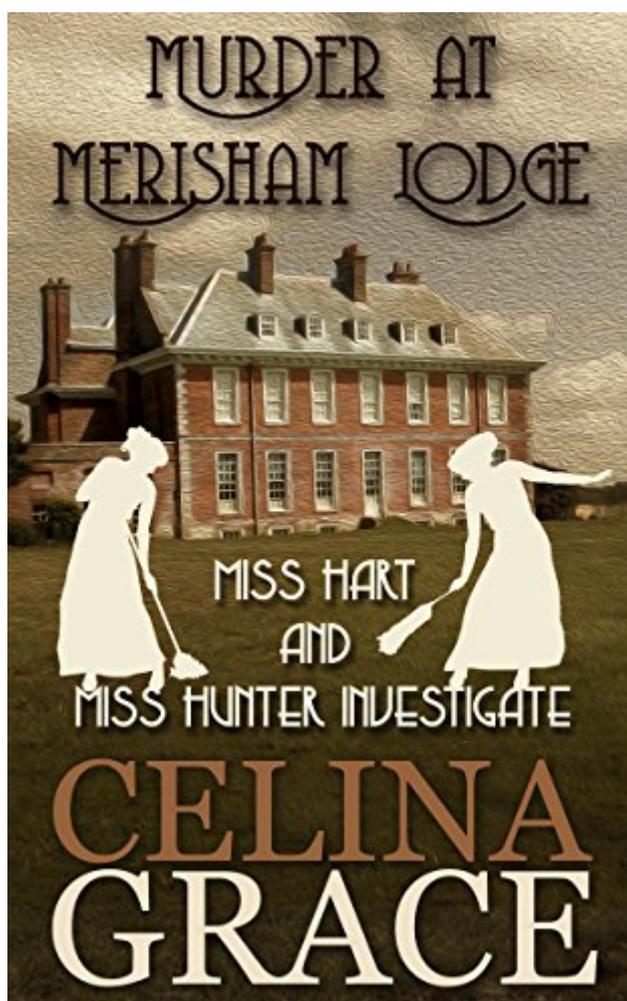


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Murder At Merisham Lodge: Miss Hart And Miss Hunter Investigate: Book 1



Synopsis

A mansion, a title and marriage to a wealthy Lord – Lady Eveline Cartwright has it all. Unfortunately, it's not enough to prevent her being bludgeoned to death one night in the study of Merisham Lodge, the family's country estate in Derbyshire. Suspicion quickly falls on her near-per-do-well son, Peter, but not everyone in the household is convinced of his guilt. Head kitchen maid Joan Hart and lady's maid, Verity Hunter, know that when it comes to a crime, all is not always as it seems. With suspicions and motives thick on the ground, Joan and Verity must use all the wit and courage they possess to expose a deadly murderer who will stop at nothing to achieve their aim.

Murder at Merisham Lodge is the first in a new series of historical mysteries, Miss Hart and Miss Hunter Investigate, set in the 1930s. The author, Celina Grace, is the creator of the bestselling The Kate Redman Mysteries and The Asharton Manor Mysteries, as well as several standalone thrillers. Praise for Celina Grace by 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." "I have read the four Asharton Manor books and enjoyed them all, but the first story that introduced Joan and Verity was my favorite and I am so glad the author wrote another story with the two of them. This time period is very interesting to me and then to throw in a couple murders to solve makes it extra interesting. I hope to read more about Joan, Verity and (maybe Inspector Marks ?) in future books."

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Customer Reviews

I am a Celina Grace fan and was given a free copy of this book for an honest review. I rated this as no violence; even though it is a murder mystery, there is no real violence involved from the reader's perspective. It is a well written novel with interesting characters. Joan works downstairs in the kitchen and her roommate Verity is the lady's maid for the daughter of the murdered woman. There are enough suspects and plot twists to keep you guessing as to who committed the murders. Yes, more than one murder. I am especially looking forward to the next book in this series which will surely involve the development of the relationship between Joan and the policeman. (If you are a Phryne Fisher fan, I picture Joan as Dot and the policeman as Constable Hugh Collins). Celina Grace always produces a very satisfying mystery.

I don't read many period books but I found this a wonderful read. The two main ladies were so much fun to read and I got an insight on how the difference in classes were defined back then. The mystery was good and it was over too quickly. Looking forward to the second book. I did receive a copy of the book for my honest review and would have happily purchased this Kindle edition.

I love this author's way of writing a historical murder mystery. She tells the story like we are living in that time, with just enough information to advance the story, without getting bogged down in a description of how and why taking a cold bath might be the only option for a servant then. We met these characters in the first Asharton Manor Mystery. I am happy they now have a series of their own. The pace of the story is comfortable for reading straight through or for picking up and putting

down on a busy day. I didn't guess all the outcomes! It's pleasant to be surprised by who done it. I'm looking forward to reading more in this series.

Friends who worked together previously at Asharton Manor (another series by Celina Grace which is excellent by the way), Joan Hart (head kitchen maid) and Verity Hunter (lady's maid) have wound up working together again – this time at Merisham Lodge. Soon after Joan's arrival, the mistress of the mansion, Lady Eveline Cartwright, is murdered. There are a few suspects, but chief among them is Peter, Lady Eveline's son from her first marriage. While everyone is shocked about this and can hardly believe it, Joan and Verity actually do something about it by investigating all angles of the crime. There are twists and turns in this story, which made it an excellent read. Although the author provided me with an Advance Reader copy of this book for reviewing/editing purposes before publication, I can assure you that my review is totally unbiased.

The characters are interesting enough and the plot is not overly complicated but done often enough in other books so the murderer(s) and motivations were easily guessed but it is still a well constructed story. What I found boring were the tedious details of everyday in-service work which made the story drag for me. I really don't need to know when the last cup is dried and put back on the shelf or how many tears are shed over peeling onions. There is enough detail in daily activities so that, in my opinion, these extraneous descriptions are unnecessary. That being said it is a light read and would do well for a lazy Sunday.

This is the first book I have read by this author and I will certainly read more. The book is set in 1930 in a country manor where, where a lady's maid and the narrator, the undercook, undertake to solve two mysteries while still dealing with their busy and privacy-free lives as servants to a wealthy British family. The narrative is lively, it gives a good view of the lives of servants at the time, and the mystery while not terribly convoluted is entertaining.

I love historical mysteries and the country house mystery is my favorite. This book was well paced, had a very authentic voice and was a perfect length for me. It was plausible and a fantastic escape. I cannot wait to see what comes next for Miss Hart and Miss Hunter. I received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

I have always loved English mysteries from Sherlock Holmes to Miss Marple. This story is in that

tradition. Not having to stress on the gruesome murders but the clever sleuthing of Miss Hart and Miss Hunter!

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