



## Death at Whitewater Church

*Andrea Carter*

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## **Death at Whitewater Church** Andrea Carter

When a skeleton is discovered, wrapped in a blanket, in the hidden crypt of a deconsecrated church, everyone is convinced the bones must be those of Conor Devitt, a local man who went missing on his wedding day six years previously. But the post mortem reveals otherwise.

Solicitor Benedicta 'Ben' O'Keeffe is acting for the owners of the church, and although an unwelcome face from her past makes her reluctant to get involved initially, when Conor's brother dies in strange circumstances shortly after coming to see her, she finds herself drawn in to the mystery. Whose is the skeleton in the crypt and how did it get there? Is Conor Devitt still alive, and if so is there a link? What happened on the morning of his wedding to make him disappear?

Negotiating between the official investigation, headed up by the handsome but surly Sergeant Tom Molloy, and obstructive locals with secrets of their own, Ben unravels layers of personal and political history to get to the truth of what happened six years before.

## **Death at Whitewater Church Details**

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Author : Andrea Carter

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## From Reader Review Death at Whitewater Church for online ebook

### Elaine says

I thoroughly enjoyed this murder mystery set on the wild coastline of County Donegal. When local solicitor Ben O'Keefe (a woman by the way) accompanies Surveyor Paul Doherty whilst he surveys a local disused church before it is sold, neither of them expect to find skeletal remains that definitely do not belong there. Local feeling is that it is Conor Devitt who disappeared six years ago on his wedding day. Are they right and if so, who put him there and why?

It is a story that just flows as we meet the locals in a story that combines the "kiss the blarney stone" storytelling magic that I really love about Irish fiction with its small town communities, characters, dialogue and storylines with a good old fashioned murder mystery. I cannot say that I was changing my mind constantly about the suspect, as the author deliberately seems to have kept me short of potential culprits and motives right until the end. I just did not have a clue as to what was behind it all in this tale that had a number of twists and turns in it.

There are some long held secrets that are going to be disclosed here, including those of Ben herself. We pretty soon realise that she is a woman with a past that she is keeping well and truly hidden, but what that past is, we do not know. I really liked Ben, especially her nosiness and the fact that she is not afraid to poke that nose in where it doesn't belong to find out what she wants to know. Combine that nosiness with the fact that the locals seem to be drawn to her doorstep to talk about what is going on and pretty soon she finds herself embroiled in the whole saga as it unfolds.

The sale of the old church does feature quite heavily in the story and because I work for a surveyor I was really interested in that part. However, I have to put my pedantic hat on and say that it would not normally follow that a surveyor would survey a property and give the report to the vendor and his solicitors. He would act for the purchaser only. That is only a minor matter though and it doesn't affect the outcome of the story in any way, shape or form.

In short, this is a really good mystery that keeps you guessing right until the end and is well worth a try. Many thanks to the publisher via Netgalley for the review copy.

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### Hans says

A promising first book. I rather like Ben as the nosy protagonist in a small fictional Irish community on the island of Inishowen.

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### Susan says

This is the start of a new mystery series, set in a small, rural community in Inishowen – a peninsula in County Donegal, Ireland. Although the actual town the author uses is fictional, Inishowen is not and is a beautiful part of the world. Ben (Benedicta) O'Keefe is a solicitor, with her own small – but successful and busy – practice. When we meet Ben, she has taken some paperwork to Paul Doherty, who is currently carrying out a survey of Whitewater Church, when they discover a skeleton in the crypt. Only this skeleton

certainly should not have been there and, before long, Ben is deeply involved in the mystery of who the bones belong to.

The consensus among the community is that they belong to Conor Devitt, who disappeared the day before his wedding, some years before. Of course, much of this first mystery helps set the scene for (hopefully) future reads and so we are introduced to many of those who help flesh out the storyline – Sergeant Tom Molloy, who Ben is attracted to, Phyllis Kettle the bookshop owner, local publican Tony Craig and others all help to create a warmth to the book and the setting. This is, obviously, a small community and so Ben finds that she knows many involved – for example, Conor Devitt’s sister, Claire is in her drama group and many of those touched by events come to Ben’s office, for various reasons, throughout the book.

This was a very involved storyline, although the author managed to keep me engaged and interested throughout. There is the mystery of the body in the crypt and who it belongs to, the drama of Conor Devitt’s disappearance just before his marriage and the recent marriage of his former fiancée, events in the past history of Inishowen which still affect the community and those in Ben’s own life. For Ben has secrets of her own and she fears that the past will not only impact on her future, but on her possible relationship with Molloy.

