



Ringing in Murder

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A merry hustle-and-bustle always heralds the holidays at the Pennyfoot. Even as she prepares for the holiday meal, Cecily Sinclair Baxter is also helping her friend Madeline plan her wedding. And this year, Cecily has a cracking surprise for her guests -- Christmas crackers. Once the crackers pop, one lucky guest will discover a beautiful pearl brooch!

But when two crackers go astray, things turn less than jolly. A mysterious fire has broken out in an upstairs room, killing the mood -- and two guests. And at the bottom of it all: one of the missing Christmas crackers. Cecily's dead-set on solving this mystery before another deadly present turns up!

Ringing in Murder Details

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Ann says

Cecily Baxter is busy getting her hotel, the Pennyfoot Country Club, ready for Christmas and then the wedding of her very close friend, Madeline. Suddenly an explosion kills two guests in their room. One of the victims in the Speaker of the House of Lords who is killed along with his wife. Cecily is frantic to keep the holiday schedule on track and to find the culprit. Meanwhile, the staff is terrified when one of the snowmen in the yard begins to walk around. This was a light and fun book and I enjoyed it a lot. Not a very deep mystery but a refreshing read.

Krystal says

England...Christmas...a quaint Bed & Breakfast... this had all the makings of a great mystery. I didn't like it at all. Two reasons - one, I had the mystery 100% figured out less than half-way through the book and then was annoyed as I waited for the main character to figure it out. Two, none of the characters were remotely likeable. They were just not nice - not even to each other.

Gerry says

The festive season is almost upon us and it was almost upon The Pennyfoot Country Club as guests gathered for the annual holiday and festivities.

Owner Cecily Sinclair Baxter decides that she will have some specially made crackers inside one of which will be a pearl necklace as a special surprise for one lucky guest. However, before the crackers get distributed two go missing. Nothing much is thought of the situation until a fire breaks out in one of the bedrooms and two of the guests die. Was it an accident, as the authorities originally thought, or was it murder?

Cecily determines to find out and with the help of her husband, 'Baxter', she unravels the mystery while at the same time assisting her friend Madeline in her wedding preparations.

An Edwardian treat with connotations of 'Upstairs, Downstairs'.

Lorraine says

The Pennyfoot Hotel aka The Pennyfoot Country Club sounds as though it would be a fun place to stay. Cecily Sinclair Baxter, who runs The Pennyfoot, is also assisting her friend, Madeline, with Madeline's New Year's Eve afternoon wedding with the wedding reception taking place all of New Year's Eve. Pretty exciting! Unfortunately, at the beginning of the Christmas Season at The Pennyfoot, two guests were murdered. Cecily desperately wants to solve the murders, but she also desires to give her friend, Madeline a beautiful wedding and reception. I wished to go for this ride to see just how Cecily manages to

complete both these important events. I liked everything about The Pennyfoot: the Christmas activities, the food, the ever loyal staff, the questionable snowman, the caroling! What can I say except a good time was had by almost all, but I did have a good time!!

Julie says

An exploding Christmas cracker kills two guests and a snowman seems to be haunting the Pennyfoot. All in all it's a pretty typical Christmas for Cecily and her staff at the country club. Although this year sees Cecily's closest friend, Madeline, marry the local doctor, which adds to the general festivities of the season.

It's a very light mystery with fairly simple solutions to the questions of the murderer and the ghostly snowman, but I always enjoy reading these at Christmas time.

Kimberly says

This is book 16 in the "Pennyfoot" series by Kate Kingsbury. I myself have not read but one before this book. It was "Shrouds of Holly". I find they do great as stand alone books. In my opinion, you can pick up wherever you like without having to worry too much over character evolution.

Every holiday book in this series has beautiful covers. The stories are just as wonderful. They are a trip back into time. Horse drawn buggies, gas lamps. Chamber pots and just the beginning of indoor Waterloos(bathrooms). Ballrooms, grand staircases, servants quarters, Victorian dresses and ballgowns. A time I simply treasure especially during the Christmas season.

This particular story takes us throughout Christmas Eve and Day, as well as New Years. The main character, Cecilia puts out Christmas crackers on to the long beautiful dressed dining table. Each guest would get a popping cracker and inside only one would be a very expensive pearl brooch. Before anyone can open them, two of the crackers have disappeared, only to reappear as a murder weapon killing two of the highly distinguished guests. A House of Lords gentleman along with his wife.

Its up to Cecilia to find out who has done such an ugly thing, as the constable is away from the town till the first of the year(Go figure that one). Working along side the town doctor as well as Cecilia's husband, they set out to find the perpetrator. Other disturbing and strange occurrences start to arise when one of the servants notice a snowman looking into the window. She sees this many times with no one believing her. Until finally the head servant sees this as well. A walking snowman that leaves footprints in the snow.

I highly recommend any of the Kate Kingsbury novels. They will bring something special to your holiday season as well. These get me into the Christmas spirit!

Christina says

Maybe I'm just not into "cozies" in the mystery genre?

From the beginning of the book, I had a feeling of something missing: there was a lack of description of the main character (physically) that continued to just the barest outline of her (psychologically) and that was an issue with the rest of the characters as well. None of them felt fully realized; they were character sketches that had made the leap into a novel before they were ready. All of that kept me from ever becoming too involved in the plot - which in any case was easily deduced.

