



Slay Bells

Kate Kingsbury

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Cecily Sinclair Baxter hosts a holiday party at the Pennyfoot Hotel where the children of Badger's End can meet Father Christmas. Unfortunately, the jolly old man is found dead along with one of his helpers.

The role of St. Nicholas had previously been played by a notorious village drunkard, and the police believe the two men killed each other. But Cecily has her doubts, as the murder weapon was never recovered. And since no one has left the hotel since the crime, she's making a list of suspects-and checking it twice.

Slay Bells Details

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Author : Kate Kingsbury

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From Reader Review Slay Bells for online ebook

Cindy says

I enjoyed this very much. I picked it because it was a Christmas book but I think I will start this series in 2018.

Jackie says

First time reading a Kate Kingsbury mystery, I enjoyed the light fun story taking place in England in 1914 at the Pennyfoot Hotel. The characters were charming which helped to add to the plot lines in the book. Definitely not an intense story, it was an easy and quick read (predictable but still engaging). Another author to hunt for at yard sales!!

Vicki says

I enjoyed it. It was a fun holiday themed cozy mystery with a fun cast of characters.

IslandRiverScribe says

This is a quick read but it falls flat compared to the earlier books in the series. While Kingsbury makes Cecily far more mature and palatable than in earlier works, Baxter is now a cardboard cutout and a stereotype rather than the fully fleshed character he has previously been.

Stereotype or not, Baxter is definitely part of an important secondary and emotional situation. And Gertie gets plenty of emotional airtime also.

For a cozy, the murder and the secondary mystery are not quickly solvable. And the book's title is both a play on words and part of the story. However, this is definitely a book that will be best appreciated if read during the Christmas holidays.

Joy Gerbode says

This was a mildly amusing murder mystery, with enough twists and turns that it was not predictable. However, there were a number of things that were "off" ... moving the body before the inspector was there, keeping things from the local constabulary (though he was obviously kind of dim-witted) ... and a few other things that made this imaginary world not quite work properly. Some of the characters were fun to get to know, and there were enough enjoyable parts of this book.

chrisa says

I really should have liked this book - a mystery set at Christmas combines two of my favorite things, but for me this book just dragged on and on. It was boring the vast majority of the time and most of the characters slightly annoyed me. This is the first book I've read in this series, and it's doubtful that I will read more.

Marigold says

I'm putting this on a Humor shelf because I found it sort of hilarious, though it's a mystery!

I got this book in a roundabout way from a friend who passed away a few years ago. Her husband decided to pass on a lot of her books & some of us were invited over to pick out some. She liked science fiction and formula mysteries like this one; those are not my genres but I grabbed this book, as I do like a silly Christmas-themed mystery from time to time! So I saved the book to read at this holiday.

I didn't realize this was one of a series, but that didn't affect my enjoyment of it. It does refer to some of the past books but if you're just reading this for sheer silliness, that won't matter to you.

This is what Agatha-Christie-meets-Downton-Abbey would be if Downton Abbey were a hotel! The Pennyfoot Hotel is apparently the scene of mayhem on a regular basis, but in this case it revolves around Santa and a mysterious clown/balloon man. There are multiple murders, things get moved around a la poltergeist, & the Christmas entertainment may or may not go on as planned at the hotel!

I actually quite liked the characters though they are pretty formulaic. Spunky woman hotel owner who solves all the crimes? Check. A couple of kookie friends? Check. Handsome husband? Check. Flirtatious doctor and clueless rural detective? Check. Loyal driver/handyman? Check. Housemaid with a heart of gold & brains too? Check. Temperamental cook? Check.

I might even read another in this series, just for fun! But at this season, what's better than a book where characters say things like, "I certainly hope we get the body out of the chimney before the guests arrive for caroling!" Or "...a desperate killer still lurked among them. It put a damper on the festivities, to say the least." Ha!!

Judy says

The last Christmas book of the season--I promise. Cecily Sinclair Baxter owns the Pennyfoot Hotel in Badger's End, England. It's Christmas and chaos is running rampant. A footman breaks his neck as he falls from the roof, the village drunk is found in a Santa suit stabbed and stuffed in the chimney, and a clown "ghost" is running amuck in the hotel. Other than the three dead bodies, I kept expecting Basil Fawlty to come running into the plot yelling at his wife and smacking Manuel. A very thin plot. By the end of the book, I really didn't care who did the killing and wasn't particularly surprised at the outcome.

