



Dead Girl Running

Christina Dodd

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I have three confessions to make:

- 1. I've got the scar of a gunshot on my forehead.**
- 2. I don't remember an entire year of my life.**
- 3. My name is Kellen Adams...and that's half a lie.**

Girl running...from a year she can't remember, from a husband she prays is dead, from homelessness and fear. Tough, capable Kellen Adams takes a job as assistant manager of a remote vacation resort on the North Pacific Coast. There amid the towering storms and the lashing waves, she hopes to find sanctuary. But when she discovers a woman's dead and mutilated body, she's soon trying to keep her own secrets while investigating first one murder...then another.

Now every guest and employee is a suspect. Every friendly face a mask. Every kind word a lie. Kellen's driven to defend her job, her friends and the place she's come to call home. Yet she wonders--with the scar of a gunshot on her forehead and amnesia that leaves her unsure of her own past--could the killer be staring her in the face?

Dead Girl Running Details

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From Reader Review Dead Girl Running for online ebook

Carolyn says

Goodness! There was a LOT going on here; however, it was excellent. I never saw the big reveal coming! Great beginning to a new series. Looking forward to the next book.

Jessica says

I received this book for free from the publisher (Harlequin) as part of their bookstagram publicity campaign.

I give this book 3.5 stars which rounds up to 4.

I always have a hard time with rating thrillers. I'm pickier with them than with other genres, and I usually end up rating them somewhere in the middle which is exactly what happened with this book (hence my 3.5 stars).

I loved how the book started off. The opening chapter was really good and helped set up the overall plot line well.

The succeeding chapters, were a bit of an information dump. You get the main character's backstory and get introduced to a ton of characters. I had a hard time keeping up with all the characters and who they were.

The mystery was very interesting so I was eager to keep reading. I found that I really enjoyed the writing style. Christian Dodd is an excellent writer. I had just finished reading a not-that-great chick lit book before picking up this book, so the writing in this was a nice change.

The book kind of stalled a bit towards the middle, but picked up tremendously towards the end. There was a lot of action in the last 70 pages. However, there were some scenarios towards the end that didn't feel very realistic so I didn't love that.

The book does end in a slight cliffhanger, so I am interested in reading the next book.

Overall, this was a well written thriller, but it did have its flaws.

Tammy says

Very compelling with lots of mystery going on.

Kellen is running from a year she can't remember + from a husband she prays is dead. She moves to hide away and starts a new job as an asst. manager of a vacation resort on the North Pacific Coast. While trying to stay hidden she discovers a woman's mutilated body and she then begins investigating first one murder and then another.

Enjoyable, I'm looking forward to the 2nd in this new series! 4 ?

Anita says

Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) provided by the Author and Publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an fair and honest review.

I have read a lot of Christina Dodd's books, she is an auto read for me and I love her stuff. This is a spin-off of the Bella Terra and Virtue Falls series, sort of. She is one of those authors that I don't read the blurb. I wanted to be surprised as I read the book and I was absolutely blown away by this book.

Unique, inventive, captivating - this plot is all that and part Gothic, part assumed identity, part amnesia victim, part who done it and totally fascinating. The heroine is a survivor and the plot is slow to give up her full story, which makes you just want to know all the more.

Kellen Adams has been the assistant manager of Yearning Sands, a high end destination resort on the Washington coast for a few months. She has been many things in her life and lived many places and all she wants now is a place to call home. At Yearning Sands she has been hiring her friends, Army vets, to try and do that. It is January and the slow season so the owners, Annie and Leo De Luca, are taking their vacation to visit relations in California. They leave Kellen in charge and the remaining staff, some of whom really resent her, have few guests to care for.

When the head of security takes off on vacation too, Kellen is concerned to be in charge of that area also. But, as a former Army Captain, she rises to the task until a body washes up on shore and a dark and deadly side of Yearning Sands is revealed. The De Lucas' decide to send their nephew, Maximilian De Luca, to aid with security and something about Max has Kellen's memories of her past resurfacing. Kellen knows someone at the resort is a smuggler and a sadistic killer and with few people she can trust, Kellen will have to discover who that person is.

Maureen Carden says

Christina Dodd's latest book, *Dead Girl Running* (DGR) came up on NetGalley for review. I smugly requested it, thinking this will be easy because they like me, they really like me.

I was refused. I spent days wandering in the wilderness of dive bars, hole in the walls and gin joints seeking solace in demon rum.(work with me here) But a miracle happened and Harlequin reversed itself.