Janice says

A new author/series for me - set in Victorian England at the Pennyfoot Hotel and included a wedding, Christmas and New Year's celebrations and a walk-about snowman. The only reason I didn't give it 4 stars was because there weren't enough red herrings and so it was pretty obvious as to the 'who' and 'why' part of the mystery, but I like the story and characters very much and will probably read more in the series.

Grey853 says

The annual Pennyfoot Hotel mystery has exploding Christmas crackers and a phantom snowman that's making everyone a little spooked. To be honest, the secondary story with Gertie and the snowman was more interesting than the murder mystery itself. It seemed to me that the book ended too quickly with a major unresolved situation with the father of Gertie's children. I suppose that will be the major plot point for the next book.

Nancy Bennett says

This one I would actually rate slightly less than a 3 because it was rather predictable. These mysteries are never super complicated, but this time the clues were very easy to figure out really early. Plus, Cecily's illegal activities are getting rather tiresome. The character development is continually shifting to the secondary characters which is okay because they feel like family, but at the same time it still seems like they are underdeveloped.

Susan says

This annual Christmas mystery from Kingsbury is a welcome gift to her many fans. This year, the Pennyfoot Country Club is hosting not only a lavish Christmas through New Year's holiday, but also the wedding of owner Cecily Sinclair Baxter's dear friend Madeline to the local doctor. Madeline's impatient nature, and the doctor's scientific disregard for his fiancee's herbalism, make Cecily worry about the ceremony. But she's more worried about the sudden death of two of her guests, in what seems initially like a gas explosion. She gradually realizes that the deaths are murder. Meanwhile, head housemaid Gertie, already moping because she's sent away the love of her life, is haunted by a moving snowman.

Drebbles says

Christmas is always a special time at the Pennyfoot Hotel, but this Christmas promises to be extra special as Cecily Sinclair Baxter is busily preparing for the wedding of her friend Madeline Pengrath to Doctor Kevin Prestwick. Cecily has her fingers crossed that all will go well since Madeline can be very unpredictable. When Christmas crackers go missing, Cecily is mildly annoyed, but her annoyance turns to horror when two guests are killed in an explosion and fire in one of the rooms at the Pennyfoot. Cecily suspects murder and wants the case solved before someone else is killed and before Madeline and Kevin's wedding is ruined.

"Ringing in Murder" is Kate Kingsbury's latest Pennyfoot Hotel mystery set at Christmastime (the others are No Clue at the Inn (Pennyfoot Hotel Mysteries), Slay Bells (A Special Pennyfoot Hotel Myst), and Shrouds of Holly (A Special Pennyfoot Hotel Myst)). Like the other books in the series this cozy mystery is delightful. All of the familiar characters are here: Cecily and her beloved husband Baxter, Madeline and Kevin, Phoebe Carter-Holmes Fortescue and her eccentric husband Colonel Fortescue, and of course Cecily's household staff - Mrs. Chubb, Gertie, Pansy, and "French" cook Michel. The wedding plot line is a good one and adds some mild suspense to the novel as Madeline and Kevin are at odds with each other over certain beliefs and readers will wonder if the two can make their differences work. The main mystery is well written and plotted, with lots of red herrings, and while Kingsbury leaves subtle clues as to who the killer is, readers will still have a hard time figuring out whodunit. There is a secondary plot involving a snowman which is a bit silly but is also intriguing since it seems to be setting up events in future books.

"Ringing in Murder" is Kate Kingsbury's nicely done holiday gift for her fans.

Alton Motobu says

Between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve during all of the festivities at the Pennyfoot Hotel - parties, shows, and a wedding - two mysteries occur. A guest couple dies from an apparent gas explosion in their room, and a "snowman" appears and disappears inside and outside of the hotel at all hours. Turns out the guests were murdered by a vengeful character from their past, and the snowman was a dad who wanted to see his children after being denied visitation by their mother. After the mysteries are solved it seems like both of the perpetrators had legitimate reasons for their acts; the vengeful character had been cheated out of a lifelong dream by the couple and had never recovered, and the dad missed his kids and wanted to see them during Christmas. But both perpetrators are guilty as charged without sympathy. It seems like a better resolution could have been presented. However, all in all this was one of the better Pennyfoot holiday stories.

Laura Lee says

A great series. I have only read a few but have enjoyed the ones I did. The Pennyfoot Hotel, now a Club, hosts a wedding for the owner's best friend, Madeline. But there is a murder! The book has a lot of humor and was laugh out loud. Gertie the maid steals the book, a walking snowman! Great fun!

Kristi | Hidden Staircase | says

Another fun Pennyfoot Hotel mystery. In general, I am not usually very good at solving a murder mystery, but I figured this one out very early on. For me, it is a delight to follow the adventures and developments of the characters.

Two guests meet a tragic end due to a gas leak in their room. Until Cecily discovers that it wasn't an accident at all. Amid Baxter's usual protests, Cecily is determined to get to the bottom of things. There is also a minor downstairs mystery occurring - a mysterious snowman is spotted in different places on the grounds, sometimes vanishing altogether.

The only complaint I have with this book is the minor inconsistency presented with Gertie's former marriage to Ian. For some reason Kingsbury glosses over this and mis-states the facts presented in prior Pennyfoot books. Otherwise another fun holiday at the Pennyfoot.
