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Green with Envy (Eco Mystery Trilogy, Book 2 / Nancy Drew: Girl Detective, No. 40)

By Carolyn Keene



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In *Green with Envy*, book two in the *Eco Mystery* trilogy, Nancy continues her investigation into the ecological abuses at the Casa Verde resort in Costa Rica. Everything's not as shiny and clean as it seems, and Nancy must figure out who is dumping pollutants at the resort.

Seeing Green is the stunning conclusion to this smart, three-book case and brings Nancy and company back to River Heights, where they continue to investigate Green Solutions, the shady American company that is defrauding Casa Verde.



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Editorial Review

About the Author

Carolyn Keene is the author of the ever-popular Nancy Drew books.

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Nancy Drew Girl Detective®



NEW QUESTIONS

It's not every day you walk in to find an enormous dead sea turtle bleeding all over the lobby of the resort where you're staying.

"Please calm down, everyone!" Even as he said it, Cristobal Arrojo looked anything but calm himself. And no wonder. A whole group of us had just walked into the lobby of Casa Verde to find the unfortunate turtle splayed in the middle of the floor in a puddle of blood. I stared at it, not wanting to believe what this meant.

"Whoa. This is bad, Nancy, really bad," my friend Bess Marvin murmured in my ear, her blue eyes wide and troubled.

Her cousin and my other best friend, George Fayne, just gulped and nodded. Most people think of Bess and George as polar opposites—Bess is blond and curvy and feminine, with a penchant for pretty dresses and high heels; George is a tomboy who would sooner go naked than give up her jeans and sneakers. The truth is, though, they're both pretty tough and no-nonsense under the surface.

But at the moment, both of them were looking a little green around the gills. The three of us have seen some fairly serious crime scenes—back home in River Heights, people like to call me Nancy Drew, Girl Detective, due to my penchant for amateur sleuthing. But most of said crime scenes don't involve actual death and bloodshed.

However, that wasn't the only reason I was feeling slightly queasy myself at the sight of the dead turtle. See, I'd thought we'd already figured out who was causing trouble at Casa Verde. The beautiful Costa Rican eco-resort, a former coffee plantation that had been refurbished from top to bottom to be a model of green living, had been plagued by trouble since the moment we'd arrived. And not the kind of trouble you'd expect due to the fact that it was the resort's opening week, like malfunctioning faucets or whatever. No, this trouble was more along the lines of vandalized luggage and mysterious threatening notes.

"Do you think Juliana could have done this?" George whispered.

I glanced around to make sure nobody was listening to our conversation. No danger of that. Almost all of the other guests that week were reporters and other members of the press who had been invited to cover Casa Verde's grand opening. Most of them were now milling around shouting questions while Cristobal, who co-owned the resort with his brother, Enrique, continued to do his best to calm everyone down.

“I don’t know,” I said to my friends. “I suppose it’s possible it is Juliana causing trouble again. We already know she was willing to go to great lengths to get back at her uncle. But would she really be stupid enough to pull something like this *after* she’s been outed?”

Juliana was Enrique Arrojo’s daughter. During the first half of our week at Casa Verde, my friends and I had discovered that the Arrojo brothers had a troubled family history. Enrique had fallen in love with and married a woman named Virginia. But Virginia had ended up spending a lot of time with Cristobal, and eventually fell in love with the gregarious older brother. She’d requested an annulment of her marriage to Enrique so she could marry Cristobal, and while Virginia and Cristobal were still blissfully happy, it appeared that Enrique had never really recovered from the betrayal. He remarried, but that relationship had lasted only long enough to produce a daughter, Juliana. At first we’d thought Enrique might be behind the trouble at the resort himself, driven by a desire for revenge, but finally we’d fingered the now-teenage Juliana as the culprit—with the same motive. Could she be behind this latest horrible incident as well?

As I glanced around the room, on the alert for clues, I noticed that eight-year-old Robin Kent was still staring wide-eyed at the turtle. Robin was visiting the resort with her mother, Hildy, a freelance travel writer. The little girl had been the first one to see the dead turtle, and she looked pretty upset.

Somebody else noticed too. “Come, *señorita*,” Cristobal crooned, trying to steer the young girl off in the direction of the dining room. “Let’s get you out of here, hmm?”

“No, it’s okay.” Robin’s voice wavered a little as she shook Cristobal’s hand off her shoulder. She swallowed hard before continuing. “I’m fine now. I was just s-surprised.”

