

Deadly Sins - Deadly Secrets Book Reviews

Sidra is a strong woman, but she is also struggling with many things. What is her relationship to God now?

January 19, 2009

Reviewed by Rachel P. Smith "BittenbyBooks.com" (Nashville, TN)

In the second Sidra Smart mystery she's been hired to prove that a dead man wasn't a murderer. Ned Durwood went to talk with a couple about some work they had for him. Unfortunately upon arriving, he finds them dead. Terrified that he'll be accused of murdering them, he takes off. As he runs away he takes a chance on getting past a train between cars. He is killed.

The local sheriff considers the case closed. He's called Durwood the murderer. But Ned's father doesn't believe it. He knows that a lot of people in town didn't think much of his son because he was homosexual. He believes that the Sheriff doesn't care enough to look for the real killer. So he hires Sidra to prove that his son was innocent.

Thus Sidra takes on a case that involves her with a fire and brimstone preacher harboring a terrible secret, his wife who's found love with another man, and an underground world of gay men who are being charged with crimes and being sent to prison by two men who hate them for what they are.

Sidra is a strong woman, but she is also struggling with many things. What is her relationship to God now that she's no longer a minister's wife? Can she truly considering the man she's come to love when he seems dead set against her doing the work she loves? And what is the ghost of a woman who lived through yellow fever epidemics and the Civil War trying to tell her?

The story points out the tragedies that religion and bigotry can wreak on lives when they are combined, but also allows that there is good in even the people who are perceived as being narrow-minded zealots.

Sidra is no young babe dashing about in a flashy car and solving mysteries between manicures. She's a woman heading into middle age who is finding her own way and developing a strong identity.

There's much to admire in this book, and in Sidra. I look forward to reading more.

Reviewed at Bitten by Books Paranormal Fiction Review Site by Sarah B.

A Satisfying Sequel!

Having decided to leave her husband, take over her late brother's private investigation business, and move into a new home, Sidra Smart discovers that it's the latter that may be the most disrupting to her new life. That's definitely a surprise for Sidra, considering that an act of charity just had her attempting to return a lost dog to his owner only to discover the old woman's dead body. However, that tragedy has the positive affect of Sidra adopting the dog and keeping her interfering but dog-disliking aunt from pestering Sidra to move in with her. Sidra's career continues to look up when she is hired to investigate a double homicide that was closed when the killer committed suicide by throwing himself under a train. The father of the suspect believes that his son was innocent and is willing to pay Sidra to prove it.

Although still a little unsure of her skills, Sidra throws herself into the investigation. As the former wife of a minister, though, residual bitterness towards the church and religion may be influencing her when she decides that one of the victims was overly involved in a fringe church led by a charismatic reverend. It's a viewpoint that is further enforced when Reverent Blue's wife comes to Sidra looking for a sympathetic ear to share her secret of infidelity. Sidra is less than receptive to the distraught woman who flees only to find herself in more trouble than she ever could have imagined.

The sequel to *Dance on His Grave*, Smith reveals her skills in the progression of Sidra's independent spirit and sense of self. What is most remarkably different from the first in this series is the strong element of paranormal elements as ghosts make themselves known in Sidra's new home. What both novels do share is a dramatic and shockingly violent conclusion. The sudden inclusion of the reverend's secretary and her conversion to Sidra's side is jarring, but Smith creates a satisfying resolution to Sidra's dilemma over a man that began in the previous novel. This is an enjoyable and well-written series by a new author who shows promise with her unique and increasingly strong leading lady.

September 24, 2008

Reviewed by Cindy Chow (Kaneohe, Hawaii)

One of the best upcoming author's I've read in a long time!

The atmosphere and setting is wonderful it kept me spellbound riveted to the story. Sid is a feisty broad with gumption that doesn't let life pass her by because her life has changed dramatically it gives all of us old broads hope.

I just can't imagine myself deviling deep into the mystery of murder and it helped to know Sid had her own doubts. The tenacity in her won't let her give up and it gives all women hope.

Ah, it would be wonderful to see a television series made of Sidra Smart PI and her adventures into solving murders most fowl.

June 23, 2008

Reviewed by Joan B. Baratta "LadyRed" (Alabama)

Exciting! Armchair Interviews says: Sylvia is also a columnist for Southern Life and Style Magazine.

If being an expert on crawling in windows is a requirement for a detective, Sidra Smart meets that requirement. She is the owner of The 3rd Eye Detective Agency with one solved case under her belt. In her former life as a minister's wife, Sidra would not have been caught dead crawling in a window-but Sidra is not the same woman as she was then.

When Dempsey Durwood contacts Sidra about hiring her to clear his son's name, Sidra feels compelled to take the case. Ned Durwood was hit and killed while trying to cross the railroad tracks behind the home of Abe and Cherrie Collins. Abe and Cherrie were later found murdered and the murder weapon had Ned's fingerprints on the handle of the knife. Dempsey states that his son had gone to the Collins residence about some work that the Collins couple wanted him to do. Dempsey is ready to spend his savings to prove Ned's innocence. Sidra takes the case but is uncertain if she can prove Ned's innocence.

