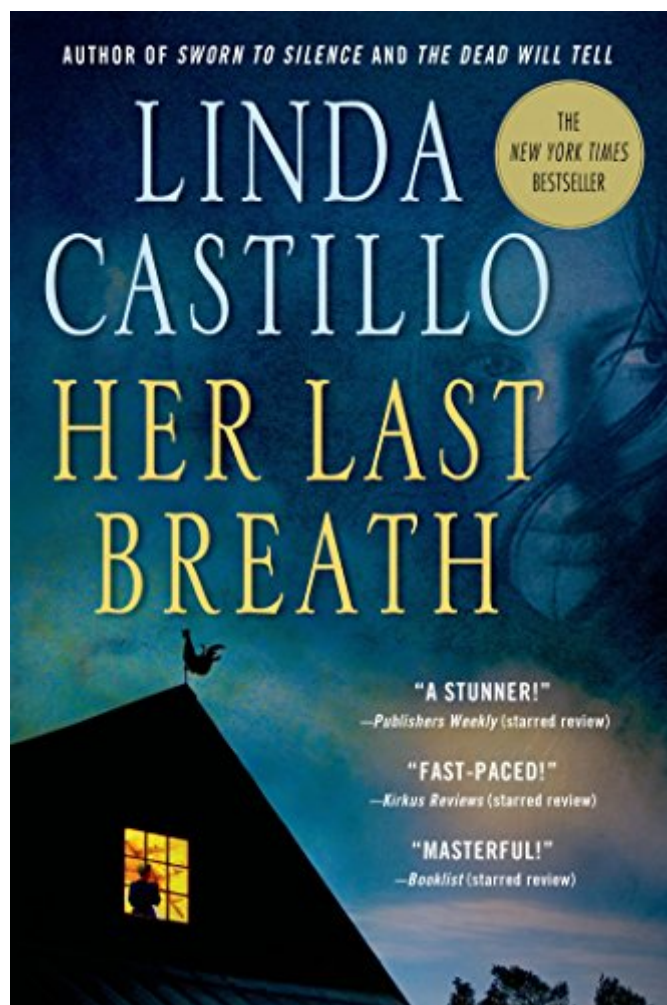


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# Her Last Breath: A Kate Burkholder Novel



## Synopsis

An extraordinarily beautiful Amish woman, a dangerous femme fatale, is the central figure in a story that reveals a dark side of Painters Mill and its seemingly perfect Amish world. A rainy night, an Amish father returning home with his three children, a speeding car hurtling toward them out of nowhere. What at first seems like a tragic, but routine car accident suddenly takes on a more sinister cast as evidence emerges that nothing about the crash is accidental. But who would want to kill an Amish deacon and two of his children? He leaves behind a grieving widow and a young boy who clings to life in the intensive care wing of a hospital, unable to communicate. He may be the only one who knows what happened that night. Desperate to find out who killed her best friend's husband and why, Kate begins to suspect she is not looking for a reckless drunk, but instead is on the trail of a cold blooded killer amid the residents of Painter's Mill. It is a search that takes her on a chilling journey into the darkest reaches of the human heart and makes her question everything she has ever believed about the Amish culture into which she was born.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**FINAL DECISION;** I loved this book. The book delves deeply into Kate's emotional world and the personal connection to the murders being investigated bring out all sorts of difficulties for Kate.**THE STORY:** Kate Burkholder, Chief of Police, is called to a horrible accident. An Amish father and two of his children are killed when their buggy is struck by a vehicle. This hit and run accident at first appears tragic but accidental. Soon, however, questions arise and it appears that the "accident" may actually have been murder. Kate is left trying to figure out who would want to murder the husband of her childhood friend.**OPINION:** This is a murder that deeply wounds Kate. Because of her personal connection to the victims, Kate's past is churned up. This is a book all about the churning up of the past. The mystery was really good in this one. It kept me guessing until the end, and honestly I didn't see the ultimate solution coming. Winding through this mystery are two other personal issues with Kate. Her relationship with John is a prominent part of this story as she needs to decide whether she wants a deeper commitment with him. Also, Kate also finds out that secrets don't stay buried as the crime that touched her life when she was fourteen is uncovered and she fears that her life will fall apart. I think the best part of these books is the personal connection that makes these books so compelling. This story is too strongly entwined with Kate's life that it gives great insight into her and also into the case itself. I can find a decent mystery anywhere. It is the extra personal connection that makes this book so compelling.**WORTH MENTIONING:** Kate and John's relationship has a significant turn in this book.**CONNECTED BOOKS:** HER LAST BREATH is the fifth book in the Kate Burkholder series. It can be read as a standalone although a dark mystery from Kate's past returns here. Readers would be better served by reading at least the first book in the series first.**STAR RATING:** I give this book 5 stars.