I was delighted and even more so when I finished DGR. The story has several threads running through, all of them centered on former army officer Kellen Adams. Kellen has taken a job at the luxury resort, Yearning Sands, as assistant manager.

When Annie and Leo Di Luca, from the Bella Terra series, and owners of Yearning Sands leave on vacation, Kellen is left in charge of the resort.

There are few guests at Yearning Sands during the dark and stormy nights of January; most of the staff is gone too, seeking sunnier climes during this traditionally slow month.

Guests and staff who are willing to stay through this wild but beautiful time, are horrified when Kellen discovers the remains of a mutilated murder victim on the grounds of Yearning Sands.

A quiet guest outs himself to Kellen, telling her that he is an agent of a small under- the- radar government agency and that the murder could be related to an investigation he is running.

Kellen has her own issues with spouse abuse, stolen identity and a year lost to memory.

Murder at her work place is something she could really live without.

After unexpectedly having to assume the position of security director, Kellen doesn't know who to trust. The Di Luca's relent to Kellen's pleas and send one of their own, Maximilian Di Luca to take over her security duties. Max seems very faintly familiar to Kellen, possibly from her lost year, but he gives no indication of

knowing her.

The setting of Yearning Sands is wondrous, the wild Washington Pacific coast, mesmerizing in fair weather, but mad, bad and dangerous to know during the winter months.

On the other had the other hand, Shivering Sands sounds like a dream, every wish catered to by highly trained staff, except for that possible murderous staff member.

But then the sadistic killer could be one of the guests too. There are plenty of choices, with the stakes so high. Kellen quotes something that brings me right back something my mom used to say, "I only trust me and thee, and I'm not too sure about thee. Or me." So fitting for Kellen's frame of mind.

Dead Girl Running provides plenty of excitement; and no small amount of "Hmm, I never thought about that" moments.

Ms Dodd bravely tackles with gentle insight the tragedy of spousal abuse. The reader will most likely come away with a greater understanding of the victimology and understand Kellen's search for family. Any family. Even just a family made up of co-workers.

Only a few quibbles, Kateri Kwinault, Virtue Fall's Sheriff really only makes a cameo appearance and without Stag!

Also, the ending, that lovely ending, I needed more, a lot more. It's not a cliff hanger, I just want to continue to know Kellen's life. DGR is the start of a new series combing Virtue Falls and Bella Terra. So I'm hoping to read much more about Kellen even as a secondary character in following Cape Charade books.

Thank you to NetGalley and Harlequin for an ARC in exchange for a fair and honest review. Now to what address should I ship my first born son?

Alissa says

The story had some promising leads but soon it unraveled into a shambles. The narrative style didn't click with me because I'm not a fan of forced dialogues as a device to feed information and the author laid it thick throughout, conspicuously producing a tale that never moves on its own. Even when not providing background or explaining characters' traits (because this book is a clear-cut example of all telling and no showing) the dialogues were awkward and unrealistic. Add to the mix many two-dimensional characters, a hodgepodge of storylines, lots of plot holes, contrived coincidences, plot turns which strained my credulity and a final cliffhanger...well, it wasn't a pleasant experience.

Reading this novel felt like being in the passenger seat of a learner's car, sometimes too fast or too slow and more often all stomps on the brake, engine revs and jerks. As a consequence, the rhythm of the story was inconstant and I felt very disconnected from it, to the point that I wasn't able to read without frequent pauses and distractions.

This impossibility to engage translated into a growing frustration and unfortunately progressing with the pages my hopes for some saving grace evaporated. I still wonder how this book failed so spectacularly on all fronts barred none.

I seriously decided to abandon the book about **10%** in, I couldn't relate and each new character sounded flat and stereotyped: there are the vapid fortune hunter, the abused brainwashed young wife, the bossy perfect cousin, the scarred veteran with big drama issues and top-notch sundry abilities (refer to 180-ish wife), the jealous, stuck-up rival at work, the loathsome in-laws...along with a huge cast of exaggerated characters which would be fun in a comedy but not in a romantic suspense/mystery story (I say it because it's shelved as such. The mystery part doesn't take center stage and the romance was stilted).

"I've never seen blue eyes spark quite like that." He leaned forward. "May I kiss you?"

Naturally the characters showed little personality and as the number of subplots multiplied, inconsistency ruled: for instance, the hotel staff barely feeling affected by the murder news, Kellen's remarkable physical and leadership skills which are rarely backed up by her actions, or the cab driver's reaction to Cecilia's request at the accident scene, or the policeman removing human remains from a discovery site without calling for backup, or the loquacious manly tough hero. Their behavior has no credibility at all.