This was an excellent mystery and will appeal to readers who enjoy less violent crime novels, with an interesting setting and characters. I certainly enjoyed this first outing of Ben O’Keefe and hope she will return in future novels. Lastly, I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

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### **Paromjit says**

This is a charming Irish murder mystery set in Inishowen. It is well plotted and constructed by Andrea Carter. It is one of those quintessentially warm hearted village crime novels. You know what I mean, a great and eccentric cast of characters, everyone knows everyone yet there are buried secrets within the community! Ben, a solicitor is present at a church when a skeleton is discovered in the crypt. It is widely expected that it will be Conor Devitt, who disappeared some time previously. Not so, and a very curious Ben, investigates. She is helped by the never ending visits from locals who drop by and regale her with information. Garda Sergeant Tom Molloy is in charge of the case. The two of them uncover secrets from the past. There are twists and suspense aplenty. Super murder mystery which I recommend. Thanks to Little, Brown for an ARC via netgalley.

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### **Fictionophile says**

"Death at Whitewater Church" marks my first time reading the work of Andrea Carter and my 6th title for "Reading Ireland Month".

This mystery, a first in a new series set in Inishowen, is a well wrought novel with likeable characters. The protagonist is Ben O’Keefe a country solicitor. Her law practice is the most northerly solicitors's office in Ireland. 'Ben' is short for Benedicta, though that is not her real name... She has been in this small rural community for the past six years following a family tragedy. Here she has made friends. Leah, her secretary/office manager, Maeve her best friend who works as a veterinarian, Phyllis, who runs the bookshop, and of course Tom Molloy. Ben lives just out of town in a cottage which she shares with her black tomcat whose name, fittingly, is Guinness. The reader is made aware that before she came to this

small place, she worked in a large law firm in Dublin - and that she suffered a personal tragedy, and that now she is somewhat estranged from her parents.

*"Guilt is a hard thing to live with, Ben. It can eat away at you like a cancer if you bury it."*

Ben accompanies a land surveyor as he measures the property of Whitewater Church. The church had been deconsecrated and an English couple want to buy it and renovate it into a dwelling. While there, they discover a crypt - complete with the skeletonized remains of a man.

Six years previously a local man had gone missing on the day of his wedding. Everyone assumes that the remains found in the crypt are of him, Conor Devitt.

The Devitt family were not strangers to loss. Many years before, the father committed suicide after a cargo ship was bombed by the IRA. Now, just days after the crypt remains are found, another Devitt brother is found dead after a traffic accident. Coincidence? Then it is determined that the remains are NOT those of Conor Devitt! Who could it be? Is Conor still alive?

This is a mystery with themes of betrayal and guilt - written in a believable way, with well rendered prose. The author is a solicitor herself, so that part of the narrative is knowledgeable and convincing. Not gritty by any means, yet somehow more serious than a 'cozy'. The dash of romantic tension between Ben and policeman/Guard Tom Molloy only slightly impacted the story, but in a good way. I can see how Ben's 'nosiness' coupled with her line of work and her romantic interest in the town's policeman will engender many more interesting stories for this series. It is a series I intend to follow when time permits.

Recommended. ♣

I received a complimentary digital copy of this novel from Oceanview Publishing via Edelweiss - at my request, for my own reading enjoyment and the writing of this review.

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### **Linda says**

Ben is a solicitor in a small town in Ireland. She's changed her name and moved away from the big city to escape some very bad memories, but finds that in this small town, people have lots of secrets, too. What happened to the man who disappeared 6 years ago? And whose skeleton is found in Whitewater Church? Evocative of Ireland's landscape and with well-drawn characters and a compelling plot, this book was an enjoyable read.

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### **Ann-Marie says**

Liked it a lot. Looking forward to the next one.

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### **Maggie says**

It was an unusual twist to see a murder mystery from the point of view of a country solicitor. However they are a repository of a lot of secrets and confidential information so they would seem to be fertile ground for lots of stories. Ben (Benedicta) O'Keefe is an interesting and well rounded character with problems of her

own. After discovering a body whilst being with the surveyor of a property she becomes involved in unraveling the story behind this discovers where nothing is what it seems. Although at first it seems as if the story might be quite simple it soon becomes apparent that there are many facets to this tale. I am really pleased to know that this is just the start of a series of mysteries set in Inishowan- a peninsula in Co Donegal. I am looking forward to returning to this place and its people again. Thanks to Netgallery for giving me the chance to read and review this five star book.

