



## The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss

*Max Wirestone*

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**Veronica Mars meets the World of Warcraft in The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss, a mystery romp with a most unexpected heroine.**

If it were up to me this book would be called Hilarious Things That Happened That Were Not At All Dahlia's Fault -- or HTTHTWNAADF, for short.

OK, I *probably* shouldn't have taken money from a mysterious eccentric to solve a theft, given that I'm not a detective, and that I am sometimes outwitted by puzzles in children's video games. I *probably* shouldn't have stolen bags of trash from a potential murder suspect. Arguably-- *just arguably*, mind you-- it may have been unwise to cos-play at an event where I was likely to be shot at.

But sometimes you just have to take some chances, right? And maybe things do get a little unfortunate. What of it? If you ask me, an unfortunate decision here or there can change your life. In a positive way, just so long you don't kill in the process. Admittedly, that's the tricky bit.

**Dahlia Moss Mysteries***The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss**The Astonishing Mistakes of Dahlia Moss**The Questionable Behavior of Dahlia Moss*

## The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss Details

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Author : Max Wirestone

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## **From Reader Review The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss for online ebook**

### **Caitie says**

If you are the kind of person who would be friends with me, even just in an online goodreads sense, you need to pre-order this book right now because you will want to own it, read it, and re-read it whenever you need to laugh. I don't do reviews with memes, if I did I would insert the take my money meme because I am buying my own copy.

It might be the funniest book I have ever read. I laughed out loud dozens of times and that is not an exaggeration. You don't even need to get the references to think they are funny, and there is plenty of humor that doesn't rely on you being a complete nerd. The mystery is equally great.

I could gush about this book for days, but I can't because work. Trust me on this one.

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### **kate says**

<3 <3 <3

The problem with reading this as an advance reader copy - starring a protagonist you can \*totally\* relate to, with zany situations, great witty dialogue, and hilarious characters - is that I'm totally and amazingly in love with Dahlia Moss AND I NEED MORE STORIES STAT.

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### **Karlyflower \*The Vampire Ninja, Luminescent Monster & Wendigo Nerd Goddess of Canada (according to The Hulk)\* says**

**Category: A Book Guaranteed to Bring You Joy** (which seemed fitting because receiving this arc from the amazing, and now popped full of pillz, karen brought me joy before I even cracked it's cover.)

### **4 Laughter Stars**

I have a love/hate relationship with most “manic pixie dream girl” characters, into which I would lump Dahlia Moss. While I love that they broaden character roles for females to include klutzy nerd girls with poor social skills into media they always seem to be portrayed by actresses who are so conventionally gorgeous that their stumbling Bambi-like behaviour comes across as “adorable” and “cute” rather than the sidewalk hugging realities such conditions - like innocently trying to wear heels - inspire.

(Yes, I think Rory Gilmore is a ‘Manic Pixie Dream Girl’. Yes, I still love her so much that sometimes it physically hurts.)

Anyways, Dahlia Moss is a delight to me. She is just the type of bumbling fool so many nerd girls can relate to. She's also unemployed and virtually unemployable, so when she is offered money to become a virtual detective in the world of 'Zoth' (An online game that I actually have no idea if Wiresome invented or if it is, in fact, a real game), she takes it with only a perfunctory "why do you think I would be good at this" inquiry. After which follows an insane series of events in both virtual and real life.

### **Real life hack:**

While writing this review I took a quick break to make soup, because I am writing it on my break at work, and not once but thrice walked into the lunchroom without the soup which I was heating up. And once there attempted (not at great length but still) to use the can opener on the bowl rather than the can of said soup. And THEN I dropped the spoon I was using to stir and eat my soup TWICE on the floor, the second time while trying to pick it up after the first drop. This is the type of idiocy I am known for, and while CQ – for reasons unknown – finds this behaviour adorable it is generally not regarded as such but instead as moronic.

/end RL hack

This book is entirely silly and completely relatable, in turns.

*"You. Are. The. Worst."*

Incidentally the above is a sentence which is said quite frequently in my apartment.

