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Exhume: Dr. Schwartzman, Book 1



Synopsis

Dr. Annabelle Schwartzman has finally found a place to belong. As the medical examiner for the San Francisco Police Department, working alongside homicide detective Hal Harris, she uncovers the tales the dead can't tell about their final moments. It is a job that gives her purpose - and a safe haven from her former life at the hands of an abusive husband. Although it's been seven years since she escaped that ordeal, she still checks over her shoulder to make sure no one is behind her. Schwartzman's latest case is deeply troubling: the victim bears an eerie resemblance to herself. What's more, a shocking piece of evidence suggests that the killer's business is far from over - and that Schwartzman may be in danger. In this pulse-pounding thriller from award-winning writer Danielle Girard, a woman must face her worst nightmare to catch a killer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Once again I was not that impressed with the Kindle First choices this month. Wasn't in the least interested in the two historical books, but even among the remaining four choices this was the only selection that had any appeal at all. Although it isn't my favorite Kindle First selection to date, I DID enjoy it - so much so that I read it in one day. Although the book starts with one autopsy being completed, the real story begins with Dr. Annabelle Schwartzman examining a body in her (the dead woman's) own bed. However, SHE wasn't the one to point out how much the dead woman looked like her: it was Homicide Inspector Hailey Wyatt who noticed the resemblance. As it turns out, Anna (she hates being called Annabelle) has her own suspicions as to why this woman would look so

much like her. AND she immediately noticed the flowers: YELLOW flowers. While not exactly the same as a bouquet placed outside her OWN door - in her security protected building - she has very strong suspicions regarding the sender. However, rule one for the medical examiner is to never make assumptions and then try to make your findings support those assumptions. No, one must let the body and the scene where the body is found (whether it is a crime or death by natural causes) tell the story. Even so - flowers or no flowers, there IS something about this body that causes Anna to collapse to the floor. Something for which (in her mind) there could be only one explanation. Just the night before, Anna had shared her own history with Hailey. She seldom spoke of herself or her past. Never knowing who was trustworthy, it was easier (and safer) to keep to herself. However, she had taken a chance last night, and she was glad she did. Dr. Schwartzman had fled an abusive, controlling husband. Even now, seven years later, she was still looking over her shoulder - living in fear. He was a wealthy, powerful man, and she was afraid he had found her again. Fortunately, she was no longer alone. She now had friends she could trust: Hailey and Homicide Inspector Hal Harris. Turns out everything is not as it seems when it comes to this body. But even while investigating this case, other bodies begin turning up - one of them someone very dear to Anna. However, some of these bodies are on the opposite side of the country! How could all the cases be connected? ARE these bodies related? Is the same person responsible for all these deaths. If so, why? Why kill all these people? Or is Anna just paranoid? Maybe they weren't even all murdered. Sometimes an accident really IS an accident. Poor Anna has been looking over her shoulder for so long perhaps she is imagining something that couldn't be further from the truth. Seeing connections with the cases where none exists. Is her life (and the lives of those close to her) in danger? Or is she seeing a monster that no longer exists? While there's no doubt her husband was a mean - oh, come on: he was evil - man, has he been haunting her all these years? Or has he found a new target for his abuse? A new "love interest" to replace Anna. Sometimes when these abusive husbands realize their wife is really gone, they find someone to take her place. Why not Anna's ex? This book never becomes bogged down with fluff. Everything moves along with a fast enough pace to hold one's interest, but not so fast that it is difficult to keep up with the characters or the action. Also, the story is never gory. No steamy sex scenes (or any sex scenes at all for that matter). No foul mouthed characters. Nothing to offend most readers. So if those things are important to you when you select a book, you should be aware they are not a concern here. I enjoyed the book. Not as much as the other reviewers perhaps, but enough to give it four stars. It didn't really WOW me or have me on the edge of my seat anxiously waiting to see what would happen next. There was no great suspense for me - no tension building to draw me to keep turning pages without ever setting

