



Scots on the Rocks

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When Judith and her cousin Renie go on vacation in a remote and possibly haunted Scottish castle owned by a rich whiskey distillery baron strange things start occurring. They meet Harry Gibbs, a dissolute young man who is estranged from his wife and is found smothered to death shortly after Judith and Renie arrive. His widow, Moira, is suspect No. 1, of course, but there are plenty to go around since Harry was a real jerk and wanted to run the petrol company Moira inherited from dear old dad. Suspects include Moira's bastard half-brother, Blackwell Petroleum's sleazy CEO, the wily comptroller, an even wilier corporate attorney, the whisky baron, Moira's former mother-in-law who mixes delicious jams along with her not-so-delicious poisons, Moira's apparent lover, and, last but not least, Chuckie, the dwarfish epileptic who runs around castle. There's a ghost, some goofy villagers, and enough suspects to overwhelm any police force, but no challenge is too daunting for the cousins.

Scots on the Rocks Details

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Author : Mary Daheim

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From Reader Review Scots on the Rocks for online ebook

Mascanol says

I thoroughly enjoy the antics of the cousins featured in the Bed and Breakfast Mystery series. This story takes them to a castle in Scotland where the local police think they are CIA and willing draw them into the investigation of several gruesome deaths. With Judith's curiosity urging them on they find themselves in the thick of things...not just highland mist!

Amanda K says

A fun cozy mystery, and I love the setting, but the many characters were difficult to keep track of in the (overly?) complicated plot.

Jenn says

Judith and Renie are at it again, once again abandoning their aging mothers, jobs and husbands to go on a murder mystery weekend on the emerald isle. The characters are hard to keep track of, but as with the rest of the series you can't help but to root for the cousins in crime solving.

Emma says

This is my first time reading any of Daheim's books, and I have to say that I was disappointed. I needed summer/beach reading material and was intrigued by a Scotland based murder mystery, so I chose this. I was excited at the beginning, then bored in the middle and confused at the end. The middle dragged on because there seemed to be no end of plot twists and new things to add to the story, and at some points I said to myself, "Alright. I get that everyone knows each other. So whodunnit?" And at the end, I guess I never really understood "whodunnit", or why. There were too many characters to keep track of and I had to keep reminding myself who each one was. Some scenarios did not seem likely, such as the fiascos Renie gets herself into. Judith, the main character, seemed too sensible and kindhearted for a person that apparently has lots of murders happen on her doorstep.

Other than that... I really enjoyed the setting and some of the descriptions of Scotland. It made me want to travel there... Just not with Judith or Renie.

I would recommend this for people who are bored at the cottage or stuck indoors on a snowy/rainy day. I am a pretty fast reader, and read it in two days, so it is an okay length. However, like I said, the middle drags a bit.

Despite all my cynicism, I will check out more of Daheim's novels simply because I have heard better things about them.

2/5 stars

Julaine says

Probably the dork in me that enjoys these mysteries. I just find them amusing in a "Murder She Wrote" sort of way.

Diana says

I picked this up because I like what are often called "tea cosies" mysteries, I liked the play of words in the title (and others in the series), and I read lots of great reviews about this series from Amazon readers. I was quite disappointed, however. I found the main characters Judith and her cousin Renie quite irritating, especially Renie. The story also didn't hold much interest for me, and I found the writing style frustrating as well - I am not a fan of writers who overuse exclamation points, and who use too many active verbs for describing how their characters "jump" into something or "race" down the hall, etc.

I finished the book only because I wanted to see what happened in the end (and it was all a twisted mess, really), and because I have an unwritten vow with myself to always finish a book I've started.

The experience with this book will likely not lead me to check out any of the others in the series.

The Badger says

I have an affinity for cozy mysteries. They generally aren't written in pursuit of a spot on the bestseller list; rather, cozies are written to give the reader a sense of comfort and calm (ironically, by way of murder).