The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss is a story about an unlikely detective investigating a virtual crime which gets high-jacked by a real crime and all the improbable craziness that would never happen in real life but which is such a delight to read about in fiction.

Thank you to the ever amazing Karen for sending me this ARC! ❤

Also, this happened:

Which maybe only I think is so insane! because I was over at a friends' and I was given this blanket to sleep with and in the morning when I woke up and grabbed this book to read, which I had brought because I just happened to be reading it, I noticed they entirely match! Which is a weird level of serendipity for me because normally I always clash at everything, really!!

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### **Lynx says**

Dahlia Moss has had a rough year. Her now ex-boyfriend cheated on her, she cannot land herself a job and is only surviving thanks to her eccentric (though some may say just plain crazy) roommate. Things are getting desperate so when she's asked to investigate a theft and offered a couple thousand to do so Dahlia cannot say no. The item in question? The "Bejewelled Spear of Infinite Piercing", a most prized possession in a MMORPG. It isn't long before the online theft turns into real life murder and Dahlia knows there's only one

way to solve this, logging on, creating a character and infiltrating her clients gaming circle.

I loved this book and I love Dahlia Moss. She's clever, fun, sarcastic and just a great character to lead you through the wonderful world of gaming and cosplay. Those who are involved in that world will get a kick out of it all and readers who are new to it all will find this to be a fun way to learn. Fantastic debut from Max Wirestone and hopefully not the last we've seen of Dahlia Moss.

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\*Thank you Redhook and Netgalley for this review copy.

### **Veronica ?? says**

[ Jonah is killed with a physical version of the spear that had been stolen from him in the game. (hide spoiler)]

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### **Joe Jones says**

I was lucky to get an advanced readers copy of this title. I am glad I did. Dahlia is one of those characters you can't help but root for as she muddles through. The side characters are a quirky bunch as well. This continues the trend of books written for geeks. MMORPG players will find plenty to love as will pop culture fans. There is enough of a mystery to draw in those fans as well so definite genre crossover appeal. Then throw in a healthy does of humor and you get one great Summer read!

If you like this one, and I think you will, the author said on Twitter there are two more planned in the series!

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### **karen says**

HOLY MOLY, THIS IS NOW PART OF A TRILOGY - MORE PEOPLE NEED TO READ THIS BECAUSE IT IS AS FUN AS A PIT FULL OF BALLS!

4.5 adorably geeky stars.

*My grandmother used to say that there was nothing worse than trust-fund kids with plans*

this is the perfect example of "right book, right time." i grabbed this from my daunting "promised to read soon" stack because it looked fast and fun and it turned out to be both of those things and also EXACTLY what i needed. i've been in the glums lately, which needs to be acknowledged but does not need to be explored any further than that. this book didn't *technically* make me laugh out loud, but it made me *want* to be a laugh-out-loud kind of reader and it definitely put off the glums for a little while. it's just ... fun. it's a mash-up of a cozy mystery and a geekworld celebration that crams all of its eggs into the basket of voice. if you don't like the voice, you won't like the book, which is risky, especially when a male author is writing a geekgirl character, but although dahlia moss references the manic pixie dreamgirl trope a few times, she mostly avoids being one herself, and her \*yes\* occasionally manic but more precisely *breezy* and *charming*

commentary and observations drive this book straight to funtown.

*With my "quiet girl at the library" look, I am genetically suited to not being noticed at parties. In my best moments, I think I look like Carmen Sandiego, with long wavy brown hair and sunglasses and fedora. Setting aside the fact that I don't wear a lot of fedoras. In my worst moments, I think I look like Roz from Monsters, Incorporated, but maybe everyone thinks that.*

pretty much, yeah.

a quick note - this is not my world. at all. this book is all gaming and cosplay and *Doctor Who* and a million other references to things that went right over my head. including this jigglypuff thing (which i misremembered as "jiggeldypear"), with which many of you are probably familiar, and if you can help me understand what is even happening in this clip, i will be very grateful because it looks like some jim jones sleepover gone wrong and i kinda want to know what i'm missing\*:

okay, i can't get the gif to post here for some reason, but here's a link. thanks for ruining the effect, goodreads!

