



The Christmas Night Murder

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A Christine Bennett Mystery.

A cheerful Christmas party at St. Stephen's Convent is spoiled when the guest of honor, Father Hudson McCormick, fails to arrive. Worried Sister Joseph asks Christine Bennet, a former St. Stephen's nun, to investigate. Now every signpost points Christine into the past -- to a troubled young woman who committed suicide and a once-prominent family that has vanished as mysteriously as Father McCormick himself . . .

The Christmas Night Murder Details

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Author : Lee Harris

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From Reader Review The Christmas Night Murder for online ebook

Grey853 says

Christine Bennett is an ex-nun who is spending her first Christmas as a married woman. She's got no talent for baking since the other nuns did that for the 15 years she was at the convent, so she learns how to make cookies from her Jewish best friend.

When she and her husband go to celebrate Christmas day at St. Stephens, since she still thinks of the nuns as her family, a beloved priest goes missing.

She spends the rest of the novel looking for him.

I liked some parts of the novel, which were about Christine, her husband, and her family, but the mystery itself really wasn't that interesting or plausible.

Ann says

This book had promise. It features an ex-nun who revisits the convent she lived in until she married. A priest she studied under is coming for a Christmas visit from his new parish in Wyoming and Christine is looking forward to seeing him again. The priest disappeared on his way to the convent and Christine is brought in to search for him. Like I said, the book had promise - but then Christine becomes very annoying. She questions people (and they answer her) about things that any reasonable person would tell her to go away. She expects to be allowed into houses to search with no authority to do so. I was very disappointed in the "heroine" of this book. The mystery wasn't bad and the story was well written but please, authors, use situations that might be real.

Corinne says

I liked the story, the characters, and the writing style. The reader, since I listened to the audiobook, was boring, almost monotone, with little expression or different voices for the various characters.

Jan says

I borrowed The Chrismas Night Murder and another book in the same series from the library and returned them both without even cracking the cover of the second novel. I found the book boring and implausible.

Pam Bales says

Christine Bennet, a former nun solves mysteries. A very nice cozy.

Reggie Virus says

I really liked this. I think it would be a good movie.1 and nuns are awesome.

Rebecca says

It is 1994, which is important because the lack of cell phones plays a significant role in this story. Christine Bennett, a former nun at Saint Stephen's convent, is at the convent with her policeman husband for a Christmas celebration. The nuns are expecting a visit from a former priest who had worked with the convent for several years, but he never shows up. Although the police find a few clues, in the end they are unable to find him and don't seem too inclined to try further. Christine, who has investigated murders before, starts digging into the priest's past. As clues come to light about a troubled young novice seven years previously who committed suicide, Christine thinks she has a good lead as to what might have happened--can she find out before it's too late?

I enjoyed this well enough. It was disconcerting before I realized it was set in the early 1990s, because of the complete lack of cell phones and Internet use. Because I personally have used computers and Internet since the 1980s, I thought maybe the book was set in the 1970s! In any case, I thought the setting was well described, and was glad that even though there were a lot of nuns, it wasn't an overly religious book. The main character was okay, though I agree with some other reviewers who found it a bit unbelievable that she felt so entitled to push her way into people's homes and ask questions. In other books with amateur detectives, the detectives usually come up with a cover story of some kind, or they have assistance from friends and relatives, or something. I couldn't figure out why anyone would want to talk to someone with no authority whatsoever. Oh well!

Claudine Suor says

This is a pretty good series, have a couple more on my to read list.

Jerry B says

Pleasant, Easy Reading, Like the whole series, a "4"...

Lee Harris (a pseudonym) must like holidays, as all 14 of her Christine Bennett stories center around special days like Thanksgiving or Father's Day or Labor Day, etc. The stories follow a reasonably predictable pattern in which our early-30's leading lady, Chris, who with only a part-time teaching job to drain her resource of time, gets involved in missing persons or murder cases that either due to the passing of time or some other

form of dis-interest are getting little or no police attention. Chris is a charming character who is new to much of the secular world having been a nun at St. Stephen's for fifteen years, arriving as a young, orphaned teenager. Her occasional naivete and fresh outlook on life adds different perspective to the stories, yet her own sincerity and persistence is usually what leads her to clue after clue til the mystery is solved. When things get tough, Chris is newly married to a NYC police detective, so he can conveniently get her data, trace phone calls, or call in favors to help our informal sleuth make forward progress.

