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The Hidden House Murders: Miss Hart And Miss Hunter Investigate: Book 3



Synopsis

It is 1934. Returning to the West Country after their latest adventure in London, lady's maid Verity Hunter and cook Joan Hart are ready to embrace a quieter life. Their mistress, the glamorous young heiress Dorothy Drew, is attempting to rein in her enthusiasm for too many cocktails and takes up the offer of a place to rest and recuperate from an old family friend, Mrs Ashford. All seems well, until the day after they arrive, when everyone in the house is struck down by what appears to be mushroom poisoning. The deadly dish proves fatal for one unlucky soul. As Verity and Joan begin to delve deeper into the tangled relationships of the Ashford family and their guests, it becomes apparent that too many people have secrets to keep – some of which are worth killing for. The Hidden House Murders is the third book in the historical mystery series, Miss Hart and Miss Hunter Investigate, by crime writer Celina Grace, author of The Kate Redman Mysteries. Praise for the series from and Goodreads reviewers: "Thoroughly enjoyed this read. I've been waiting for this story since the first of the Asharton novellas was published and I am very glad to see more of Joan and Verity. I think they are a great mystery team. Smart and active, but in a believable way. You don't ever wonder how they could do what they do within the confines of their social roles and their "real" jobs are never thrown to the side." "Celina makes her characters someone you care about. I enjoyed this book and I am looking forward to the next book in the series. I would recommend this book to anyone that likes mysteries, especially period mysteries." "I love her writing style. This book does not disappoint. A great mix of mystery, humor and wonderful characters. All in a beautiful Manor. Very enjoyable read." "An intriguing, well written mystery set in the 1930s which will keep you glued until the last page!"

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

(Review first published at Goodreads by myself)Received an ARC for an honest review.To start honest, this kind of mystery might not really be my cup-a-tea: I read Agatha Christie last when I was still reading in German (translation) only, maybe age 10 or 12 (1976, 1978).The book takes place in England, but in the past (20th century), I think, which would prevent me from buying this, as I have long stopped reading most books playing too long ago in the past (with exceptions).But I am paying for this with a review, so I will see how I like this (TANSTAAFL).Well, better than expected. You feel like visiting the UK between the two Word-Wars, I think, cannot exactly pin the time down, as no real indication is given, they have cars, wireless, a telephone in the house with the need to call an operator (could also be before the first WW, but I guess that not many people had a Telephone way back then).Very well done, even though I would have liked more suspense. You get to know how servants work and live their life in a wealthy household in the UK. There is lots of eating and tea-drinking, and even if the female servants-team Hunter / Hart try to solve the crime, work comes first, feeding their household, even the other servants. And, having been in the UK a few time during the 1980's for vacation, I can assist, that they still drink a lot of tea, so that is realistic.The main women are very well described, deeply fleshed out, with the few man mostly described with an outline, but not very deep, only the inspector, which I understand was also in the book(s) before this one is more fleshed out, but not overly so, in comparison to the MC's.The crime and solving is a lot like in the Agatha Christie books I remember from my childhood, with a rounding of all (surviving) people and staging a big reveal. Not really something I would buy today, I am sorry to say. But in exchange for a review, I must admit, it was very well written, with a certain insight in life at that time I did not expect.So recommended 4 stars it is, if you want a lighter mystery, not much blood and I did not guess at any point what really happened. No sex, but that is to be expected, and you get a little romance thrown in, some real and some pretend. Having been in the mood for this certainly helped, else it would be a 3 star/recommended (or would have been, might be or whatever).

[Disclaimer: I received this book as a gift from the author, so it will not show as a verified purchase. As per usual, how I receive such books does not affect how I voluntarily review them.]"I sighed. "I do. It's just so hard to describe it. It's almost as if this is what I'm meant to do. I mean, if fate hadn't meant me to do this, why do I keep getting mixed up in all these strange happenings?" Now Verity did grin. "Don't ask me, Joanie. You're just a magnet for murder!" In this, the third Miss Hart and Miss Hunter book, Verity and Joan are off to another house that has a connection to Dorothy Drew, Verity's boss, who is in need of some time away from the temptations of city life. Joan is hastily hired on as a replacement cook in a bare bones all female staff presided over by Mrs. Ashcroft, an elderly lady who knows everything she needs to, a slightly more. Upset that her adopted daughter seems to have become infatuated with an improper gentleman, she threatens to cut her off should she actually become entwined with him. In the meantime, Dorothy, far from getting the "rest" she needs, becomes infatuated with another houseguest....it just gets so...1934 Joan and Verity get caught up in the case when first one and then two older women die. Because of connections with Inspector Thomas Marks of Scotland Yard in previous mysteries, Joan, more than Verity, keeps wondering if it's more than just accidents, but murder, and with both Tom and Verity to discuss it with, she soon finds that Hidden House doesn't mean you can get away with murder. Recommended.

In this new novel featuring Miss Heart and Miss Hunter, they accompany their mistress to the country where Miss Drew has gone for her "health." Joan is a full-fledged cook this time, as the regular cook at this house is away and Dorothy Drew doesn't want to leave Joan behind in London. The first night everyone becomes ill, supposedly, from food poisoning, but it soon becomes apparent there was nothing in the food to cause the illness. The mistress of the house, Mrs. Ashford, is the most seriously affected, but she is slowly improving. However, the second night Mrs. Ashford is found dead in her room. The question is, was it an accidental fall or murder, as Joan believes? There are several people with possible motives. Because of the difficulties in the case, Inspector Marks, much to Joan's delight, is brought from London to work on solving the crime. Another death (suicide or murder?) occurs, and Joan can't grasp the similarity, hovering just beyond her memory, that reminds her of a similar experience she had with a previous murder. She and Inspector Marks are finally able to solve the murders, even though there is a surprising twist at the

end. This was an intriguing story that keeps the reader engaged and pages turning. The relationships between Joan, Verity and Dorothy Drew are more fully developed. I am a great fan of Celina Grace, both this series and the Kate Redman stories. I highly recommend this book for those who truly seek a good mystery without graphic violence, sex and bad language.

Celina Grace is one of my favorite authors - the Miss Hart and Miss Hunter series is a delightfully suspenseful period series with the two being a cook and a ladies maid. In this book, they go with Verity's lady, Dorothy, to visit a distant relative while Dorothy tries to deal with her drinking problem. It happens that the resident cook is off recovering from an illness, so Joan is asked to come and handle the head cook job. When a dead body is found, Joan strongly suspects murder. She soon finds herself teamed up with Inspector Marks to find the solution. A fast paced whodunit - I loved it

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