HOWEVER - unlike several of the reviewers on here who didn't like the book because the references were too far removed from their own experiences, for whatever reason i didn't have a problem at all. sure, i had to do some googling today when i was writing this review, and even after googling i still have some questions, but it's not like the story is *impenetrable* if you don't know who snorlax is. which i didn't. but now i do. and i want one.

so, if this isn't your world, you may or may not have problems. for me 1) so much of the book revolves around *Zoth*, a game that only exists in this book, i feel like every reader should be in the same ballpark of understanding so long as they are aware that there are people who play RPGs online in which things like "The Bejeweled Spear of Infinite Piercing" and treants and warpriests exist. and 2) not everything in this book is about the gaming world - there's plenty here that's just part and parcel of the universal fabric of humanity - job interviews, bad relationships, crazy friends, the shame of unemployment when unexpectedly running into more-successful acquaintances... and there are also plenty of nongeek references in here: cormac mccarthy and macgyver nods, a perfect shirley jackson analogy and peter capaldi (which is technically a dr. who reference, but some of us fell in love with him long before he got his license to practice medicine)

and maybe knowing this world intimately would be a bad thing. lord knows i get real critical when authors misrepresent stuff i know a lot about.

so even though i didn't get every shoutout, i got enough of them and frankly - dahlia had me at the madeline kahn/*Clue* reference. which is a completely disingenuous statement, since that scene is alllll the way on page 256, and i was had way earlier, but i think it's important to take a moment to honor every instance of a *Clue*

reference in the world.

i really hope this book is a first-in-series situation. i love the noir-by-way-of-geek-cozy dialogue:

*"Don't laugh, but I kind of wanted to hang out with a private detective," he explained. His embarrassment lasted nanoseconds, and he was bright again. "Makes you feel like you're in on something. You know, put the squeeze on the old up and down. Derrick the gin mill. Hoosegow the bean shooters."*

*"You're just stringing together nonsense words."*

*"Maybe," said Nathan. "But you have to grant that I've got the cadence down."*

i love the many lessons i learned

*I was not cyberstalking Nathan. The line between checking out someone on the Internet and straight up cyberstalking them sits at the twenty-minute mark. Five, ten minutes of checking them out? Awesome. You're being a conscientious person and a good date, as you will have excellent conversation starters in hand. Thirty-five, forty-five minutes? You are a psychopath. I realize that's not a wide berth between the two, but them's the rules.*

i love that dahlia hides her money in a copy of Northanger Abbey because *knowing the thief liked Jane Austen* would make the theft less deplorable. and that, when she is in grave danger later in the book, fearing for her life, she's mostly concerned about who's going to return her library books if she gets murdered.

i love *Orchardary* as a name, i love *Threadwork* as a character because - dapper cat, but i am mostly in love with detective "let's-listen-to-King-Crimson" shuler, his *Interrupted Cop* subterfuge, and his raised-eyebrow patience. this is me, shipping: ditch that botanist, dahlia moss! shuler and frozen custard 4-eva!

anyway, this is a fun book that i read when i was sad. it's not going to change the face of american literature or anything, but it's also more than just diversionary entertainment. it's got admirable wit and it's like a sweet snuffly puppy you can't help but fall in love with.

\* oh my god and while i was reskimming to write this review, it turns out that with that particular clip i serendipitously stumbled upon the touchpoint to a reference from a different point in the book about falling asleep/face-writing, that dahlia addresses as such:

*(This is a hardcore Pokémon reference and if you do not get it, I apologize. If you do get it, I apologize even more deeply)*

so if you tell me what it all means, know that you are outing yourself as a hardcore geek. which is awesome.

come to my blog!

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**Michelle Hauck says**

How could I not love a character who wears a Jigglypuff hat. That is like the coolest reference ever!

Dahlia Moss has long been out of work, lost her boyfriend to a dental hygienist, and lives with a crazy roommate. So it's a regular day when a stranger asks her to recover a spear stolen from him in a role-playing video game and offers her \$1000 upfront. She's no detective, but with rent money due, there's no backing out of this one. Then her benefactor turns up dead, killed by a real copy of the spear.

