



# Death Is Like a Box of Chocolates

*Kathy Aarons*

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**Death Is Like a Box of Chocolates** Kathy Aarons

**Whether it's to satisfy a craving for chocolate or pick up the hottest new bestseller, the locals in charming West Riverdale, Maryland, are heading to Chocolates and Chapters, where everything sold is to die for...**

Best friends Michelle Serrano and Erica Russell are celebrating the sweet rewards of their combined bookstore and chocolate shop by hosting the Great Fudge Cook-off during the town's Memorial Day weekend Arts Festival. But success turns bittersweet when Main Street's portrait photographer is found dead in their store, poisoned by Michelle's signature truffles.

As suspicion mounts against Michelle, her sales begin to crumble and her career seems whipped. With Erica by her side, Michelle must pick through an assortment of suspects before the future of their dream store melts away...

FIRST IN A NEW SERIES

**Includes Scrumptious Chocolate-Making Recipes!**

## Death Is Like a Box of Chocolates Details

Date : Published September 2nd 2014 by Berkley

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Author : Kathy Aarons

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## **From Reader Review Death Is Like a Box of Chocolates for online ebook**

### **\* Jennifer says**

This one surprised me - I expected to DNF it honestly. The title just didn't appeal. But it's great: these characters break the cozy molds - highly intellectual without being socially awkward or unlikeable, community college drop-outs that own successful businesses, an MC that doesn't drool over children. Refreshing and well written with a murder plot that was really well done. I can't wait for the next one.

Full review: <http://jenn.booklikes.com/post/114335...>

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### **Carla Johnson-Hicks says**

Michelle Seranno and Erica Russell are co-owners of Chocolates and Chapters, a bookstore and gourmet chocolate shop. They will soon be celebrating the one year anniversary of their renovation with a Great Fudge Cook-Off which has snowballed into a part of a town-wide Memorial Day weekend celebration. They are very busy and Gwen, the mayor, just keeps piling on more. Good thing Erica loves to organize. When their friend, neighboring storeowner and fellow committee member Denise is found dead with a box of Michelle's chocolates, her store gets shut down. It is time to solve this murder to get Michelle off the hook and her store back in business.

I liked the fact that there was a team of sleuths involved in this mystery. Not only Michelle and Erica were nosing around, but Erica's brother and best selling crime author, Ben (aka Bean), helped out with his many connections. One step forward and two steps back happened throughout the book with a few suspects but not as many as in other books I have read. Crazy reporter Reese, computer whiz Zach and police detective Bobbie all added to the story and filled out this little town. I enjoyed following the life of the townspeople, the attempts to try and solve the mystery as well as the festival they were planning. The suspect became apparent near the end of the story and the reason behind it was quickly unveiled. I will check out more in this series.

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### **Becky says**

A great first book in a series! Somehow the author made me even smell her chocolate shop and I know that is an impossibility! Do not be fooled by the Forest Gump sounding title--this tale is more like a Shakespearean tragedy. The main characters and their supporting characters, the books/chocolate shop, and writing style have sold me on wanting to read more!

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### **QNPoohBear says**

Michelle Seranno and Erica Russell are co-owners of Chocolates and Chapters, a bookstore and gourmet chocolate shop. They will soon be celebrating the one year anniversary of their renovation with a Great

Fudge Cook-Off which has snowballed into a part of a town-wide Memorial Day weekend celebration. That means a lot of work to do in very little time. When their neighbor and fellow committee member Denise is found dead with a box of Michelle's chocolates, it puts a serious crimp in Michelle's plans, not to mention is bad for business. Aided by Erica's sexy reporter brother, known as Bean, their computer genius Zeke and a mysterious stray cat, Michelle and Erica are determined to help the police solve the murder before Memorial Day.