My mom read cozies to escape her three eccentric young daughters and grumpy husband: one daughter, the artist, painted five-foot tall green flowers on the side of the freshly painted rental when she was four; the adventurous daughter asked which way north was, and was found by neighbors five hours later walking up the beach, wearing a backpack, in pursuit of Santa in the North Pole (we lived on an island--she wasn't the brightest of the three of us); and the oldest daughter (that would be I) caused her first-year kindergarten teacher to quit by demanding that all classroom toy soldiers and toy weapons be removed from the classroom so that her classmates would not become violent adults, and that the teacher immediately stop smoking on her breaks because she would surely die of lung cancer. As to my mother's husband, he had some strange notion that feeding 40 stray cats, a stray goat, a duck, and 4 turtles (not stray) out of a 2-bedroom apartment was odd. He also became irrationally upset when the cat gave birth in his shoe. So you see, for my mother, it was either read a cozy or drink (or possibly dispose of the children and husband).

Years later, when my grandmother came to live with us (bigger house, different country, revolving pet door, dad retired and usually lost in Best Buy, girls now goth, theater geek, and raver) we slowly replaced her true crime books with cozies in order to keep her from roaming the house at night after taking her pain pills, looking for the Son of Sam whilst armed with a shoe horn.

And all this is how I came to read cozies myself, because they were always there to help me escape my crazy

family, you could carry on a screaming match with a sibling and not miss much in the book, and thanks to grandma's Dahmer intervention, there were always a shitload in the house. (Serious reading was done away from the insane people.) I have an affinity for cozy mysteries. They generally aren't written in pursuit of a spot on the bestseller list; rather, cozies are written to give the reader a sense of comfort and calm (ironically, by way of murder).

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Sue says

In this 23rd in the Bed-and-Breakfast series, cousins Judith Flynn and Renie Jones travel to a small village in Scotland, St. Fergna, for a well-deserved vacation with their husbands, staying at an old, restored castle. Their husbands promptly leave them to go fishing with Scotland Yard detective Hugh MacGowan. After the men leave, the grandson of the castle's caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. Gibbs, dies in a fiery explosion, with his young wife the chief suspect, although there are numerous others who disliked Harry Gibbs. Judith, never one to let anyone get away with murder, decides she must find the killer; so with Renie's reluctant assistance, she begins interviewing the suspects to piece together what happened. While Daheim does a good job describing the setting, and the cousins are well-developed characters, especially the feisty Renie, the other characters are not so well delineated and are too numerous and are often difficult to keep straight. The local police department's willingness to accept the cousins' help also doesn't ring true.

Mirrani says

The mystery has center stage for this book, which takes place in Scotland, at a Castle that has been somewhat turned into a Bed and Breakfast. I have to say that I didn't quite see how the setup was all that believable.

One family owns the castle, the previous owners work for him, there's a company in town causing all kinds of mischief with a wife not devoted to her husband and all sorts. You name it, this book has it, including a hamster that rides around in the back of a pizza delivery guy's car all day. (If this were reality, I'd be calling the authorities on that one.) Plenty of mysterious things happening, plenty of places to point fingers when murder is mentioned in several places, but the whole thing seems almost too complex while the characters seem to have been lost in the shuffle.

I am not certain if the exchanges between the cousins were meant to be amusing, frustrating or otherwise engaging, but I found them somewhat staged at times and a complete turn around at others, when the totally random nature of one of the women seemed to make her the least likable person on the planet. I find it hard to believe that the mystery solving cousin can put up with her rude counterpart. Even if I had grown up with my own cousin and was as close to her as these two are, I would not have let her get away with all that was going on here, in fact, I would probably have tried to prevent her from making the same remarks and ending up in the same situations, for her own sake.

This is one of those murder mystery books that you don't read because you're expecting to be wowed, but because you're looking to engage your brain while killing a few hours of your day. It's an interesting mystery, if complex, and its location makes it somewhat unique, but don't pick it up if you're a reader who wants something with depth in the character or location of a story. Visuals and even some of the characters (who just disappear for most of the book, brushed off like a piece of straw from someone's shoulder) are left for your imagination to come up with.

Helen says

Like a visit back with old friends. I love this series. This time, Judith, the Seattle B&B owner is on holiday in Scotland with scatty cousin Renie, stuck in a castle while their husbands go fishing. Of course they find a body, and the usual mayhem ensues. While the accents have changed, the weather remains like home, and for once the police want their help.