I like how real to life this feels and modern. Some of the characters might be on the odd side, but the mystery unfolds so very naturally. Each step of the puzzle follows logically, though not at all predictably. The mystery side kept me guessing while the sideshow of characters kept me infinity entertained.

I have to say I might be a bit in love with Dahlia's attitude to life and was somewhat of a video game geek myself in the past. I didn't catch all the pop culture references but had fun all the same finding the ones I did know.

Dahlia is a blast and I'm a big fan. She's down to earth and thoughtful, while being full of whims and quirks. I haven't liked a character this much in forever!

I received my copy for NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Sherwood Smith says**

Copy provided by NetGalley

Jobless-for-over-a-year Dahlia Moss is surprised by an offer of a job, for which she'll be paid a grand, and another grand when she finds a certain spear. She is not a detective, never has been a detective, but for a couple grand, she's game. "Game" being the operative word here, as it turns out that this spear is not real, but an artifact in an online game. As she discovers in a painful dinner "date" that Jonah, her client, set up to get her started on the case.

But the very next day, Jonah turns up dead. Furthermore, he was stabbed by a real version of the game artifact.

The detectives in charge warn Dahlia off, the gamers ignore her, but when the lawyer in charge of Jonah's estate makes her an offer, she's even more determined. It turns out there is a mystery, and the mystery does get solved in a very satisfying way, but most of the novel feels picaresque as Dahlia navigates the wacky world of fellow nerds, gamers, and twenty-somethings in St. Louis, as well as the wackier online game world.

I think it's fair to say that if you like the voice, you will really like the novel. Dahlia's first-person narrative is distinctive, and I found it hilarious. Deeply appreciated the introduction of every bizarre character, some of whom are charming and even appealing--like the maybe-suspect, maybe-boyfriend geek, Nathan. And the evil bank teller. Through it all swoops Dahlia's rich, gorgeous and utterly weird roommate, Charise.

Wirestone's descriptions were such a pleasure, and even though I'm not hip enough to recognize some of the

names dropped, it didn't matter because context was everything. And a small but distinct plus, at least for me, not once did the narrative voice reveal character, mood, or intuition through "somethings" in eyes, which I've noted in a preponderance of the books I've been reading lately. (Which is okay--we know what it means--but when one sees it over and over, it layers a kind of generic gloss over an otherwise enjoyable book.) The pacing was leisurely, and the climax cinematically bizarre, while explaining everything in an "ahah!" manner.

Wirestone goes onto my list of "watch for the next one" authors.

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### **Claire - The Coffeeholic Bookworm says**

Perhaps, this is one of those books that are out of my league, but due to my love of books, I am willing to study about the subject matter and learn more. I am not a fan of MMO, but I love detective stories. Such was the case for The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss.

Truth is, my husband's the one who's really into MMORPG, and whenever I get a break from work, I spend some time watching him play, steal, kill, demand and pursue heroes, villains, combatants, dragons, elven archers, et al. By watching him play with his online cohorts, I know about gaming techniques, cheats, building armies, looting merchandise and stuffs. So am I qualified to read this book? Yes, definitely!

It's funny how I was able to easily relate to the story and with the characters. At first, admittedly, I was raising my eyebrows because Jonah mentioned about finding Bejeweled Spear of Infinite Piercing. I was like, WTF is he talking about? I somehow mirrored Dahlia's initial reaction and was bewildered. I decided to continue reading until I finally understood what Jonah was talking about. You know what I did? I screamed and hurriedly told my husband that I am reading a book with MMORPG theme and my hubby was ecstatic. He said, finally "you'll understand the world I am living in"... sheesh!

So I went along my merry way, reading about Dahlia's unemployed status thus agreeing to Jonah's initial \$1000 to meet the thief and another \$1000 after shaking him up. Sounds like a plan. Only, the problem was, she didn't have any experience doing detective work. Zero. Zip. Zilch. Nada.

Dahlia's response? "Game on!"

