



Romancing the Brush: An Austin, Texas Art Mystery

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Thirty-year-old Shell Hodge seems to have it all: a great life with Dean, the man of her dreams, and an art career that is taking off. But when one of the partners in her gallery, Garrett Hall, is murdered, Shell's life seems to go into a tailspin. She is thrown into a fearful state as memories of her parents' deaths surface, and she finds herself worrying about her relationship with Dean while she puzzles over Garrett's murder. To make matters worse, Shell's ex-boyfriend intrudes into a family visit at just the wrong moment, causing a rift between herself and Dean just when she needs him most. She is on her own again, and a killer is on the loose. Will she and Dean work out their troubles before something worse happens, or will it be too late? Shell has gone missing...

Romancing the Brush: An Austin, Texas Art Mystery Details

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From Reader Review Romancing the Brush: An Austin, Texas Art Mystery for online ebook

Amary Chapman says

Romancing the Brush is a well written cozy. Ms. Woods' characters are realistic written with human traits and frailties. There is more than one sweet love story contained in the mystery, and they resolve more than a few misunderstandings. It's easy to visualize the landscapes with her vivid descriptions of where her action takes place. I applied for and received this book free for an honest review because the blurb interested me, but I did not expect the book to be as good as it was, because I was unfamiliar with the author. I have to get books 1 and 3 in the series so that I can catch on & continue the story. Kudos to Ms. Woods.

Don says

Don't waste your time

I'll admit, right from the start, I read only 20% of the book before giving up on it. It was all about alternative lifestyle and solving a murder. A murder in which the victim took home a valuable painting for the purpose of inspecting it for a fraud. Instead of immediately looking for clues directing the cruel deed toward the owner of the painting, we are left with page after page of wondering how anyone could kill such a perfect man. Also we were led to believe burglary could be the reason, even though nothing could be found missing. . Amateur writing with everyday characters and a weak plot stopped me from wasting any more time with this particular novel.

Terry says

Cute romantic cozy mystery

The good: this was a lite cozy mystery, competently written, no glaring plot holes, very few typos/wrong words - I only recall one, likable if somewhat cardboard characters, includes dogs (that may only be a good point for some readers, but I like it), and a logical resolution.

Before I go on, I have to say I admire anyone who can write a novel, the comments that follow are more about details that can make the writer better, not a slam. Those of you who read reviews but get mad when any actual plot points are discussed might want to stop here.

The not so great: The flow of the book was a little clunky. While I like detailed description to help me feel in the story, I don't really need to know the color of the all the teacups, walls, flowers, the make and color of all the cars, the layout of the kitchen, etc., ad nauseum. The plot was logical but not very original, the characters were rather shallow and stereotypical. I was disappointed that there was really not much art content, that was one of the reasons I picked up the book, the art theme. The slight paranormal components seemed to be more to solve some plot difficulties than anything else, but perhaps later books will develop that theme.

Slight Spoiler: the killer, while having a motive, could easily have solved their problem without killing people and it seemed a bit over the top and illogical that they would do so. But it's fiction, not real life. And real life can be wildly illogical too.

If you enjoy a light coZy that does not tax your brain at nite, you will like this.

Cindy says

LBGA. Very non-Christian (more of a backhanded than a face slap delivery). Can't recommend.

Diane Durbin says

One of those 'can't put it down and when you do you can't think of anything else's books

I received this book for free in order to review it; and did I ever luck out. I nearly shouted out loud at Shell. (You'll find out why when you read the book.). There was a real working dog included in the story which was a giant plus for me. The author did a great job having several main characters and yet giving the reader the opportunity to get to know them all well. The story line ran at a great pace. I found my self skimming the story to see what would happen next, then going back to read what I'd missed. I did ultimately figure out whodunit. But prior to the right answer I had several wrong answers. I would read this author again and again. Hope you enjoy her as much as I did.

Mary says

Very enjoyable mystery!

Interesting story, well developed characters and enough twists to keep you guessing made this an extremely enjoyable read! Looking forward to the next in the series! I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Linda Cole says

Pretty good

I enjoyed reading all about Michelle and Dean relationship and how they help others. The killer was obvious and I really didn't know why shell was kidnapped

Kay (Brigidsmomma) Compton says

This is listed as book one in the series but is actually book 2 as the first book, chronologically is book 0. In

this book, Shell has finished her degree, moved to Dallas where she has been in a fruitless relationship that she has planned to end - only to find her boyfriend in the arms of her best friend! So she picks up and moves back to Austin to be near her best friend Margie and her husband Donald. But Dean, Margie's half-brother, and Shell's hot new landlord, is accused of having murdered his estranged wife. Shell is sure he didn't do it, and once again finds herself in the middle of a murder investigation. Only this time, as she falls for Dean, the stakes are higher than ever!