Her Last Breath is the fourth book in the Chief Kate Burkholder series. I am hooked on the characters Kate and her boyfriend John Tomasetti, FBI agent. Kate was raised Amish and when she was seventeen she left her Amish farming community near Painters Mill. She went to the city to live and earned her degree in Law Enforcement. Bishop Troyer excommunicated Kate and banned her from the Amish community. The town council offered Kate a job as Chief of Police in Painters Mill. She can speak Pennsylvania Dutch fluently. Paul Borntrager took his three children to the Clinic in Planter Falls. Mattie was usually the one who brought the children to the clinic every week. All the three children have Cohen syndrome. It's a genetic disorder that causes mental and physical developmental problems in children. It's common in the Amish culture because of the small gene pool. Kate arrives at a scene of an accident that involved a truck and buggy. Kate recognized the Amish man who was driving the buggy as Paul Borntrager. His three children were with him. Three

died at the scene of the accident. The eldest child was the only one who survived. One of the deputies in Homes County is a certified accident reconstructionist. His conclusion was that the guy who hit the buggy was doing eighty miles per hour. It wasn't an accident. The driver of the truck planned to murder Paul and his children. Two boys were playing in an abandoned grain elevator at the edge of the woods. It was slowly taken over by the element. The boys were exploring the grain elevator when they found a skull. Katie's past has caught up with her. When Katie was seventeen she was raped in her home. She took her father's shot gun and killed the rapist. There are two unanswered questions about Katie's past and her relationship with Agent Tomasetti. I recommend.

I have enjoyed every one of the Linda Castillo books I have read. Like the plots and she definitely keeps them exciting enough to keep reading. So far it is 7 books and no need to read them in order. Each one may have a past or future about Kate, but each book holds its own.

This is the fifth in a series of books about Kate, a police chief who has return to live among the Amish, although she is no longer one of them. That said, this book could certainly stand on it's own, with no need to read the other books first. The book begins with a beautiful family moment that quickly goes terribly wrong. A father and his children, returning home by buggy, are run down and left for dead, with only one child surviving. The wife/mother is Kate's closest childhood friend. In the ensuing investigation there are many twists and turns, and surprises. One of the reasons I love this series the window it offers into Amish life-and the life of someone who has left and been shunned. In this case we see more of Kate's childhood than in other books, through flashbacks as Kate remembers childhood conversation and events. The novel also weaves story lines from other Kate novels throughout-her difficult relationship with her family, a family secret that is often alluded to through the series, and her relationship with police officer John Tomasetti. Thomasetti seems to be ready to take the relationship to the next level-surprising Kate in the process. I started this book in the afternoon, and read through until the middle of the night, stopping only to eat. For me personally, this was the best of the series (excepting perhaps the first). For those who care about such things, it's also the least gruesome in terms of description of crime scenes and bodies. With one, and perhaps two cliffhangers (professional and personal), this book definitely left me wanting more of Kate, and I await Linda Castillo's next novel!

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