Shannon Pierce says

While I very much enjoy a cozy mystery, this fell short in my opinion. I had heard good things about this author's style and I was terribly disappointed. I tried for two weeks to read past the fifth chapter and the author not only repeated herself, but contradicted herself several times. Enough times that I donated the book to the library AND apologized for doing so.

Cozy mysteries can sometimes be formulaic in nature, but we enjoy them for the fun characters, cozy settings, and general "who did it" theme. Recipes, tea-time hints, etc often help sell the books as well.

This book had a cynical who complained about her hip CONTINUOUSLY, too many contradictions to count, and a plot that just fell flat. Even a place as pretty as Scotland sounded rather drab.

George says

#23 in the Judith McMonigle Flynn bed and breakfast operator mystery series. Judith, her loud mouthed hot tempered cousin Renie and their husbands go on vacation in a remote and possibly haunted Scottish castle. While the husbands go off fishing, Judith & Renie find themselves in the middle of a heated intra business and family plot for control of a oil company that also involves the owners of a shipping company and whiskey distillery which results in murders. As usual in this series, it is Judith who manages to fit all the pieces together and help the police solve the mystery. However, along the way, the antics of Renie and Judith's efforts more resemble a Keystone cops comedy than a serious mystery.

Jody McGrath says

The husband's plan a vacation and Judith and Renie find themselves staying in a castle in a small Scottish village. While the husband's take off fishing, the ladies are left to their own devices. When there is an explosion on the beach by the castle, and the grandson of the caretakers is found dead, Judith can't help but investigate. Everyone knows everyone in a small village, but who do people not know is a killer?

This was a good addition to the Bed and Breakfast series. I think it is book #23. I think Renie is just so funny. I know she is kind of rude, but her antics are hilarious. Judith is her normal social, nosy self and drags Renie along. It is nice to see them away from home again. It brings a new flavor to the books. I definitely recommend this book and this series if you haven't read it.

Cassie says

Very cute cozy mystery. I liked the setting, and most of the characters. The story moved along quickly enough too. Although I have to second (or third or fourth or fifth, etc.) the comment about how annoying the cousin (Renie) is. Not only annoying, but representative of one of the most dreadful American stereotypes of ignorance and rudeness. Even if it (mostly) balances out in the end, her behavior is atrocious to the point of not being funny after 1/4 of the book. Furthermore, I can't say that I bought the conclusion or how it came out, but I don't read these kinds of books for a great plot. I don't know that I'd read another one of Mrs. Daheim's books, but it was enjoyable enough to warrant 3 stars.

Betty says

What happens when you give your husband a criteria for your long-awaited vacation and let him pick the location? Well, that is what happens when Judith and her irascible cousin Renie dream of a vacation by a beach where they can get some much needed rest, and their husbands can go fishing. It is February in the Pacific Northwest and they have warmth and sun in their minds. Where do they end up, but on an island with a beach, good fishing, and in a castle in Northern Scotland!

The girls are literally dumped at the island & left on their own as their husbands go off for a day of fishing that turns into a week or more. Fortunately for them, the water between the island and the mainland is very shallow and twice a day at low tide the sand can be driven or walked on. That turns out to be a blessing

because Judith's husband has kept the destination a secret from her and she has arrived with only lightweight clothing. Of course, wherever Judith McGonigle Flynn goes trouble follows and soon this B&B owner finds herself wrapped up in murder and mayhem. In this book, a large cast of well-fleshed characters are involved in greed, conspiracy, jealousy, misplaced anger and more. Family bloodlines contribute to the mix.

This is number 23 in Mary Daheim's Hillside Manor Bed & Breakfast series . The characters remain true and age appropriately. Her series is light and fun, even with Judith's statement to Renie "You get worse as you get older. You age, but you don't act it." The opposite personalities play well off each other and the series has a large following. I recommend any of her books for a light entertaining read. Daheim also has a second series based in the town of Alpine in the Pacific Northwest featuring Emma Lord - Editor/Publisher of the The Alpine Advocate.