The story at hand arises from a Christmas celebration at St. Stephen's that goes sour when a beloved former resident priest turns up missing at the last minute. The discovery of some of his clothes and his car soon point to foul play, but we get strung along for most of the book as the plot not only takes a few turns, but involves an older mystery (from seven years prior) that in a burst of tidiness gets cleaned up along with our priest by the final chapter. There are a few somewhat implausible parts of the book, like when Chris starts tailing suspects in her car or the inevitable few things people suddenly remember or find (after nearly a decade) and are nice enough to call Chris; but the writing style and action are generally as relaxed as are we as we read these light but entertaining stories.

The characters' lives evolve a little from book to book, so reading them in order might make sense, though it's certainly not necessary. We are also glad to report that the ex-nun angle leads to no Catholic proselytizing; indeed, Chris's best friend Melanie is Jewish, and so far, our author has even resisted what might be some interesting byplay from that scenario. So -- by the fire or at the beach, tough to go far wrong with a nice clean story with Lee Harris & Christine Bennett.

Jean says

Interesting storyline. Focus was the murder and minimal subplots, which I prefer. No love triangles, which I also prefer. It's a unique approach and has its own recipe. It differs from some of the cookie cutter suspense novels. Fresh approach.

Jennifer says

A library recommendation. I enjoyed it

Andrew says

Christine (Chris) Bennet is something of an amateur detective. She lost her parents at fifteen and spent sixteen in St. Stephen's convent before she walked away from being a nun. Afterward, she met Jack; he became her husband a year later.

It has been seven years since Father Hudson McCormick has been at the convent and its church when he transferred to Wyoming. There is a scheduled Christmas get-together, and after Jack's family Christmas, they drive to the convent, where the nuns that she spent sixteen years reside; her chosen family. Father McCormick is invited, calls to update Sister Joseph, the Mother Superior, of his departure time, but he never

arrives. Eventually, it sparks a mystery for Chris and her husband, whom is a cop.

On pg 29, they turned down a Mrs. Pfeiffer's offer for coffee, but on pg 31, they took a walk before lunch with the lady and ended up having coffee. On pg 34, Sister Joseph offers them both a cup of coffee and they accept. MC's husband tells the Mother Superior that cops need at least 'two cups to kickstart their hearts each morning.' If they'd accepted Mrs. Pfeiffer's cup, they'd be on their third. I can only guess that she makes a horrible cuppa.

This is definitely NOT a story for those who are interested in fast paced stories or the majority of crap that gets released today. There were several times that my fiancé and I laughed our butts off. The comedic relief moments were received as intended.

This is a slow story. There are a lot of conversations in this book. Most people I know wouldn't have the patience to read it, sadly; but I thought it was terrific.

I definitely want to read more of this series by Lee Harris. 5 stars.

Denise says

This is the first book I've read by this author. It's a great mystery and because it happens in a convent was a former nun it's a good clean read too. It was suspenseful and had some surprises. I look forward to reading more by this author.

Ed says

#5 in the Christine Bennett series. Christine is a 31 year old former nun who to her own surprise fell in love with and married a NYC police detective only a year after leaving the convent. This is a delightful cozy series. Although she manages to stumble over murders, as is the wont of a cozy protagonist, she is surrounded by very nice people including husband Jack, domestically skilled neighbor Melanie Gross, part-time employer and liberal lawyer Arnold Gold and the convent's General Superior, Sister Joseph. This series is par for the course as a cozy mystery but is elevated by its charm.

Christine Bennett series - It's a snowy Christmas at St. Stephen's Convent, where a cheerful party awaits an old friend and former confessor, Father Hudson McCormick. But he never reaches his destination. Christine Bennett, a former St. Stephen's nun, at the convent for the reunion is asked to investigate the disappearance. But the nuns are mum until an old scandal involving the priest and a St. Stephen's novice rears its ugly head. Has Father McCormick, unable to face the scene of his sins, gone underground? Or has someone taken belated revenge, ensuring that the truth will never be known?

Scott Drake says

A fair story told evenly but nothing really special. This was more like a police detective mystery than a sleuth one. A few things felt unresolved--for instance how did the furnace for in anywhere? Did I miss a sentence?

3 stars because it's a holiday themed mystery, which there are too few of, but might have garnered 4 had there been more clues in the book than revealed right before the solution.
