That was when he heard the screaming. The screaming was coming from one of the farm workers. Investigating Skid finds the bodies of the owner of the farm and his sons. Kate is called in and upon further investigation it is discovered that the entire family, seven in all, have been brutally murdered. The Plank's had moved from Lancaster County Pennsylvania to Painters Mill, Ohio less than one year ago. They were respected and seemed the model of the Plain Life in the Amish community.

Everything is not what it appears though. The Amish are a close-knit society and have their secrets. Kate finds a journal belonging to one of the daughters indicating that she had very dark secrets. Formerly Amish herself, Kate finds that she identifies with this daughter. For Kate this hits close to home, she is out raged, and she is determined to learn the truth about what happened that night.

She calls State agent John Tomasetti who she met during the Slaughterhouse killings (Sworn to Silence). Kate and Tomasetti developed a complex relationship. Tomasetti has his own issues and is on administrative leave from the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Apprehension but that does not stop him from coming to Painters Mill ... and Kate. This case forces them both to face their troubled past.

There is a lot of repetition and references to the first novel, Sworn to Silence, but I don't think it is to the point where it ruins the story. Linda Castillo does a wonderful job of bringing Kate Burkholder and her team to life. The setting is a terrific alternative to anyone seeking a change from the typical urban setting.

Jonetta says

Kate Burkholder and her detectives are severely challenged when an entire Amish family of seven is discovered brutally murdered on their farm. One was an infant and the two daughters were horrifically assaulted. They begin the investigation to determine who would have a motive and capability of committing such a heinous act and discover one of the daughters had been living a secret life.

The crime was horrific and the details aren't spared so be prepared. However, all that occurs in the beginning and the rest of the story focuses on solving the crime and the mystery. There are distasteful revelations, though, that are heartbreaking. John Tomasetti makes another appearance as he and Kate continue to figure out just what kind of relationship they have and he has his own set of concerns to worry about. There's an exciting climax, though one could question Kate's judgment to some degree.

I'm continuing to enjoy this series and its interesting cast of characters, especially Kate. The narrator again turns in a terrific performance, pacing the story perfectly, effectively adding tension and excitement and providing distinction to the character voices. For those for which narrative matters, the story is told in a combination of first person (Kate) and third person narratives (all other characters). In my opinion, it feels like the best of both worlds as you get the insights and emotions of the main character but don't lose the perspectives from others. I'm really looking forward to the next book

Lynne Davis says

Excellent thriller by Linda Castillo, as police chief Kate Burkholder tries to solve the horrific murder of a family in Amish farm country. I never saw the killer until all was revealed at the very end. A good addition to this excellent series.

Anniebananie says

Für mich leider schwächer als Band 1. ich hatte hier das Gefühl, dass die Spannung doch sehr unterschiedlich verteilt war. Am Anfang hätte ich mir früher die Ermittlungsarbeiten gewünscht und dafür hätte man sich bei der Auflösung etwas mehr Zeit lassen können. Auch das Motiv fand ich am Ende doch etwas ungläubwürdig. Alles in allem aber trotzdem ein guter Thriller.

Tammie says

Pray for Silence is the second book in the Kate Burkholder series. I did not enjoy it as much as the first, for a few reasons. Reason one being that I do not care for some of the tactics Kate and Tomasetti use in dealing with suspects. I know they are supposed to be flawed with personal demons, but it doesn't endear them to me.

Reason two is that Tomasetti annoys me with his attitude towards his superiors. Sure he's flawed and he went through some terrible things that left him in a psych ward for a while, but he chose to self-medicate through prescription drugs and alcohol and his utter refusal to face the consequences of his actions like he should annoy me. In book one I could understand his attitude a little more because he was still abusing drugs and alcohol and trying to hide it. Also his superiors didn't come off as particularly caring about his situation, but in this case the consequences were minor compared to what they could have been and it seemed like they took into consideration all that he had done in the previous case. I just thought he should have been happy that all he was getting was put on leave for a while.

Reason three is that there were some things I thought should have been done during the investigation that were never considered, like going around to area nightclubs with the victims photo and asking questions. Putting someone in the park to observe and see if the perpetrator was still hanging around there taking photos. Looking for the necklace the victim mentions in her diary. It could have had fingerprints on it, but it's never even thought of.

The mystery aspect of this book was good and it kept me guessing about who was involved for a while, but the motivation was easy to figure out. I did feel like there were some similarities to the first book. (view spoiler). I'm still mildly interested in this series and I will probably eventually read the next book.

Review also posted at Writings of a Reader

Liz says

This book is not for the faint of heart. It starts with the gruesome murder of an Amish family of seven and goes from there. I really like Kate Burkholder, the formerly Amish police chief. This crime really hits home for her, reminding her of her youth. She's troubled to begin with and this crime doesn't do anything to bring her peace.