the book down. In fact I DID set it down for several hours to take a nap. Then I also went to bed last night (OK - early this morning) before writing the review today. Thus four stars instead of five: it didn't grab me so that I couldn't let go. Would I recommend this book to you? Certainly. I don't think it's something you can't live without, but I do believe it is enjoyable enough to recommend to others who love a good cop story. (Definitely more of a cop story than a medical examiner's story. That just HAPPENED to be Anna's job: she could have been something else and the story would not have changed significantly.) And I would DEFINITELY recommend this story if you are trying to decide on your Kindle First selection for the month: it is still better than the other choices based on the descriptions and my interests. However, if your interests differ, then by all means go with your gut. But as for me: I was satisfied with my choice, and I have no qualms in recommending it.

This is an exceptional read, once you get started it's hard to put down. I will tell you how I chose my Kindle First for September, first it was listed as a Psychological Thriller, one of my favorites. Second there were several of Danielle Girard books listed with reviews of 4.5 and higher, that made my decision easy. Annabelle Swartzman is a good character (a little quirky, very likeable), she draws you into her story from the first few pages. This will be an excellent series, highly recommend.

Danielle Girard may not be a household name but she has developed a considerable following in the genre of police procedurals. This book, 'Exhume', is further justification of her status as a fine writer, even though no such justification is really needed. For those who don't know, Ms. Girard has published several novels over the past fifteen plus years, a point which was not lost on me. She has published another series (The Rookie Club..) which consisted of five novels in sequence, the first one of which is 'Dead Center' which you can find at this link: [Danielle Girard](#). I was lucky enough to read three of the five in that series... and the remaining two are still on my reading list. I never follow series' to their conclusion unless the writing is well done and interesting. These were, so I fully intend to complete it by reading those last two books. This book, 'EXHUME' is the start of another series. While the first series featured a beat cop, this book (and I suspect the entire series..) features a ME (medical examiner..) who has a history that follows her. She is constantly watching her back... waiting. When I selected this book, I did so for two reasons. First, having read some of her earlier work, I felt certain that it would be a good read. Second, and perhaps just as importantly, I am a fan of Patricia Cornwell's character, Kay Scarpetta, who is also a Medical Examiner and who is a very complete and complex character. A third reason was the general paucity of good titles in the First selections over the past few months. So, with an open mind, I chose this one. And I'm glad

I did!!No Spoilers here... 'EXHUME' is perfect example of a police procedural that is well written, relatively free of errors of scope and grammar, well plotted and a truly satisfying read. The main character, Annabelle Schwartzman, is a strong character with a troubling history. She has faced trouble before, and will again as this book unfolds. When a young woman ends up dead and on her examining table, and that woman looks a lot like Dr. Schwartzman herself, the 'mirror' analogy is born. She is forced to rethink and relive parts of her past always wondering who the killer is trying to confront... and why. When Dr. Schwartzman becomes aware of some of the consistencies with episodes in her past, she turns even more introspective and in so doing realizes some of the real danger she now faces. From coast to coast she confronts death and evil intent, all the while facing her own inner demons. The book moves at a good pace and has enough twists to satisfy all but the most dedicated crime reader. It is a very good story and details the human side of police work along with the special situations and problems associated with being a woman in a male dominated field. Ms. Girard does a great job of allowing her characters to operate realistically while still keeping a strong female presence in the lead. My first impression was that some of the characterizations were a bit problematic, but after completing the book I am convinced that Ms. Girard has walked a fine line and has stayed pretty much on point. I like her characters and the way she developed them... while leaving room to grow them some in the rest of the series to follow. The ending is just a touch flat maybe, but I suspect that is to heighten the suspense for the next book in the series, which I will now be certain to read. I am giving this book five stars. It might be a bit of a reach, but because of my history with this author and my love of the Scarpetta books, it is the only conclusion I can reach. For anyone who is a fan of police procedurals or crime novels in general, you will find this book to be very satisfying. For the first time in several months I am truly satisfied with this Kindle First selection. Highly recommended.

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