Carlin says

Great cozy mystery though there are parts that weren't so "cosy" and I held my breath wondering how it all would be resolved. The art painting/forgery theme was fascinating, and the love stories (yes, more than one), the dogs, the open-minded characters (even though set in Texas), and the mystery itself all kept me reading when I should have been doing other more "constructive" things (like sleeping for one). Even the minister at the victim's memorial service was Unitarian! This is book 2 in a series but was fine as a stand-alone story. I intend to go back and read book 0 (a prequel) and book 1 immediately to learn more about these characters and the Austin art world. I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a good cosy mystery with well-realized characters and a little romance.

Christine Lowe says

Romancing the Brush

Romancing the Brush is an interesting story about forged paintings. The beginning was a little wordy and overly descriptive. I really didn't care about the color of the cups. The author may have been trying to familiarize readers with the places and people but for me it was overdone.

I liked the main characters Shell and Dean and their new romance even though they both have issues regarding trust and pride. I think they will continue to grow as a couple as this series continues.

As the story unfolds it becomes more interesting. I found myself turning pages more quickly and rooting for the good guys to prevail. I liked the roles that the dogs played in the story. The author knows that life is better with good dogs. There is a lot to like in Romancing the Brush. I'll be looking for the next book.

I was given a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Lois says

Disjointed and Stilted

Stopped in the middle of chapter two because the writing just does not flow. Sentences that are just lists. Comments that do not fit together. Pure torture to read since it does not flow naturally. I would love to see this author rewrite this story since the concept of a mystery involving art forgery sounds great. If you want details email LifeRegeneration@twc.com

Teresa Kander says

Romancing The Brush is a mystery which delves into the world of art forgery, while also telling a story of family, friends, and romance. Shell and Dean, the main characters, are in a fairly new relationship and are both dealing with issues of trust and insecurity.

There are a lot of subplots throughout the story which leave you wondering about the identity of the murderer, but in the end it turned out to be the person I had suspected all along. That did not in any way detract from my enjoyment of the book, however.

While this is the second book in a series, it easily stands on its own, and gives you enough information about the first story that you don't feel lost if you haven't read it, like me. I do look forward to reading future installments in the story.

I was provided a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. All thoughts and opinions are entirely my own.

Richard says

This was a pretty enjoyable read (a bit more than three stars worth) that kept me curious and turning pages, but I don't find myself raving about it—which possibly just reflects my own taste. It's numbered "2" in a series that employs zero-based slot numbering, meaning it's the third item on the conveyor belt. Now, I haven't read the others, so as things went along, I was thankful for various bits of inserted back-story info that readers of prior books would already know.

Up to the halfway mark, the plot was all right and I liked the characters Shell, Dean, Gonzalez, Billie... And I disliked a couple of other characters (just as I was supposed to, I suppose). Mainly the plot concerns an investigation into the murder of an art dealer, who is examining some paintings for authenticity. Shell, the protagonist, works in the same gallery, which may now be in trouble because the deceased is a main financial backer. Things began to pick up near the half-way mark with a couple of unexpected twists, and I enjoyed the rest of the book more than the first half. (I also decided to trust the writer's geographical knowledge, and did not get out a map of Austin to check for accuracy of highway numbers. But I am convinced the dogs are accurate.)

There are some excellent technical points to this indie-published novel that I'll note here. (And when I say Indie, I mean this is really home-made; not even a fake publisher, just the author's name and a copyright statement.) First, the writing is good and solid. I never stopped to shake my head, roll my eyes, or say tsk-tsk. (Except when she used super-script abbreviations for ordinal numbers such as 19th. [Sadly GR seems to edit out the superscript code.] So sorry, Ms Woods, but that drives me *batty-wonkers* in a novel because I'm a spell-it-out kind of guy; but excessive number abbreviation is only a misdemeanor in California, and I'll let it slide.) Otherwise, the editing and proofing seemed quite solid. I didn't spot any typographical errors until page 77/269—which is quite good—and only two thereafter. (In fact, if Ms Woods comes over and pokes me, I can tell her where the typos are because I marked them.) In any case, this writer certainly gets a silver rodent award for good editorial hygiene.

Go ahead, give this a try. I may even check out the others in the series.

Disclosure: I don't know the author; and I acquired the book during an Amazon free giveaway.

Pamela Richard says

I loved this book and can not wait for the next in the series. The writing was excellent along with the story line and the characters. You are drawn in right from the first page to the last. Just when you think you have the murder solved it takes another twist and keeps you guessing. Also the love story is not over powering and just the right amount of romance.

I was given a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Bev says

I liked this book. It is a nice cozy mystery about painting forgery and murder. The main characters, Dean and Shell have trust issues and are a couple. There are even dogs in this book...you can't go wrong with dogs in the book, they add character to the story. Dean and Shell go about trying to figure out who killed the expert, who by the way was a partner with Shell in her art gallery. It's a fun, nice read.