Well written and fast paced. This was one of those books I kept trying to squeeze in just one more chapter. I had read the first book in the series a while ago, just got an advance copy of the latest and decided to go back and read the ones between. If this is any indication, I'm going to enjoy books 3-8.

Sean Peters says

Another great read from Linda Castillo and the second Kate Burkholder books.

One family. One horrific murder. An entire town under suspicion...

The Planks moved from Lancaster County Pennsylvania to the small Amish community of Painters Mill, hoping to resume the comforts of the Plain Life in Ohio. Less than one year later, the family of seven is found dead—slaughtered on their own farm.

This isn't just any brutal murder, either- a family of seven, Amish, bound and slaughtered. Sound pretty gruesome? It is. Kate Burkholder is the chief of police in the small town of Painters Mill. Formerly Amish, Burkholder finds the crime shocking and is immediately thrust into the center of a tornado of questions. Trying to find answers, Burkholder must confront her own past and penetrate the tightly-knit Amish community who distrust the 'English', as they call outsiders in a town uneasily divided along the lines of faith and culture.

Castillo does a great job with her characterization. She really breathes life into her supporting cast, and you start to get to know Kate and all team better as well as Tomasetti.

I really do like Linda Castillo's writing style, and the brutal crimes in "Pray for Silence" will make even the most avid genre reader flinch while reading. This is definately not a book for the squeamish as Castillo visits some pretty nasty corners of Painters Mill.

While I don't think "Pray for Silence" was as nailbiting as "Sworn..." it's still a great read, and Cheif Burkholder is one of the best new characters to hit crime fiction in years. If you haven't discovered this series...do yourself a favour and pick up both Burkholder books.

Just have another five to read, and as Linda Castillo says herself, her new book looks like being a best book, it's out in 2015.

Vivian says

Sadly disappointed. I really enjoyed "Sworn to Silence" and looked forward to reading this one. I'm happy that I didn't spend any money on it since I could not finish it. The gory descriptions of the killings of the Plank family are not for the faint of heart and I had a hard time reading through the first 40 pages or so. My biggest problem, however, is that Ms. Castillo must think her readers are stupid. Why else, would we need to be reminded on every other page that Kate Burkholder grew up Amish and KNOWS what it's like and how it feels and how one can keep secrets. We get it, Ms. Castillo. So repetitive and unnecessary. Also unpalatable, are Ms. Burkholder's serious lapses in judgment since she is supposedly an experienced police officer. The book was overlong and in need of some serious editing. I seriously doubt that I will read the next in the series.

Tim The Enchanter says

Excellent Crime Thriller - 4 Stars

Me and Kate Burkholder are not quite seeing eye to eye. Her and her friends need to have their mouths washed out with some soap. We get it already, you are not God-fearing, pacifist Amish. If the penchant for drinking away pain and the intimidation of witnesses didn't give us this impression, the frequent f-bombs certainly clue us in. Although I really do enjoy the wonderful writing and meticulous plots, I going to have to put the series aside. The excessive use of adult language has been a turn off.

Plot summary

The normally quiet town of Painter's Mill is left paralyzed by fear when in the early morning hours a family of 6 (or maybe 7) is found shot and murdered with no trace of a killer left behind. Amongst the family members killed by gunshot wounds, the two teenaged daughters appear to have been tortured while one of the girls was found to have been mutilated. It is the story of this savaged girl that leads the investigation. While investigating these brutal crimes, Kate Burkholder finds herself emotionally drawn into the investigation and she faces what she has lost and what could have been.

The Good

Death and Destruction Brought to you by Thomas Kincade

This series by Linda Castillo features one of the best settings for any crime novels I have read. The peaceful and rolling countryside dominated by the insular Amish society provide a stark contrast for death and destruction. It is almost profane to imagine such dark crimes taking place in this pastoral setting. The author does a wonderful job of blending the beauty of the setting with the brutal and brooding darkness of the human mind.

The Bad

Plug your Ears Grandma

As I complained above, I felt the adult language was again excessive. As I chose to listen to the audio

version of this book, the language really stood out. Linda Castillo continues to paint a story with stark contrasts. While the language may be used to contrast with the surroundings, I was put off by the constant swearing.

Give the Woman a Tissue

I always enjoy strong female characters. Without a doubt, Kate Burkholder is a strong woman...well, mostly. Unlike the first book, we found Kate, somewhat stereotypically, teary and close to losing control of her emotions. Granted, she does more than cry. Kate has a hard time with impulse control. Throughout the story she finds herself in bed with a person she is trying to avoid, drunk on several occasions when it was not appropriate, attacking a potential witness, finding herself unable to say no to the strong male character and in one major move, taking action that could conceivably cause her to lose her badge. While a broken character is believable, Kate felt like more a caricature than in the first novel.

I expect the first novel of a crime series to involve a case that is personal to the protagonist. I thought we did that in the first novel. Apparently, it can get more personal. If I ever read the third novel, I hope it is less personal as that ground is now well tread.