What happened next took me by surprise. There was murder, mayhem, cosplay (darn it, i wonder how I'd look if I were to wear that Manic Pixie Dream Girl costume, too!) and laughter. This book was too much fun! I enjoyed Dahlia's weird antics and come-what-may, devil-may-care attitude. She was so cool! This book is definitely for me! Max Wirestone, you just got yourself a new follower, include me in your fandom from now on.

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### **Arlene Arredondo says**

FASCINATING!!!

Dhalia Moss is living with a friend since her boyfriend dumped her for another and has no income and no prospects of job, even though she makes the effort to go to every interview available. Her life literally sucks, until she gets a job offer she can't refuse. She's paid a high amount of maney to find the "Bejeweled Spear of

Infinite Piercing" which happens to be a digital item from a MMORPG.

I'm a geek at heart and this story is just great! Since the beginning is very funny. When you have a character that makes a fool of herself and has the resolution to not be let down by anything, and even at the worst situations can keep her mind on the target and accomplish the task at hand, then you have a true heroine. I like this story because it can give you a perspective in life and uplift your spirit.

You can find friends in the weirdest places, just have to be yourself.

This is great for young adults or the young at heart.

Note: I received this book from NetGalley and Redhook Books for review purposes and an un-biased opinion.

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### **Billie says**

It was cute, but the plot and characters never quite rang true for me and it ended up feeling more surface than substance. Plus, the ARC was riddled with the kind of grammatical errors that should have been cleaned up by the author--or a freelance editor--before this book ever made it to the publisher.

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### **AH says**

**The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss** was a fun and light read. It's perfect for when you don't want something too deep or complicated, even though Dahlia's life is a bit complicated. Dahlia is unintentionally hilarious. She's a millennial, a college graduate, unemployed and living at a friend's place. Her job prospects are horrible because she fails at every interview, and she often finds herself in strange and wacky situations. Since the entire story is told from Dahlia's point of view, you kind of feel very sympathetic to her predicaments.

Dahlia is hired to find a spear in a computer game and stranger things happen. Someone is murdered and against police advice, Dahlia (aided by her even wackier roommate) puts her limited detection skills to use. She enters the virtual world of Zoth and tries to find the missing spear and the murderer.

Do I even need to tell you that there is a role playing convention complete with costumes?

Just the cultural references will get you chuckling. I mean, who wears a Jigglypuff hat?

Oh, Canadian history buffs should get a giggle at a seance scene. It always boils down to beer.

A perfect light and fluffy read. We all need them.

Recommended for millennials with a college degree and no job prospects, gamers, and anyone with an inner Geek.

*Thank you to NetGalley and Redhook Books for a review copy of this book.*

**Review posted on Badass Book Reviews. Check it out!**

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## Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.com/2015/11/04/a...>

The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss is definitely an audiobook you should avoid listening to in public, lest you want the people around you to think you've completely lost your mind. Folks generally don't react well to someone bursting into spontaneous maniacal laughter, I find.

And to think, I almost let this gem pass me by! A book like this doesn't technically fall under the Sci-fi and Fantasy purview, which is what I mostly read and review, but I could not resist checking this one out after learning about the MMORPG angle. From Ready Player One to Reamde, video games and gaming have been the inspiration for many works of speculative fiction, but of course not all gaming-related books are SFF. That doesn't mean I can't still geek out about them, though.

And geek out I did. If Nancy Drew were a millennial and grew up to become a gigantic mega super geek, you would probably get Dahlia Moss, the titular main character of this delightfully witty book. Thing is though, I can also see Dahlia being popular with more than just the geeky crowd; fans of underdog stories and readers who love rooting for the long-shot protagonist will be sure to love this book as well.

Unemployed, flat out broke, and living off the largesse of her kooky roommate, Dahlia could not believe it when she was suddenly offered a job by some rich kid hiring her to track down a stolen object. Her only qualifications for the job appear to be 1) the one time she temped at a PI agency and 2) the fact that she has played Zoth, the massively multiplayer online game in which the theft itself actually took place.