I knew this book and I were off to a bad start when I saw the cat on the cover. I'm not much of a cat fan. I just don't get the appeal. Then Michelle and I got off to a bad start and never recovered. She tosses around phrases like "librarian glasses" and "geek chic." Librarians come in all shapes, sizes, colors, genders and styles. There's no such thing as "librarian glasses." Michelle's attitude seems a little antagonistic towards smart people though Erica is a certified genius. Michelle is also a chocolate snob- she hates fudge. Who hates fudge? She also hates cupcakes and can't bake. What the heck? Baking is easy if you pay attention to what you're doing. Creating gourmet chocolate is hard. Also, Michelle's sheer stupidity in insisting on investigating annoyed the heck out of me. It doesn't usually but probably since I didn't like her very much to begin with and since the police seemed competent, I didn't see the need for her to investigate.

The plot doesn't make a lot of sense. I'm pretty sure there's a plot hole somewhere but I forget where. I figured out who did it about halfway through when the clue was dropped. The story didn't end very satisfactorily. The plot was wrapped up too quickly and didn't explain enough. Why were the committee members targeted or was it a coincidence? Why did the murderer try to frame Michelle, Mark and/or Colleen or again was it convenience? That just didn't make sense. The motive was so stupid and lacking in believability. The burgeoning romance was kind of cute but I just don't get what Bean sees in Michelle. He likes her sense of adventure but I call that stupidity. There's a random, brief subplot about Michelle's brother Leo. Leo is a war veteran and he plot gets all patriotic and supportive of veterans for no good reason except the book is set during Memorial Day. If Leo had been in the story more, he could have interacted with his sister and shown more of her character, but he is barely in this book at all. I kept forgetting who Leo was. Hilary Punkin is another random character tossed in because the book is about cooking so there must be some celebrity TV food critic tossed in for good measure. There's also too much planning, committee stuff and repetitive babysitting requests that slowed the story. There's not enough chocolate making for me and none of the recipes appeal to me or make me even want to try to make chocolate.

The secondary characters are not all that memorable or quirky. I liked Erica better than Michelle because she's smart, loves research and sells books. However, she lacks some serious common sense, which I hear geniuses tend to do. She also lies too easily. Her relationship with Bobby drove me crazy. Her sister Colleen seems normal. She's a typical stressed mother of young children. Her husband is a jerk. Denise was not a very nice person. Though she didn't deserve to be murdered, the more that is revealed about her, the less I liked her. Reese seems crazy but her character developed well and the best of all the characters in the book. Gwen is a typical politician for all the locals refuse to believe it. Henna is the only quirky character in the book.

I didn't care about the characters enough to want to read any more of this series. I keep striking out with chocolate books. I do wish I could visit Chocolate and Chapters though! Two of my favorite things... chocolate and books.

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**Betsy says**

Death is Like a Box of Chocolates by Kathy Aarons is the first book in A Chocolate Covered Mystery. I found the book to be enjoyable. I would like to know more about the characters and see Coco more. Solid start to series. 3.5 stars

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## **Lesa says**

If Kathy Aarons' debut mystery, *Death is Like a Box of Chocolates*, is any indication, cozy mystery readers are in for a delectable series. Aarons already appears to be a pro at creating likable sleuths, well-developed characters, and a surprise, but logical villain. Isn't that what we're all looking for with our mysteries?

Michelle Serrano is perfectly happy operating a combined bookstore and chocolate shop with her best friend, Erica. Michelle is the chocolatier for Chocolates and Chapters, while Erica runs the bookstore, and their lives. It's Erica, along with the mayor, who has everyone in town actively volunteering for the Memorial Day weekend Arts Festival. And, Michelle had only wanted to hold a Great Fudge Cook-off. Now, it's a full-blown event with the star of Grand Chef Network as a possible guest judge. But, everything is temporarily on hold when Michelle finds the body of one of the town's professional photographers. Of course everything is on hold. Denise appeared to be poisoned by eating some of Michelle's chocolates. So, guess who's on the top of the suspect list. Michelle is desolate when she can't get into her shop, anticipating the destruction of all of her hard work. For her, "Chocolate was food and family and friends." Is it any wonder that Michelle and Erica team up to ask a few questions and create a project plan for a murder investigation?