Final Thoughts

The language aside, I really did enjoy the book. While I had issues with the development of Kate Burkholder, Linda Castillo is an amazing author with a wonderful sense of plot and setting. If you are not bothered by adult language and you like dark crime novels, you will enjoy this series.

Audiobook Notes

If I do continue the series at a later point, it will not be in the audio format. I found myself tired of the narrator after this second book. She seemed to play up the frail emotions in her narration and added to the feeling of a stereotypical female lead. While her narration is fairly good, I don't enjoy her in this series.

Content Advisories

It is difficult to find commentary on the sex/violence/language content of book if you are interested. I make an effort to give you the information so you can make an informed decision before reading. *Disclaimer* I do not take note or count the occurrences of adult language as I read. I am simply giving approximations.

Scale 1 - Lowest 5 - Highest

Sex - 4

There is sexual tension between characters and one non graphic description of an implied sexual encounter. There is some non graphic descriptions of a victim's consensual sexual encounters. The rating was raised because there was a major theme of rape and sexual encounters where the victim could not give consent (through the use of drugs). Though the investigation, there is much discussion of forms of pornography where there is non consenting participants. While the descriptions are at most, moderately graphic, it is a major theme and persistent.

Language - 4

While there may have been a small reduction in adult language from the first novel, it was still pervasive. I felt the use of mild obscenities and the f-word were excessive and unnecessary.

Violence - 4

Violence is a major theme. It covers the gambit from execution style murder, suicide, torture and rape. The crimes are dark the perpetrators are unrepentant. While the violence is persistent, the author avoids gore and manages to be respectful despite the high violence level.

Eve says

“There are monsters living among us. People who look no different than you and me. But they lack a fundamental component of the human species: a conscience.”

An Amish family of seven is annihilated at twilight in the tiny farming community of Painters Mill, Ohio. Kate Burkholder, Chief of Police, has her hands full trying to cover as much ground in the crucial first forty-eight hours of the homicide. Because of the cruelty and brutality inflicted on the victims, Burkholder immediately calls in for help. What follows is a dangerous venture into the dark, seedy underbelly of pornography, and the loss of innocence.

After reviewing my highlights and notes, I realized that this book didn't quite measure up to the initial book in the series for two main reasons: repetition and repetition. See? It's annoying. I'd have hoped that most mystery writers would take a cue from the Miss Marple, Hercule Poirot, and Nancy Drews series. It's not necessary to rehash the plot of the previous book until the reader is bored out of their mind. Carolyn Keene's books usually had a sentence that read something like: "Nancy, Bess and George had a close run-in with a ring of dangerous jewel thieves in an earlier adventure." Done and done!

Apart from that, I just grew tired of Castillo's same use of descriptive words, especially the word "sage." Has anyone ever given you a "sage" look? What does that even encompass? Or her reference to Kate's past and how it kept coming up in this investigation to haunt her. I get it.

Don't get me wrong. This is a thrilling page turner. Could it have been better? Yes. Am I giving up on the series? Definitely not. I've already purchased the third book, although I'll probably wait a minute or two before reading it.

William says

Audiobook

I really liked the first book in the series; not so with this one

Cons: At the beginning, all the police officers, including Burkholder, constantly used unfettered profanity. I don't think that is normal behavior for police officers dealing with the public.

Sort of like shooting yourself in the foot.

I got really tired of her retelling her personal "Amish" story from book one. At least 25% of this story.

All her male characters were deformed thru her feminine lens or her misunderstanding of the American male. i.e. her love interest was unlikeable and unbelievable.

I recommend this to readers who disagree with my cons, and like 'the world should be like this' stories. This

wasn't written for me so no more Castillo.

Thomas says

4.5 stars

I started reading this series when I won *Among the Wicked* in a Goodreads giveaway. It was book 8 in the series and I liked it so much that I decided to read all the books in the series. This is book 2 in the series and I recommend that you read them in order, as the characters develop and reveal past secrets as the series progresses. This book opens with a family of seven Amish people murdered on their farm. Two of the people murdered are teenage girls, who are tortured before they died. This is definitely not a cozy mystery, but both my wife and I enjoy this series.

I read it in 2 days, because it is a riveting mystery. Kate Burkholder is the police chief of Painters Mill, a small town in Ohio of 1/2 Amish and 1/2 "Englishers" as the Amish call the outside people.

Kate and her small police force do solve the murders, but not until the end was I sure of the who and why.

Two quotes:

Initial discovery of murder scene: "The house was as silent and dark as a 1920s noir film."

BCI(Bureau of Criminal Investigation) agent John Tomasetti at a disciplinary hearing; "She looked at him over the bifocals perched on her nose and smiled in a way that reminded him of a coral snake, right before it sank it's fangs into you."

This was a library book.