That's because the stolen object in question isn't even a real object, but a bunch of pixels—more specifically, an ultra-rare spear that's one of its kind in-game. It should be an easy enough job, Dahlia figures. All she has to do is to find out which of her employer's guildies made off with the highly coveted weapon and call it a day. But then, that's when things start to get weird. Jonah, the client who hired her, ends up dead the next day, skewered through by a very real, very sharp full-scale replica of the pixelated spear that was stolen from his Zoth account, right down to the very last gem stone.

Dahlia's hunt for a thief soon becomes one for a murderer in this quirky little whodunit. Sure, our protagonist is not exactly the most savvy of detectives, but that's all part of her charm, along with her propensity to leap into situations without thinking them through (this book isn't titled *The Competent and Well-thought Out Decisions of Dahlia Moss* for good reason). She also has this bad habit of digressing a lot, but those runaway trains of thought often lead to hilarious asides about geeky pop culture and gaming references, so I let a lot of that slide seeing how Dahlia is a woman after my own heart. I also pardoned the character of her roommate, who is bizarre for the sake of being bizarre, as well as the many times this story grew too silly to the point of absurdity. Still, I couldn't believe how often I literally laughed out loud at Dahlia's exploits. With me, that happens to go a long way.

Also, books about MMORPGs really get to me. Especially books about friendships in MMORPGs. Even if you don't consider yourself this book's audience, I think you'll be touched by some of these relationships. I've known some of the people I play MMOs with for years and there's definitely a unique culture among online gamers; tight guilds often have their own code and customs, which is even more pronounced on RP servers. Though you'll likely never meet most of your online gaming friends face-to-face, you definitely connect with them on a whole other level (no pun intended). I love how this book taps into all that, and I totally found myself relating to a lot of the characters.

A final shout-out has to go to Lauren Fortgang, the narrator. I've listened to her work in the past (most recently in the audio production of *Six of Crows*) and it's hard to believe it's the same person. She has so much more energy as the voice of Dahlia Moss. Audiobooks are always so much more enjoyable to listen to when you can tell the narrator is really getting into the performance (this is why I loved *The Martian* audiobook so much) and this is most certainly the case with this book and Ms. Fortgang. All her sardonic inflections and snarky deliveries were spot on. Just a brilliant, brilliant performance.

*The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss* was just an all-around fun book. You can bet I'll be telling all my gamer friends about it, though I am also highly recommending this book to both geeks and non-geeks. Simply put, it's awesome!

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### **Cale Dietrich says**

This is the funniest book I've ever read.

I know that's a really bold statement, but it's the truth. This book is freaking hilarious, so much so that it probably isn't the best idea to read it on public transport, because you will laugh, and people will stare.

*The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss* is the story of Dahlia Moss, who is a charming, adorable hot mess that instantly found a place in my heart. She's 60 percent Codex from *The Guild*, 20 percent *Veronica Mars*, and 20 percent of a totally new thing that the world needs more of (Jigglypuff caps FTW). I'll just say there's a reason her name is a huge part of the title, as, in my opinion, the success of this book hinges on her and she totally delivers. She's one of my all-time favourite heroines, and watching her stumble through this mystery (and the rest of her life) is an absolute joy.

Speaking of mysteries, it's a great one. I'll be vague on the details, but I'll just say that the murder weapon is a 3D printed spear from a video game. How cool is that? There are plenty of clues about the killer, and plenty of red herrings, all of which will encourage readers to put on their sleuthing hats. And, perhaps most importantly, the resolution is super satisfying.

The supporting cast deserves a special mention. Charice, Dahlia's housemate, is wonderfully insane, and Nathan, the nerdy possible love interest/suspect, is mega-adorable. Additionally, there are so many great side characters. My favourite is Clara, an evil bank teller. Can someone please make a #teamclara shirt? I would buy it. Evil bank tellers aside, a real warmth comes from reading about these funny, fleshed-out characters, and watching them interact/trade quips is so much fun.

With a fantastic heroine, a compelling mystery and a complex and hilarious cast of characters, this was an absolute blast to read! I'll be recommending this to everyone when it releases in October!

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