Sid has just moved in with her Aunt Annie in a house that has the reputation of being haunted. Soon Sid begins to believe that there really is a ghost that only she can see. Her inquiries regarding the Collins case are taking her no place and the ghost is keeping her awake at night.

A man that Sidra has questioned is found dead on the porch of Annie's home. The office of the detective agency suffers an arson fire. Sidra discovers a secret about the wife of the local pastor. The more events unfold, the more determined Sidra is to find out what has happened in her town in the past that is now having a very adverse effect.

Deadly Sins Deadly Secrets is an exciting book that is full of surprises. I look forward to reading more about Sidra Smart, a spunky lady. I also very much enjoyed Slider, the dog that Sidra rescued early in the book.

I haven't read Dance On His Grave, the first Sidra book, but I intend to do so soon.

April 4, 2008

Reviewed by armchairinterviews.com (Minnesota)

Awesome Read!

DEADLY SINS DEADLY SECRETS, the second installment of Sylvia Dickey Smith's Sidra Smart series, is a tale of how small town secrets and small-minded attitudes seldom mix with pleasant results.

Sid is desperately trying to keep the private investigation business she inherited from her brother open while living in a ghost active house with her overly-involved aunt and her overly-indulged feline, as well as a dog Sid saved from going to the pound when his owner died. Sid's love life and her professional life seem to be at odds with one another and with her past as the wife of a Baptist minister. To add another helping onto her already full plate, Sid is hired by a "tobacco-spitting, chair-rocking old codger more interested in the shine on his shoes than the dust on his furniture" to clear his dead son's name after he was accused of a double murder. After all, just because he happened to have been spotted at the scene around the time of the crime and just because his fingerprints were on the murder weapon does not automatically mean he was guilty of the crime. But try convincing the local sheriff of that--especially when the prime suspect is no longer able to mount a defense to the charges.

Sid must trudge deep into the swamp and even deeper into the past in order to solve this case. As if that isn't bad enough, her preacher ex-husband shows up in the middle of her date with a new man and the ghost who haunts her aunt's house refuses to allow Sid a good night's rest. This ghost is a long dead relative of her new client and former owner of that same house. Scrappy Kate, as she was known in life, has vital information for Sid about the present, her new case and the people involved in it.

Sylvia Dickey Smith is a master storyteller who weaves a tale tighter than a hangman's noose. Her characters resonate with a down-home true feeling found in small towns all across America. They come alive on the page. This is a book I could not put down and highly recommend.

April 3, 2008

Reviewed by Mystery Reader in NC "I love a little mystery, don... (NC, USA)

Another fantastic read!

This second book is every way as good as the first. Sidra is growing in spirit as well as PI knowledge. She fumbles/mumbles/succeeds like any and all of us would if we were following a dream.

Good writing, good character, freeing spirit make for good books.

Keep up the good work.

January 15, 2008

Reviewed by Carol M. Menchu "Thirdgate" (Texas)

Another Sid Smart Winner!

Sid Smart seems to be winning the battle for an independent life when she's hired to clear the name of a young man suspected of murder.

Her simple exists is constantly being complicated by visits from ghosts trying to tell her something, a preacher and his straying wife, a canine, and of course her aunt. Its bad enough that Sid is forced to move in with her aunt in her haunted 19th century home when her apartment building is sold, but then someone burns down the offices of The Third Eye detective agency; her agency. The suspected arsonist is then found dead on Sid's back porch.

Will Kate, the ghost, help Sid solve the mystery? Third Eye Intuitive Investigations is hard at work.

Sylvia Dickey Smith has a very entertaining series in The Third Eye, and Sid Smart. Sid gets stronger in every book.

May 2008

Review by Wanda C. Keeseey (Author Of Lost In The Mist)

Robert E. Keeseey "WC Keeseey" (Harrisburg, PA)

Another winner!

This book is an absolute winner!! Sylvia grabs your full attention from the first sentence and you will have a hard time putting this book down. Her talent for weaving a tapestry of characters and surprising turn of events kept me on the edge of my chair and commanded nothing less than my undivided attention. Sylvia has moved up in the ranks of my favorite authors to number one! If you thought the first book in the series was good, then you will definitely love Deadly Sins-Deadly Secrets. Sylvia has hit the ball out of the park on this one.

December 26, 2007

Reviewed by Karyn Trantham (Orange, TX USA)

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Another great adventure with Sidra Smart!

Sylvia Dickey. Smith's second mystery was a fast-paced read from page one. It is loaded with many unexpected turns and much interesting information about the area the book is

set in--Southeast Texas. Her heroine, Sidra Smart, along with other well-defined characters, is never boring. I'm looking forward to more good reading from Sylvia Dickey Smith.

December 16, 2007

Reviewed by Michael W. Eiden (Orange, Texas USA)

Deadly Sins Deadly Secrets was almost deadly reading!

Reading Deadly Sins Deadly Secrets was so exciting I needed two days of rest to recover from the experience.

December 6, 2007

Reviewed by John T. Browning
