

## Brooklyn Graves

**Triss Stein**

Poisoned Pen Press (Mar 1, 2014)

Hardcover \$24.95 (246pp)

978-1-4642-0217-9

*Our protagonist must discover the connection between Tiffany windows and the death of a Russian night guard, in this deftly-paced murder mystery.*

Erica Donato is a single mother in her thirties who is working on her dissertation on urban history. On the side, she occupies a lowly position working for a museum curator. Erica finds herself assigned to Dr. Flint (an expert on the artwork of the Tiffany studio) and investigating a box of mysterious old letters that hold historical value as part of the Tiffany heritage. While working hard to deal with the meticulous, micro-managing Dr. Flint, Donato hears about the murder of her friend's husband, Dima. As the information from the letters has Donato wandering into old buildings and mausoleums to uncover the truth about Tiffany windows, the mystery behind Dima's murder slowly begins to unravel.

*Brooklyn Graves* maintains the mystery between Dima's death and Tiffany windows by drawing out the investigation into the letters and offering a variety of would-be suspects. The rich characterization, especially of the protagonist, is another alluring element of the story. For example, while she's walking through a cemetery, the protagonist is haunted by memories of her dead husband: "After a while, I stopped seeing the stones and the mausoleums and only thought about my Jeff dying in a park kind of like this, under the trees."

While some of the characters, such as the finicky Dr. Flint, who sends typo-ridden emails to Donato, offer some lightness to the story; Donato's interaction with other characters flesh out her own qualities and flaws, such as her motherly treatment of Dr. Flint's young assistant, Ryan. ("I brought two egg-and-bagel sandwiches to work and ... offered [them] to young Ryan who looked underfed and unhealthy").

There are some inconsistencies and awkward sentence structures in the narrative that detract from the flow of the story—for instance, "This was no ordinary morning. I found pancake mix way in the back of a cupboard and threw together a stack of them." However, the characters and the unfolding plot are enticing enough to keep readers grounded in the story as the connections between art history and the Russian immigrant's death are carefully exposed as events unfold.

The strong female protagonist in *Brooklyn Graves* offers an element of chick-lit to this enticing whodunit.

MAYA FLEISCHMANN (Spring 2014)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*