



Tickled to Death

Joan Hess

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Murder is no laughing matter—especially when it comes to marriage. So before Luanne gets in too deep with her new flame, a dentist named Dick, she'd like her best friend to do a background check. Did Dick murder his two previous wives? That's what Arkansas bookseller and amateur sleuth Claire Malloy intends to discover...

Everything Claire turns up on this would-be blue-beard keeps leading her down a slippery slope. The police are determined to prove Dick guilty of double homicide, but Claire's not so sure. Something about his story just doesn't add up. But if Dick didn't do the deed, who did? The only thing Claire knows for sure is that Luanne won't have a moment's rest until she finds out...

Tickled to Death Details

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Author : Joan Hess

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Lorraine says

Murder is no laughing matter—especially when it comes to marriage. So before Luanne gets in too deep with her new flame, a dentist named Dick, she'd like her best friend to do a background check. Did Dick murder his two previous wives? That's what Arkansas bookseller and amateur sleuth Claire Malloy intends to discover...

Everything Claire turns up on this would-be blue-beard keeps leading her down a slippery slope. The police are determined to prove Dick guilty of double homicide, but Claire's not so sure. Something about his story just doesn't add up. But if Dick didn't do the deed, who did? The only thing Claire knows for sure is that Luanne won't have a moment's rest until she finds out...

Another in the Claire Malloy murder mystery series that is filled with Claire's sharp wit and pithy tongue. The small town of Farberville is one again filled with unique characters who repeatedly cause Claire to get involved when she doesn't intend to do so. Enough twists and turns to make it interesting along with the never ending high jinks of her daughter, Caron, and her best friend Inez.

Rating: 3.5

Deborah says

I have read nearly all of Joan Hess's cozy mysteries about bookseller Claire Malloy and I really enjoy them. Claire owns a bookshop in the town of Farberville, Arkansas - business seems sporadic, which gives Claire time to engage in her amateur sleuthing. All the usual characters are present in this installment: her pouty, overly-dramatic teenage daughter Caron, Caron's best friend Inez, Claire's friend Luanne, and of course Claire's love interest Peter. The romantic relationship seems a bit on the outs in this novel, owing no doubt to Claire's reluctance to make a commitment. But Claire has plenty to keep her busy, as her friend Luanne has gotten involved with a man who's suspected of killing his first two wives - and she wants Claire to prove him innocent!

In addition to the mystery aspect, what I most enjoy is the humour. I find myself laughing out loud numerous times while reading, often because of Claire's somewhat sarcastic attitudes and/or Caron's antics. And although I did manage to figure out some things about who the killer was, there was also a twist that I did not see coming. Even if I had figured out the whole thing, though, it would not have spoiled the book for me because reading it was so much fun.

Rose says

I thoroughly enjoy Joan Hess's Claire Malloy mysteries. They are set in a fictional university town in Arkansas, and Claire runs a bookstore, The Book Depot.

Shirley says

Didn't even finish. Guess just not in the mood. Hess I sometimes enjoy, but just couldn't get into this one.

The Badger says

The Claire Malloy series is a step above a Cozy, mainly because you actually LIKE the characters. Claire is the single mother of Caron, a teenaged daughter who's at the age of speaking in ALL CAPS. Claire is also the proprietor of a bookstore (which she doesn't seem to spend much time in, on account of solving murders and trying to calm Caron down to at least italics). Peter is Claire's detective boyfriend whom she's lucky to have, otherwise she'd spend the majority of her time in a holding cell for interfering with crime scenes.

If you're looking for a mystery series where you actually LIKE the characters (I love Christie, but spent much of my extracurricular time plotting the death of the sanctimonious bitch Ms. Marple), start on the Claire Malloy series. Likewise, if you're wondering whether to have children, pay close attention to Caron. I work with kids and can assure you that all teen girls go through the "I HATE YOU--I NEED A RIDE TO THE MALL" phase. Unless you're saving for boarding school, pay attention.

Sandy Weir says

Given to me by Susan S., I have put it on the bottom of my stack several times in the last 6 months, but picked it up on a whim, as you really can judge a book by its cover (and Susan's cover was not lovely). The first chapter hooked me more from humor than the cozy image advertised. Plus I liked the main characters.. I think I did, anyway. A well planned plot and divided comfortably to make it a good companion for a trip or appointment.

I have already ordered 3 more Clair Mallory titles.

Joann says

I am reading these books as I purchased them at a sale. For some reason I just don't really like the main character Claire. The stories are OK but it's her and I don't like the way she treats people as in her boyfriend. I have 3 more to go but will not finish the series. She really needs to be a better person.