Aarons' cast of characters is fascinating. Michelle is in love with her chocolate, following rebellious teen years after her parents died. Her older brother, Leo, had raised her, then enlisted. He's now back from Afghanistan, a disabled veteran suffering from depression. There's the brilliant Erica, along with her hot brother, Ben, the "Bean" that Michelle always had a crush on. It's a well-developed cast of characters, from Michelle's assistants to the other store owners in town. And, of course, there's Michelle's life-long enemy, now the owner and editor of the local newspaper.

When Michelle looks at her friendship with Erica, realizing how "entrenched we were in each other's lives", she actually sums up the world of cozy mysteries. Amateur sleuths like Michelle and Erica fall into investigations because they are entrenched in the lives of their small towns. And, those investigations often uncover unpleasant secrets about friends and neighbors. Aarons' *Death is Like a Box of Chocolates* offers a combination chocolate shop/bookstore (heaven, anyone?) in West Riverdale, Maryland, the newest setting for crime and friendship in a small town. Kathy Aarons' debut is a sweet treat, indeed.

Kathy Aarons' website is [www.kathyaarons.com](http://www.kathyaarons.com)

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## **Fred says**

*Death Is Like A Box Of Chocolates* is the first in the A Chocolate Covered Mystery series and a delicious series, too.

Michelle and Erica own the Chocolates and Chapters bookstore/chocolates shop in West Riverdale, MD. Next door to their shop is Denise Coburns' photography studio. They and the whole community are looking forward to the Great Fudge Cook-off will be held during the upcoming Memorial Day weekend. Michelle is

both excited and nervous as Hillary Punkin is rumored to be one of the judges. Punkin is a pastry chef on Grand Chef Network and has been known to make or break a chef.

Denise is also excited, as some of her work has been selected for display in an art gallery in Washington, D.C.. But before she can meet with the gallery owner, Michelle finds her dead in her shop. She had died from poisoning. The poison was found in a small box of Michelle's chocolates that were sitting near Denise's body. With the Fudge Cook-off quickly approaching Michelle gets help from Erica and Erica's brother Bean to try and learn the identity of the killer. It appears that Denise had taken some pictures that someone wants to keep secret.

This is an interesting series and having lived in Maryland it was particularly fun for me to try figure out what community West Riverdale is model after. The book has many interesting characters and hope to read more about most of them. On the romance side, Erica just might be able to convince Bobby, a policeman, to show more interest in her. And Michelle, who has had an interest in Bean in the past, would like for him to show a little more interest in her.

Recipes are included with the book.

Looking forward to the next book in the series.

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### **Tina at A COZY GIRL READS AND WRITES Blog says**

Who could resist books and chocolate, especially if you are a book and chocolate lover. Imagine a cozy mystery that brilliantly combines the the two like first in a series *Death is like a box of Chocolates*. Michelle Serrano and Erica Russell run Chapters and Chocolate, a bookstore and chocolate shop. Every one including Chocolates and Chapters and their neighboring business, a photography studio run by Denise Coburns is excited for the Great Fudge Cook-Off as Chocolates and Chapters is hosting.

Denise has a lot to look forward to as some of her photographs will be featured in an art gallery in Washington D.C. and before her meeting with the gallery owner, Michelle finds Denise dead in her shop from eating one of Michelle's Chocolates that was found out later by the police to be poisoned. Michelle soon realizes that her business can come crashing down around her when she is stopped from the police from producing any more chocolates for her business to sell. With help from her business partner, Erica and their many friends they need to find Denise's killer so Michelle and Erica's business can once again return to being a chocolate lovers dream.

Combining both chocolate, books and murder, you really want to savor and sink your teeth into this first in a series. Any cozy mystery with a food contest like the Great Fudge Cook-Off is top notch for me and the many different characters made *Death is like a box of Chocolates* intriguing. Just when you think you know who the killer is the plot twists and turns but as they say the killer is always some one you least suspect as it is with this one. I look forward to reading and reviewing the next in the series.