April says

This was the first Pennyfoot Hotel mystery that I read, but I don't think it'll be the last. I definitely enjoyed the book; the cast of characters was fun, I felt like Kingsbury did a good job with character development throughout the book (at least, for the main 3-4 characters, which is more than most authors focus on), and the mystery was intriguing. I did guess near the end (right before it was "officially" revealed) whodunit, but that was more due to the amount of clues that had been dropped prior to the whodunit being revealed.

Definitely would recommend to anyone who enjoys cozy mysteries. This was one of the best cozy mysteries that I've read in awhile, which I do think was helped along by the fact that this story took place at Christmastime (which happens to be my favorite time of the year).

Christina says

This is the second of the Hotel Pennyfoot holiday mysteries. Kingsbury does a great job of creating a festive, yet mysterious, atmosphere. Who killed Santa before he could get down the chimney at the children's party? How did the library armchairs end up on the lawn in the snow? You can almost smell the goodies baking in the kitchen while Cecily tries to solve the mystery.

Lorraine says

Kate Kingsbury, a descendent of Agatha Christie, writes wonderful cozy mysteries much in the vein of her ancestor. Cecily Sinclair Baxter, the manager of Pennyfoot Hotel, in England during the early 1900's, finds her footman dead from a supposed fall from the roof, but things get further complicated when Father Christmas (who didn't show up for the Christmas party at the hotel) is found dead in the chimney in the library of the hotel. Things go from bad to worse when a ghost suddenly appears to be haunting the hotel along with her husband's mysterious meetings.

This novel has a delightful cast of characters and a storyline that keeps adding layers of mystery.

Drebbles says

Cecily Sinclair Baxter is annoyed when Sid Porter fails to show up at the children's party where he was hired to play Father Christmas. Her annoyance soon turns to horror when it's discovered that one of her footmen fell to his death from the roof where he was apparently helping Sid. Even worse, Sid, dressed in his Father Christmas costume, is found stabbed to death in her chimney. With the Pennyfoot Hotel filled at Christmas, Cecily does her best to keep the deaths quiet but it's not easy to do with a practical joker moving things around the hotel and a clown "ghost" hanging around the hotel. The police are on holiday and Cecily starts investigating the deaths herself. While Cecily is investigating, she is also worried about her husband Baxter's strange behavior and wonders what secrets he is keeping from her.

"Slay Bells" is a nice entry in Kate Kingsbury's delightful Pennyfoot Hotel series. The book is set in England

in 1914 and has a nice old-fashioned feel to it. Kingsbury fills the book not only with the mystery but also with Christmas traditions such as holiday shows with skits and dancers and descriptions of food including blood pudding which makes the time period come alive. All the favorite Pennyfoot characters are there: Cecily, Baxter, Gertie, Mrs. Chubb, Michel, Madeline, the Colonel, and Phoebe are all there. Ex-maid Doris even pays a visit to the Pennyfoot and there's a new maid, Pansy, who figures quite prominently in the story line. There are several plot lines in the book: the murders, the "ghost", the practical jokes, Baxter's secret and Kingsbury neatly ties everything up at the end with quite a few surprises. The actual murder plot line is well done and the identity of the murderer will be a surprise to most readers. As Kingsbury often does in her books, the motive is a sad one that will have readers in some ways feeling sorry for the murderer.

"Slay Bells" is a nice cozy mystery to read.

Susan Ginger says

Kate Kingsbury is one of my favorite current mystery authors. I've enjoyed all the Pennyfoot Hotel Mysteries I've read, and I'm keeping an eye out for the books I'm missing in the series.

Upstatemamma says

This book was really fun to read. It was a murder mystery and followed along the path of most murder mysteries. I haven't read a real murder mystery since I used to read Nancy Drew books as a kid. I loved those. So, I really enjoyed this book. It wasn't overly predictable, but it did not have a surprise ending either.

Denise Spicer says

This 2006 Pennyfoot Hotel mystery series is set at Christmas time. Cecily once again is involved in a mystery. This time a seedy Santa hired to amuse the local children is murdered. With the help of her hubby and their doctor friend, Cecily finally arrives a solution. Engaging and/or eccentric characters include hotel staff as well as friend Madeline the herbalist and Phoebe the giddy socialite.