Elaine says

not exactly impressive; didn't particularly like that nearly everyone was involved in one way or another except the person who was suspected or that one character ended up dead more than 2/3 of the way into the book.

Barbara says

Kindle...very distracting while enduring the flu.

Vicki says

Easy to read. Entertaining. Couldn't guess who done it!

Nancy says

Claire is asked by her friend to help prove her boyfriend (Luanne's) did not kill his previous wives. Claire ends up going to a bird sanctuary. Wife #2 is not really dead, but faked her death to escape with money from the bird foundation. The husband of the owner of the bird sanctuary killed a marina worker and wife #2 killed the first wife. Wife #2 is killed when a boat explodes.

Nancy says

Somehow I missed this book when I was reading the Claire Malloy series. It was nice to get reacquainted with Claire, Luanne, Caron and Inez.

Claire (Clairby11xxx) says

(1/10) Admittedly I only read 4 pages but sometimes you just know there is no point in going on, this was definitely a case of it's not you it's me, cozy mysteries aren't my thing.

Pat says

Claire's friend's boyfriend is accused of killing 2 previous wives. Did he or didn't he?
Bird sanctuary.
Good.

Margaret says

The front cover calls this book "seriously hilarious!" but I found it to be more like "mildly amusing". I liked that it's written in first person and the character of Claire has a rather dry, droll, witty style. Thought it had a

rather slow start but enjoyed it more as I stuck with it. I liked the 2 teenagers (Claire's daughter and her friend) and thought that having them lent some realism to the situation.

Mary Newcomb says

Claire Malloy is a good friend whose detective fame has spread to the next county. Called in to clear a friend's new beau of suspicions regarding his wives' deaths (really??), she learns more than anticipated.

Charlene Gordon says

Ok book. Read this in 1998.

Daelith says

This one started out a little slow for me, but at least it picked up. Lots of eccentric characters to keep up with.

David Caldwell says

This is the 9th book in the Claire Malloy mystery series. Claire owns a small bookstore in a college town. Her husband was killed years ago when he was hit by a chicken truck. Her teenage daughter frequently talks in Capital Letters. Her love interest is a detective for the local police and frequently is at odds with her amateur investigations. Her friends are a collection of odd characters who quite often lead Claire into trouble.

This time Luanne Bradshaw, Claire's best friend, is dating a man who is accused of murdering not one wife but two. Luanne wants Claire to prove his innocence, while Claire just wants to make sure Luanne is safe. With a bunch of odd suspects, Claire is not even sure how to prove someone's innocence especially for things months and years in the past.

I have always been attracted to mysteries involving people who are involved with books. This was especially true when I was working in a bookstore myself. I first found the Claire Malloy series in the late 80's or the early 90's. I really liked the series and tried to read all of the ones that I could get into my hands. I was not that much of a fan of the other series by Joan Hess. Truthfully I could not remember if I had read this particular installment or not. Even if I have read it, I figured a decade or so would make it seem new to me.

One problem I always had with Claire (and most amateur sleuths) is their efforts to not involve the police. These efforts include even lying, or at least omitting things, when talking to the police. This time Claire seemed to be hypocritical, hypercritical, and antagonistic. She insulted almost every person and place she came into contact with. Often complaining about things that others did that she did herself. She seemed to go out of her way to disagree with everyone. I am not sure if Claire was just worse this time or

if my time away from the series changed my attitude towards her behavior. While her actions could be taken as sarcastic and witty, it just came off as rude to me.

Frequently in mysteries, readers are surprised with new characters in the last few pages. This book didn't introduce new characters but it did introduce new mysteries. So yet again, the not-so-innocent do most of the amateur sleuth's work by basically confessing everything just because the sleuth has asked a bunch of bumbling questions.

This story is starting to show a little age. It was written in 1994. Therefore cell phones were not that common yet. If Claire had had one, she would have been saved so much trouble (or Joan Hess would have had to come up with reasons why it didn't work). It also seemed very strange that Claire's daughter, Caron, was facing the problem of having to pay almost \$180 for driver's ed. Personally, I have never heard of a place that did not require driver's ed for 16 year olds or a high school that charged for it (especially that much in that time). It just seemed to be a fairly obvious way to get Caron (and Claire) to the scene of the crime.

Strangely enough, even with all of these problems, I still enjoyed the book for the most part. Perhaps it was just nostalgia.

Jenn Flynn-Shon says

At times I felt the Author forced the characters to jump around (thought there were still inside but they end up on a deck or something) but overall an entertaining read. Fast paced and light characters that were easy to follow even though the cast was large.