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### **Jean says**

(Audible; Melanie McHugh, narrator) Many secrets among the populace of the Inishowen peninsula in Donegal. This mystery has one good short story embedded in it, the story about why Benedicta O'Keeffe left Dublin for Inishowen. Perhaps because this is a first book in a series, author introduced too many characters, some of whom will likely reappear later. Author should have skipped the subplot about the home invasions, which really distracted from the main story.

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### **Clare Chase says**

I really enjoyed this book. The mystery itself was satisfying and clever, and I loved the vivid descriptions of the local scenery and the engaging cast of characters. It's one of those atmospheric books you can get totally wrapped up in, without ending up exhausted from a constant feeling of tension. I also liked the dynamic between lead character Ben, who's a solicitor and her contact in the local police, Tom Molloy. I'm looking forward to seeing how things pan out for them.

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### **Josephine (Jo) says**

This was a really good murder mystery set around the Whitewater church near to Inishowen, Co. Donegal. Whitewater was a thriving village until a boat was blown up by terrorists during the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. People drifted away and all that was left of the thriving community were a few cottages and a disused church.

When Benedicta 'Ben' O'Keeffe returns to her home town to set up as a solicitor she soon becomes embroiled in a series of very strange events and murder.

Ben is a very likeable character and the story was really well written, it was hard to work out what had happened to the body found in the old church crypt and I was still guessing until right near the end of the book.

I liked the relationship between Ben and Sergeant Tom Molloy and I look forward to reading more in this series.

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### **Bastet says**

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I really hate it when authors have their main character in a mystery/thriller get themselves in danger, especially in the final showdown, because he/she fails to call the police or get help in another way and ends up alone in a dangerous situation. That's plain stupid. (BTW, that's one of the reasons that made me stop

reading Kathy Reichs' books. Tempe

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## Mary Crawford says

Set in fabulous Donegal this book has an immediate reason to read it. Ben O'Keefe is the local solicitor who moved to Inishowen six years ago. She unexpectedly came across a skeleton in a deconsecrated church crypt and the whole village think they know who it is. This is a gentle murder mystery, dependant on the relationship Ben has with a local Garda. I enjoyed reading the descriptions of Donegal, small community characters and a back story that tells us why Ben originally left Dublin.

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## sue says

I would like to thank *Little, Brown Book Group UK via Net Galley*

**This is the start of a new series** and judging from what I have just read, its going to be an excellent page turner.

This is set in a small village in Ireland.

Ben is a solicitor, he has a business there. Its small, busy and compact.  
Ben is short for Benedict.

We also meet Paul. He is doing a survey on a church there called Whitewater.

A skeleton in the crypt is found and wondering what/whose it could be, Paul is endeavoring to try and find out.

The neighbors of the small village say its Conor Devitt who disappeared the day before his wedding and was never found.

This is the start of the substance of the story.

There is intrigue surrounding this. And if it was Conor who disappeared, what happened?

It is sure to keep you guessing.

Its not an horrific blood bath investigation so far, its a mild mystery, so I am looking forward to book 2 in the series also because I want to learn more of the other characters in the village which have made an impact on me so far.

I am also wondering about Paul and Benedict. Will they get together? Who knows.

I would recommend this book to other readers that love a good mystery and page turner.

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## **Damaskcat says**

This is a very promising start to a new series of mysteries set in the small community of Inishowen in Ireland and featuring Benedicta O'Keeffe a solicitor - always known as Ben.

Conor Devitt disappeared on his wedding day nearly seven years ago. A skeleton is discovered in the crypt of a disused church which is about to be sold and renovated and turned into a holiday home. Conor's family believes the skeleton could be the missing man.

Ben is curious about the skeleton not least because she was with the surveyor who discovered it and she starts asking questions about Conor's disappearance which was before she arrived in Inishowen. Then Conor's brother dies unexpectedly and Ben's curiosity is well and truly aroused.

The book is well written and well plotted and certainly kept me guessing until almost the last chapter. I liked Ben as a character and the taciturn Sergeant Tom Molloy. I thought the descriptions of small town life and the people in it was realistic too. Everyone knows everyone and you can't do anything without someone seeing you and forming their own conclusions.

This is a promising start to what I hope will be a long running series and I look forward to reading the next instalment. I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley for review.

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