“Are you sure?” Cristobal asked.

“She’ll be all right,” Hildy said firmly. “My daughter is tougher than she looks.”

I smiled at Robin, impressed by the little girl’s bravery. She was certainly acting more mature than some of the others in the room. For instance, Deirdre Shannon and her cousin Kat. Deirdre was someone my friends and I knew from River Heights. Although we’d gone all through school with her, we couldn’t really call her a friend, exactly. Deirdre’s the type of person who requires her friends to worship the ground she walks on. None of us do—and we’re not the types to fake it. So let’s just call her an acquaintance.

In any case, she had won this trip to Casa Verde in a raffle, just like Bess had. While Bess had invited George and me along to share the week, Deirdre had brought her cousin, who lived in California. Kat was nice enough, though much like Deirdre, she rarely talked about anything but herself—her job as an extra in movies, the fancy Hollywood parties she got invited to, the celebrities she’d met. And she never went anywhere without her spoiled Chihuahua, Pretty Boy.

Right now Deirdre was ranting about having her relaxing day ruined by this, while Kat covered Pretty Boy’s eyes with one carefully manicured hand and hugged him fiercely to her chest with the other. “Don’t look, baby!” she cried into the little dog’s ear.

“It’s too horrible for your innocent eyes!”

Pretty Boy wriggled against her grip, seeming kind of annoyed. I wasn’t sure whether that was because of Kat’s current behavior or the ridiculous navy-and-white-striped sailor outfit she’d forced him to wear that day. He let out a series of yaps, then bit Kat on the hand.

“Aw, it’s okay, little guy,” Kat said, stroking him on his bulbous head as his beady eyes followed her movements, clearly waiting for an opportunity to get another nip in. “I know you’re upset. Mommy forgives you, poor baby.”

I stepped away from Kat and Deirdre, trying to hear what some of the others were saying. Alicia Alvarez had stepped closer to the turtle for a better view, looking as upset as everyone else. Alicia was a biologist who served as Casa Verde’s resident groundskeeper and animal outreach expert. Her forehead wrinkled with confusion as she touched the dead animal’s leathery skin.

“*Dios mio*,” she said. “Hold on, everyone. Something doesn’t look quite right here.”

“No kidding,” Deirdre snapped. “You know, in all the times Daddy and Mother and I have stayed at five-star hotels and resorts all over the world, nothing like *this* has happened.”

Cristobal was usually all about customer relations, even when that customer was acting as obnoxious as Deirdre was. But at the moment, he didn’t even seem to hear her comment.

“The sea turtle is an endangered species and a beloved icon here in Costa Rica,” he said sadly. “Who would do such a thing to an innocent creature?”

“Alicia, what do you mean by ‘Something doesn’t look right’?” I asked, carefully keeping my eyes averted from the awful sight. “Can you tell how this turtle was killed?”

“No, but I have some idea about *when* it was killed,” the biologist replied matter-of-factly. “And it wasn’t any time recently.”

Cristobal stepped forward. “What are you talking about?”

“I don’t know where all this blood came from.” Alicia waved a hand at the crimson stains soaking into the carpet and splattered on the walls and furniture. “But it certainly wasn’t from this turtle. See its eyes? They aren’t real—the turtle’s been stuffed. Looks like some time ago too.”

“What are you saying?” Frankie Gillman demanded sharply, clicking forward on her high-heeled sandals.

“This is a fake turtle?”

I cringed, remembering the last time Frankie had started shooting questions at Alicia. While investigating the earlier problems, I’d accidentally let Frankie in on the case. She was a reporter for the *New York Globe*, which she seemed to think made her an expert on solving crimes. But in truth she’d almost blown the whole case when she’d aggressively interviewed Alicia and her rather shy young assistant, Sara Sanchez, all but accusing them of being behind all the trouble.

Fortunately, Alicia didn’t seem to be holding any grudges about that. “No, not a fake,” she told Frankie patiently. “A taxidermy. This leatherback turtle died long ago—perhaps killed before they were protected, or perhaps dying of natural causes. Someone preserved and stuffed its body.”

The resort’s driver, Pedro, had been gazing at the turtle ever since he’d entered with the rest of us. But now his expression cleared. He turned to Cristobal and let out a torrent of rapid-fire Spanish that I couldn’t even begin to follow. I glanced at Bess, who could usually follow along pretty well, thanks to her high school

Spanish classes. But she just shrugged helplessly.