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## **Lacey says**

Star rating: 4 - 4.5 stars

When Michelle Serrano finds her neighbor dead in her chocolate shop from eating a box of poisoned chocolates, Michelle along with her best friend and business partner Erica throw themselves into finding the culprit to help salvage their reputations as businesswomen. Little do they know their small town runs rampant with secrets that people could possibly kill over.

Even though I found a lot of negative reviews on here, over the fact that Michelle and Erica's characters are more salty then most main stream cozy characters, I found them to be purely entertaining. Yes, Michelle is not a fan of small children and Erica can be a bit snobbish sometimes, that doesn't mean that this novel is a bad read. Many main characters in cozies can be a bit *too* perfect (in my opinion), so I found their flaws to be refreshing. Not every adult woman wants to have children, or even enjoys being around children that doesn't mean they're a bad person.

I also really enjoyed their wholehearted efforts into finding the killer and the way they navigated the waters of detective-hood. It was nice to read a cozy where the main characters really put forth an effort into finding the murderer, instead of just hoping clues would fall into their laps. I also enjoyed this novel because I had a *really* hard time figuring out who the murderer was. Just when I thought I had it all sorted out, Kathy Aarons pulled a fast one on me and left me reeling. I can't wait to read the next novel in this series... It also helps that all the chocolate in this novel had my mouth watering!

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## **Nicole says**

Really enjoyed this one and look forward to the next in the series. Sadly, I think there are only 3 but I'll read them all!

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## **Terri Crossley says**

What a great start to a new series! Michelle and Erica are best friends and together they open up Chocolates and Chapters ! Michelle makes chocolates to die for and Erica is a master at finding the perfect book ! The store is doing great and getting more busy everyday! When Denise who owns the photography store next to theirs is found dead with one of Michelle's chocolates next to her the business takes a huge hit! Who could be so cruel to poison someone with one of her chocolates and what did Denise have to hide that would cause someone to kill her? With her life and job on the line Michelle and Erica jump head first into finding out who could have done this. With the help of Michelle's brother Leo, Erica's trusty assistant Zane and Erica's brother Bean they start to dig into this mystery! The deeper they dig the more dirt they find and everyone is shocked to find out this quaint little town held so many horrible secrets! I highly recommended this book and I am moving on to the next book in this series!

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## **Hilary (A Wytch's Book Review) says**

The first in a new series and whilst it was a little heavy going in places, and also I spotted the murderer fairly quickly the idea of chocolate and books is enough to make me want to read more and more!

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## **Mark Baker says**

Michelle Serrano runs the chocolate part of Chocolate and Chapters, the combined chocolate and bookstore she owns with her best friend Erica. But one morning, she walks into their store to find their business neighbor Denise dead from a poisoned truffle. Now Michelle has to find the killer to clear her reputation.

These characters grew on me quickly, and I really came to care for them. I can't wait to find out what happens to them in future books. The plot got a little sidetracked at the end, but it still had an exciting climax. Plus there were some twists along the way that confused me, but in a good way.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

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## **Sarah says**

I finished this book solely so I could give a different perspective than the other reviewers. There are several four and five star reviews and I don't think the book deserved as many as were given. I don't think that the book was poorly written but I did find the characters to be self-righteous and humorless. These are definitely two traits I am NOT looking for in the characters that I read about. Michelle and Erica seem to take themselves 100% seriously with very little humor involved in their everyday work and life. And besides what they did for work, the author did not incorporate anything else into their characters, i.e. are they interested in things besides selling books or making chocolates? Also, there is no reason given for Erica coming home instead of finishing her degree; apparently she's brilliant but yet she comes home to a one horse town to run a bookstore and used book business? Doesn't make much sense. Michelle on the other hand, thinks her chocolates are the best and chock full of integrity and are far superior to things like, oh gawd, FUDGE. This one just didn't do it for me. I might have run out of patience for this genre, except for the series that I truly love. I have been super busy lately as well and that might account for some of this. At any rate, I didn't like this one much at all.

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## **NicoleG says**

A fun first in series! Includes yummy recipes!

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