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Christmas Caramel Murder (A Hannah Swensen Mystery)



Synopsis

Christmas normally descends on Lake Eden, Minnesota, as gently as reindeer alighting on a rooftop—but this yuletide season the only thing coming down Hannah Swensen's chimney is a case of murder . . .

— The holidays have arrived, and Hannah and her good pal Lisa have agreed to provide all the goodies for the town's annual production of *A Christmas Carol*. But before anyone can say "Bah, humbug!" a Santa-sized sackful of trouble ensues. Like the fact that Lisa's husband will be playing Mr. Claus to his ex-girlfriend Phyllis Bates' Mrs. Claus. Or that before the curtains even go up Phyllis is found dead in the snow—wearing a costume that the real Mrs. Claus would put on the naughty list. Soon after the suspects pile up faster than snowdrifts in a blizzard, while a merry murderer remains on the loose. With clues even harder to find, it might take a visit from ghosts of Christmas past to wrap up this mystery in time for the holidays . . .

— Includes a Dozen Holiday Recipes from The Cookie Jar!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have read all of the novels in author Joanne Fluke's Hannah Swenson's mystery series to date. I was attracted to these "cozy mysteries" because they were light reads that included recipes (the

main character, Hannah, owns a cookie shop), and I've actually made many of the recipes from the books over the years. Unfortunately, the last several installments have deteriorated in terms of quality--yet so far, I've hung in there and continued to read. This latest book is shorter, at just over 200 pages. Because it is a Christmas novel, it isn't really sequential with the other books, although it does open with Hannah and Ross, a character who has appeared in the last few novels. (I won't say more about the status of their relationship in case some readers haven't yet heard about Wedding Cake Murder, the last book published prior to this one.) It is actually Halloween at the start of CHRISTMAS CARAMEL MURDER, but Hannah tells a story that is a flashback to the previous Christmas, when she found yet another dead body. The story itself is okay. It is fairly engaging (I read the book in just a few hours), and there are a few twists. The murderer is a somewhat unlikely surprise, but also someone who was oddly projected by Fluke. At this point, Fluke's writing style feels not just familiar but stale. She uses so many of the same phrases, same plot devices, same setups, etc. Readers just are not getting much new here anymore. The recipes--just ten of them--are marginally better than last time. At least they are mostly for sweets/desserts rather than meals, but a lot of them seem pretty unoriginal (e.g.

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