"Since when had Kellen become a fanciful idiot?"

The beginning, probably. She and I together.

30% in I decided to finish the book because I believe in commitment, but truly, my suspension of disbelief was jeopardized and I couldn't accept the flow of events. It was hard going.

At the **40%** mark the male protagonist (head of an underreported government agency) gives a detailed spiel about his life, motivations, line of work and secret mission to the female protagonist. They had just met; it was completely out of the blue: scene set, dialogues on.

Halfway I seriously started to rethink my decision but then I thought I was probably better off finishing than keep stopping to write this review, because what was not working was piling up and it was useless to remark any further.

Long story short: **75%** in I could not believe what I was reading. Far-fetched, much? And I'm complimenting here. **88%** in, I was aghast, was there even a connection between one paragraph and the next?

Plot what plot indeed. Too many plot ideas contributed to the chaos, sure, but even the main storyline was messy. The final twist was too much. Ok, done.

A nice blurb unsupported by storytelling, planning and characters cannot ever make a good novel. At least there weren't any typos that I could detect and the cover is nice, but sadly this about sums up what I liked about this novel.

"We're going to talk. I'm going to fill you in on the situation."

Leo gestured him in. "Go, sit down with Annie and listen."

"You might as well come in," he said. "Let's talk."

"If you would shut the door, we need to talk."

"After this is over, we'll need to talk."

Chris Conley says

Christina Dodd did it again. Created a woman character who is complex, smart, strong, weak, amazing. Kellen's story has just begun and, wow!, what a beginning!!

BleuBelle says

I'm in a reading slump right now. This one was another fail for me. DNF Chapter 15.

Spoilers ahead:

I already didn't care for the prologue. And that's a bad sign.

I did not like Kellen. She, the former Cecilia, was responsible for the death of her causing the real Kellen. Only because she didn't want to tell her about her real abuse, about how her husband killed her unborn baby and nearly herself. How he would never let her go. And then she leaves Kellen to deal with such a dangerous man. And then her husband kills Kellen. They both could've fled the scene. But no Cecilia needed photographs. In a death and life situation, you're glad if you come out alive, with your cloths on your back. I found her to be a doormat and uninspiring and a coward. Selfish. And I didn't care that she did a 180 and joined the military and was a Captain everyone respected. Blah blah blah. I don't believe in this. There's no way she did such an 180.

The story takes place in a luxury resort, catering to the wealthy. They have a reputation to uphold. The staff behaved very inappropriate. Chatting and discussing private things while on the clock and with guests nearby. Gossiping, being rude, always talking to each other and open hostility towards other staff members. Even if it's off season, some things don't have to happen. It read like a group of children doing everything but what they're supposed to do.

It also got on my nerves that there were no capable staff anywhere. Everyone discussed this, that they had unprofessional staff members and they couldn't find replacements. Every department needed more capable workers, but nothing was done about it. They just complained.

I found the writing style to be very unique. And not in a good way. I hated the "reports" on all the characters that appear in the book. And they are so many. Everyone was described in a military fashion, with skin color and height and how Kellen viewed them. It was efficient, but lacked any personal connections. It was really boring to read. And I really don't need to know about every little worker bee on the vast property.

Kellen was once again a doormat. One of the staff members pushed her to exercise together, even if Kellen didn't want to. Kellen didn't like the woman very much, but what does she do? She agrees and lets herself be pushed around. How hard is it to say no?

Then there is the problem with the corpse. No one is afraid. They are just curious how she died and who did it. But no one thinks the killer will kill again. No one fears for their safety. The investigation isn't going forward. All is very unprofessional. Taking pics with the mobile and then moving the corpse around. The police chief is really incompetent. Don't like reading about such things.

I don't like one character in this book. Not one. That never happened before.

So I'm out.

Julie says

Dead Girl Running by Christina Dodd is a 2018 St. Martin's Press publication.

Whoa! This was one wild ride!

Kellen is living a lie- or at least partially. An entire year of her life is missing- gone- no memory of it whatsoever. But, she does remember her ex-husband, and the horrific abuse she suffered at his hands. She escaped him, at a very high cost, but, she went on to become an Army officer, and is now running a resort on the coast of Washington. However, when the owners turn everything over to her for a short time, anything that could go wrong did, starting with a dead body and a smuggling ring. Toss in a few ominous connections to Kellen's past and some very stormy, gloomy weather, and you have the perfect mix for a tense novel of suspense and a puzzling whodunit. There is even a little action and adventure and romance to round things out. But, that ending.... Oh, wow!