“What?” I asked, glancing from Pedro to Cristobal.

“What is it?”

Alicia spoke before either of the men could. “Of course!” she exclaimed. “I should have recognized it myself.”

“What are you talking about?” Poppy LeVeau demanded. As usual, she looked every inch the fashion magazine writer that she was. Her dark hair was swept into an elegant updo. An expensive-looking sarong was knotted stylishly over the designer bikini she’d worn on that day’s outing, a snorkeling trip to a nearby lagoon.

“Pedro just pointed out that this appears to be the same stuffed turtle that’s been on display for years in a local restaurant down in San Isidro,” Cristobal said, referring to the closest town. “I suppose we should call and see if they are indeed missing this fellow.”

“I’ll do it.” Frankie whipped out a cell phone.

“What’s the place called?”

As Cristobal gave Frankie the information, George moved closer to me. “Guess the *Globe* must be paying her roaming charges, huh?” she whispered, sounding envious as she eyed Frankie’s cell. George was a techno-freak. This trip was really testing her ability to live without her phone, laptop, and other beloved gadgets.

Soon Frankie was snapping her phone shut again. “It’s theirs, all right,” she reported grimly. “Someone broke into the place last night after closing and took it.”

“Wow.” George stared at the turtle, which was close to six feet long and probably weighed somewhere in the vicinity of a ton. “Those were some motivated thieves.”

Aside from Kat talking to Pretty Boy, the room fell silent for a moment. I wasn’t sure whether this latest news made me feel better or worse. On the one hand, it seemed no endangered sea turtles had been harmed in the making of this statement. That was definitely a good thing.

On the other hand, I had no idea what this statement was supposed to be telling us. There was no way Juliana could have moved the huge leatherback on her own. That meant either she had accomplices, or somebody else entirely had done this.

Cristobal sighed loudly. “I’m so sorry for this, er, mishap,” he said, finally seeming to recover his usual smooth, friendly demeanor. “Please, if you’d all like to retire to the pool area, I’ll see that Enrique brings you some refreshing snacks to enjoy while we get things cleaned up in here.”

With that, he hurried over to the phone on the lobby desk and started making calls. The others slowly drifted off, though only Deirdre, Kat, and Pretty Boy actually disappeared through the door leading toward the pool. Frankie hung around in the main part of the lobby, staring thoughtfully at the turtle, while Poppy, Hildy, and Robin chatted over near the dining room doors, all of them looking perplexed.

Meanwhile, another door opened and two people entered. The first was Sarene Neuman, Frankie's friend who'd accompanied her on this trip. Sarene was a writer who had won a National Book Award for a recent nonfiction book about the life cycle of salmon. I wasn't sure why she'd bothered to come to Casa Verde, since she seemed to find many of the resort's activities insufficiently environmentally correct for her tastes. She'd even skipped that day's snorkeling, announcing at breakfast that gawking at exotic sea creatures while potentially damaging the reefs they rely on for life was just as bad as dumping toxic waste down their throats. Or something like that, anyway.

Now Sarene's cool green eyes widened slightly as she took in the sight of the bloody turtle. She immediately headed over to Frankie, and soon the two of them were deep in conversation.

The second person who entered was Sara, Alicia's assistant. "There you are!" Alicia greeted her. "Don't worry, it's not what it looks like. . . ." She switched to Spanish for a moment.

Sara nodded, her gaze sweeping over the turtle and the blood. "I just heard," she said. "Señor Arrojo called the employee lounge, wanting us all to come immediately."

Indeed, several other resort employees soon arrived and got to work scrubbing up the mess on the carpets and walls. Alicia and Sara moved around the turtle itself, carefully cleaning the blood off its shell and body.

My friends and I huddled in a quiet spot behind a potted palm to discuss the situation. "Well?" George said grimly, sweeping a hand through her close-cropped dark hair. "What do we do now?"

"I'm not sure." I bit my lip and looked over at the turtle. "Obviously if Juliana's behind this, she had help."

"Well, we can rule out everyone who was on the snorkeling trip," Bess pointed out. "That includes Cristobal, Alicia, and most of the guests."

"But not Sarene," I said, glancing toward the writer. "Or Poppy's boyfriend, Adam, either."

"True." Bess winced. "That sounded like quite a fight those two had before breakfast this morning."

"Yeah." We'd all heard Poppy and Adam's argument through the dining-room windows. It had sounded pretty bitter, and I don't think anyone was surprised when Adam had begged off the snorkeling trip, claiming he didn't feel well.

