

A Fair Knight Slain: Murder at the Renaissance Fair

Linda LeBlanc

Ama Dablam

(268pp)

978-0-9785353-3-9

Two detectives encounter unscrupulous people as they investigate a murder at a renaissance festival in the Florida-set mystery novel A Fair Knight Slain.

In Linda LeBlanc's mystery novel *A Fair Knight Slain*, a brutal death exposes political intrigue and romantic rivalries at the renaissance fair.

The Renaissance Village comes to Reunion Heights, Florida, once a year. When one of its knights is killed and their body is found on the fairgrounds, it is up to Sara and Ryker, police detectives with differing investigative styles, to sort through the colorful suspects. Their discoveries include a connection between the fair and an unscrupulous mayoral candidate as well as some disturbing secrets about the murder victim. In the process of investigating, they also infiltrate dangerous settings and confront uncomfortable truths about themselves.

The book's setting is a stimulating one, forcing the detectives to navigate changing locations and a variety of events. And the fair's imminent end means that Ryker and Sara have to work with a compressed timeline. Their suspects—among them proud knights, a savage Viking, and an unfaithful queen—are a motley crew of dangerous and evasive individuals with their own reasons for shielding the truth. Meanwhile, Ryker and Sara's boss nurses political ambitions; he is more interested in protecting his reputation than in protecting the people of Reunion Heights.

The book's conversations are overwrought, though—even those that take place without the fair's actors. A late revelation about Sara's father's health is underexplored; it serves no clear purpose in this volume. Further, people's actions in the story sometimes defy logic, as when the police allow visitors into the fair before they have removed the corpse. Both Sara and Ryker engage in unethical behavior to further their investigation, including threatening and lying to suspects and using physical violence. They are off-putting as a result, though their personal problems are otherwise sympathetic (Ryker is out to restore his tarnished professional reputation; Sara's past haunts her; both struggle with the specter of abusive pasts and family problems). Later, a small detail leads to a shocking revelation that forces Sara to make one of the most difficult decisions of her career. Painful lessons about what really matters warm the text's conclusion, which features both personal and professional breakthroughs.

In a distinctive setting, the mystery novel *A Fair Knight Slain* finds its murder-investigating cast overcoming past traumas and recognizing the importance of their families.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (September 5, 2023)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.