This story is a little complex, and there's quite a bit going on. Kellen's past is turbulent to say the very least, and the murder mystery coupled with the smuggling ring, on top of the fairly large cast of characters, would normally leave me feeling overwhelmed. I will admit I did have to slow down and pay close attention with this book, but I had no trouble following along. I thought the author did an amazing job of tying the threads together. I loved the guessing game, suspecting everyone at one time or another. The conclusion is a major surprise- I mean a MAJOR surprise- packing a strong, almost poignant, emotional punch. I never saw it coming. I think I gasped out loud!! I thought the story was very original, exciting, imaginative, deeply absorbing and suspenseful! I can't wait to read the next book in series!!

5 stars

CD {Boulder Blvd} says

Wow! I love Ms. Dodd's books. I loved the characters in this book (actually I like the characters in most of Ms. Dodd's books). She creates unique and authentic characters and seldom relies on stereotypes.

The plot was really good and I had a hard time putting it down to go to sleep. Will definitely be continuing this series.

Caz says

I've given this a D+ at AAR, so that's 2.5 stars.

I enjoy a good mystery or romantic suspense novel and have been lucky enough to find some fantastically good authors in the genre who are now on my 'must read' list. I'm always on the look-out for the next addition, so I eagerly picked up Christina Dodd's **Dead Girl Running**, the first book in her new *Cape Charade* series, hoping for an intense, exciting and complex read – aaaaaand, well, let's just say I don't think I'll be adding Ms. Dodd to that list of 'must read' authors on the strength of it. The book turned out to contain a myriad of hackneyed tropes and plot points (and plot holes) that made it seem as though the author had too many ideas and, instead of undertaking some judicious pruning and concentrating on the one or two strongest ones, decided to throw everything at the wall and see what stuck. What we end up with is a classic 'base-under-siege' type plot, a too-good-to-be-true, dull heroine, a lot (dare I say – too many) of barely two-dimensional, stereotypical secondary characters, and writing so clichéd in places that it made me wince – or laugh, which I'm sure wasn't Ms. Dodd's intention.

Kellen Adams was a captain in the army and served in Afghanistan before returning to the US. She has recently taken up a position as assistant manager at the Cape Charade resort in coastal Washington state and is determined to make it her home. When the resort owners – the elderly Leo and Annie di Luca - decide to take a holiday for the first time in ages, they leave Kellen in charge, confident in her ability to keep things running smoothly. It's a quiet time of year, there are not many guests booked in, so it's just a case of keeping things ticking over until the di Lucas return. That is, until some decomposing human remains are discovered on the grounds, which are identified as belonging to the previous assistant manager, Priscilla Carter, who disappeared without explanation less than six months earlier. It's impossible to keep something like that a secret from the staff and guests, and the atmosphere at the resort becomes one of fear and suspicion; everyone is a suspect and Kellen isn't sure who she can trust.

We learn early on that Kellen isn't actually who she says she is; she's an abused wife whose husband tried to murder her (and died in the attempt), and who is still looking over her shoulder for any sign that her family might be catching up with her. She's also the survivor of a gunshot to the head - something I found hard to credit – which caused her to lose a year of her life; she was in a coma for all that time, and after waking up confused and fearful, ran from the hospital and to an army recruiting office. We're asked to believe the shot to the head is the reason she now has a unique mental ability to acquire, store, process and recall information, but I'm still wondering how it didn't simply blow her brains out... Whatever the case, having both incredibly traumatic and dramatic events happen to the same person seemed to me to be taking things a bit too far. I understand that this is the first book in a series, but in spite of all the things that have happened to her, Kellen is not a well-defined or interesting character, and I couldn't warm to her or find anything to draw me in.

The same is true of the secondary characters, of whom there are a lot; they're poorly defined and stereotypical, and there's no time for the author to flesh any of them out or give them actual personalities. We've got a former movie star, an upbeat, preppy personal trainer of the type you want to strangle, a bitchy hostess who is bitter that she was passed over for Kellen's job, an enigmatic (though hot) guest who says he's an author (he isn't) and a handful of Kellen's army buddies now employed at the resort – and that's less than half the list. There has to be a fairly large pool of suspects to make the identity of the villain hard to guess, but given that there are no clues pointing to that person, I can't see there was much of a point. In any case, the reveal comes out of the blue, but not after Kellen jumps to a completely wrong conclusion as to his identity so fast it made me wonder if I'd skipped a few pages.