George frowned. "Look, what's the point in worrying about everyone else's alibis?" she said. "If Juliana was behind this, she can tell us who helped her."

"But do you really think she'd do something like this?" Bess asked.

"Why wouldn't she?" George countered. "She's the one who snatched that oversize mosquito of Kat's, right? We caught her red-handed."

That was true enough. During an earlier excursion someone had slipped some animal tranquilizer into Pedro the driver's water bottle, which he'd sipped from while he was waiting for us on the bus with Pretty Boy. When we'd returned, the driver had been unconscious and the Chihuahua had vanished. We'd tracked down Pretty Boy a couple of days later in Juliana's private study room, which had been the conclusive evidence that she was our culprit.

“Then there’s the note,” George added.

I’d almost forgotten about that. When we’d first walked in and seen the bloody scene today, we’d also spotted a note sitting on top of the turtle’s shell. In big block letters it had read:

I TOLD YOU TO LOOK DEEPER. HOW MUCH MONEY HAS

CASA VERDE TAKEN FROM THE GOVERNMENT,

ONLY TO HURT WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO

CONSERVE! UNLESS YOU WANT MORE ANIMALS

TO SUFFER LIKE THIS, FIND THE TRUTH!!

The paper and writing seemed identical to several similar notes that had appeared at Casa Verde since our arrival. Now that I remembered this latest note, I started walking over to see if I could take another look. But it was gone.

“I think Frankie grabbed it,” George said, guessing what I was thinking. “But I got a pretty good look before she did. The writing style matches the earlier notes. The stationery, too. So that looks like a big duh to me—it had to be Juliana.”

“But isn’t she supposed to be in school all day today?” Bess said.

Just then there was a murmur from the employees and guests around the lobby. Glancing up, I saw that Enrique Arrojo had just entered carrying a tray of food and drinks. Judging by the expressions on most of the other faces, it seemed my friends and I weren’t the only ones thinking his daughter might be responsible for this latest mischief.

“Listen, I think I’d better talk to Juliana,” I said, hurrying toward a courtesy phone on a bamboo end table nearby. George was right—Juliana did seem like a slam dunk as the culprit for this incident too. But something about the whole situation was bugging me. “If she’s supposed to be in school today, it should be easy enough to check her alibi for the time when this was done.”

“Want me to talk to her?” Bess offered. “I know we were all there when you busted her, but . . .”

“That’s a good idea.” I dialed Juliana’s cell phone number, then handed the phone to Bess. “She might be more likely to talk to you.”

Bess is probably the most diplomatic person I know. She greeted Juliana kindly, asking how she was doing. Within moments the two of them were chatting like old friends.

Unfortunately, George and I could only hear Bess’s side of the conversation, which was kind of frustrating. Bess didn’t mention the turtle, but she did ask if Juliana was in school that day. Actually, she said, “I hope I’m not interrupting one of your classes or anything.”

She paused to listen to whatever Juliana said in response. Her eyebrows lifted a little.

“Oh, really?” she said, glancing at us.

“What?” George muttered.

“Shh!” I warned.

Bess was listening again. She didn’t say much else except for a couple more “Oh, really’s” and some “hmm’s” and “I see’s.” Then she added, “Would you mind if I spoke to her for a second?”

George and I traded a look. Who was “her”? A teacher?

Soon Bess was introducing herself to whomever was on the other end of the line as “a friend of Juliana’s.” “I just wanted to thank you for being so kind,” she added. After listening for another moment, she added, “Well, it certainly sounds like you two made a lot of progress today.”

I tapped my foot impatiently. Luckily, Bess seemed to be winding things down. After a little more small talk she hung up and turned to us.

“That was interesting,” she said.

“What?” George demanded. “Who was that? Was Juliana in school today?”

“Not exactly.” Bess glanced over at Enrique and Cristobal, who were doing their best to shoo the others out of the lobby. “You know how she and her father and uncle have started family counseling over what happened?”

I nodded. “Of course.”

“Well, I guess the counselor got permission to take Juliana out of school to go to some workshop for troubled teens or something like that today.” Bess shrugged. “The workshop started at eight this morning, and just finished up a few minutes ago. Oh, and it was in San Jose.”

My eyes widened. San Jose was over three hours’ drive from Casa Verde.

“Given that the turtle wasn’t here yet when we left the resort at nine,” I said slowly, “I guess that means there’s no way Juliana could have done it.”

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