The mystery plot, concerning the smuggling of valuable artefacts off the coast near the resort is interesting, and when the book concentrates solely on this aspect of the story, it's a good read and I was eager to keep turning the pages. But that doesn't really happen until well into the second half of the book, and doesn't last for long; after that, we're back in the land of the clichéd and utterly ridiculous, which then culminates in a completely unbelievable plot twist that contradicts something explicitly stated earlier on in the book.

I'm not sure whether to categorise **Dead Girl Running** as 'mystery' or 'romantic suspense' because it doesn't really fit either. If it's a mystery, it's very simplistic and quite clumsily done; if romantic suspense, there's pretty much no romance and not much suspense, so that doesn't fit either. The writing is generally solid, although there is a LOT of telling rather than showing, and this is especially evident in the way we're shown Kellen's supposedly unique mental ability working. Whenever she meets someone, we get a 'note card' of what is supposedly going through her head, which lists background data on that person and her feelings about them – which is, I suppose, an easier way of disseminating that information than actually spending time on developing that character and letting the reader get to know them; it smacks of lazy writing.

In short, **Dead Girl Running** is deader than a dead duck dead in the water. Give it a miss and pick up something by Rachel Grant or Loreth Anne White instead.

Kendall says

This was my first experience from Christina Dodd. I'm not usually a fan of romance and I felt that this would have been a stronger book if some of the romance was taken out.

It was an enjoyable read for the most part but I felt like there were some aspects that were very unrealistic to me. The way that some of the information was presented in the book was a tad bit like reading cliff notes or like a police report. Ehh. this was a tad annoying to me.

There also was a TON of information presented in the novel and it left me confused with the information at times and was hard to follow.

I also was not too impressed with the villain and was hoping for more twists/turns to the thriller.

Thank you to Harlequin and Netgalley for the advanced arc.

Overall 3 stars for me on this one.

Publication date: 4/24/18

Published to GR: 4/15/18

Cheri says

Wow! This is my first CD book. Anita recommended it to me and I loved it! The story does go back and forth from one part of the h's life to another, but with good reason. I never guessed who the main villain was nor did I expect the big reveal at the end. Leaving us with a cliffhanger and anxious to read the next in this series.

Reading.Between.Wines says

????????? / 5 rounded up!

You guys, I LOVED Dead Girl Running by Christina Dodd! This is an action-packed, ominous book and it deserves to be read!

Dead Girl Running focuses on a woman named Kellen Adams and a remote resort in Washington state called Yearning Sands Resort. Soon after Kellan takes a job as assistant resort manager at Yearning Sands, a dead body is found on the property while the owners of the resort are gone leaving Kellen completely in charge. But little does everyone know, Kellen is also on the run from her past which is about to catch up with her.

The writing was superb; the remote resort combined with murder, power outages, and raging storms - thrilling! I loved Kellen and the way the author mixes past and present in this book. It was a super fast read that left me wanting more. I didn't actually know it was a series when I started, but I'm glad it is and I hope

book 2 comes out quick. There was a bit of a cliffhanger at the end, but nothing major enough to make me angry. I am the person that gets mad when a series ends books with huge cliffhangers and you have to wait a year + to read the next one. The ending left me anxious for the next book, but without that nasty HUGE unknown.

Final Thought: Why is this my first time reading Christina Dodd? That is all.

Dead Girl Running in 3-ish words: Brilliant, Complex, Creepy

Zoe says

Perilous, twisty, and sophisticated!

Dead Girl Running is the first novel in a new series by Dodd that introduces us to Kellen Adams, a skilled, determined young woman with a past rife with secrets, violence, and memory loss and a present filled with stolen artifacts, ruthless smugglers, and dead bodies.

The writing style is intricate and intense. The characters, including the hardworking, scarred heroine are multi-layered and mysterious. And the plot, including all the subplots, unravel and intertwine into a compelling tale filled with mixed emotions, red herrings, deception, abuse, manipulation, romance, friendship, and murder.

Dead Girl Running is an intelligent, entertaining, action-packed tale that has all the elements you look for in a romantic suspense novel and is an excellent start for the new Cape Charade series.

Thank you to Harlequin Books for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

All my reviews can be found on my blog at <https://whatsbetterthanbooks.com>
