



The Curse of Arundel Hall

J. New

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One ghost, one murder, one hundred years apart. But are they connected?

Ella has discovered a secret room in The Yellow Cottage, but with it comes a ghost. Who was she? And how did she die? Ella needs to find the answers before either of them can find peace. But suddenly things take a nasty turn for the worse.

Ella Bridges has been living on Linhay Island for several months but still hasn't discovered the identity of her ghostly guest. Deciding to research the history of her cottage for clues she finds it is connected to Arundel Hall, the large Manor House on the bluff, and when an invitation to dinner arrives realises it is the perfect opportunity to discover more.

However the evening takes a shocking turn when one of their party is murdered. Is The Curse of Arundel Hall once again rearing its ugly head, or is there a simpler explanation?

Ella suddenly finds herself involved in two mysteries at once, and again joins forces with Scotland Yard's Police Commissioner to try and catch a killer. But will they succeed?

The Curse of Arundel Hall Details

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From Reader Review The Curse of Arundel Hall for online ebook

Cathy Ryan says

4.5*

The ghost residing in the secret dining room beyond the pantry was causing Ella some problems in that Mrs Shaw, the housekeeper-cum-cook, refused to enter the pantry. Ella's temporary solution was to move the food stuff into the kitchen proper, but she was determined to try and solve the mystery of who the woman had been and how she died. Ella decided she needed to visit her friend, Harriet, a local historian, to see if she could research The Yellow Cottage and shed any light on who the mysterious spirit was. Harriet is the founder of the local library and that's where Ella finds her. It seems Harriet had found a connection between the cottage and Arundel Hall, now owned by Harriet's old friend, Sir Robert Harlow. Harriet discovered that Ella's cottage was once The Dower House belonging to the Hall.

As Ella begins to unravel the mystery of her resident ghost she discovers solid links between the cottage and the Hall, as well as how the ghost woman died. Invited to the Hall for Robert's engagement party to a much younger woman, the celebration comes to an abrupt end when the body of one of the guests is discovered.

Paying homage to the classic/murder mystery of the period, it reminded me a little of Miss Marple except that Ella is much younger and her input in the investigation is welcomed by Scotland Yard. The author has written a story which includes all the elements needed, and included a paranormal twist which, for me, gives it an added extra. The gathering of the characters for a social occasion, in this instance including the local doctor and a friend of the newly engaged Patty Mae, as well as Ella, Harriet and Sir Robert. Any of the assembled party, or even the butler, could be responsible for the murder. Or is it the curse of Arundel Hall?

Ella has two mysteries to solve and I enjoyed the processes of both. The plot is well crafted with believable characters, appropriate language and dialogue and descriptive prose. The atmosphere of the era is brought to life. There are plenty of twists, an ending I didn't expect and a surprising discovery at the very end. A very entertaining read.

I chose to read and review The Curse of Arundel Hall based on a copy of the book supplied by the author/publisher.

Carmen Amato says

Ella is a young widow in 1930's England, living companionably with a female ghost in the cellar and a roaming spectral cat named Phantom. As she looks for clues to the identity of the ghost, a wealthy neighbor's gold-digging fiancé is murdered after a dinner party. Ella helps out the local police and ends up assisting Scotland Yard because of her ability to draw out secrets from reluctant witnesses. Both the style and subject matter reminded me of the Lady Molly of Scotland Yard stories by Baroness Orczy, creator of The Scarlett Pimpernel, albeit with a supernatural edge and some nice romantic anticipation.

Patricia Feinberg Stoner says

If you like a good mystery story with a bit of spookery thrown in, this book is a treat. Isobella lives in a 'cottage' – actually a former dower house - complete with hidden rooms, spectral ladies, a crumbling skeleton and a ghost cat. The nearby Arundel Hall has a murky past – what exactly happened to the wife of the eleventh duke? Could it be her unquiet spirit that haunts the dower house? And just as Ella closes in on the secret there is a murder, followed by not one but two shocking twists.

This is a real page-turner, and although I had an inkling who the murderer might be, I certainly wasn't prepared for the revelation on the very last page. J New has cunningly set and baited her hook – and I for one will be snapping at the next book as soon as it comes out. A thumping good read!

Elizabeth Lloyd says

Although this is not the first of the Yellow Cottage cosy mysteries, Chapter One introduces the heroine, Ella, and explains why, as an intelligent 24 year old widow, she is living on the island of Linhay needing to occupy her life with a challenge.

Set in the 1930s, there are parallels with the investigations of Miss Marple, but in Ella's case her help is welcomed by Sir Albert Montisford, Police Commissioner at Scotland Yard. In addition to the usual cast of suspects, the local Lord, a spurned spinster, a handsome doctor and a disreputable bachelor, Ella has a phantom cat and sees ghosts others are unaware of. New developments in police methods such as finger-printing are explained and the local village provides a range of interesting characters.

At first the story moves rather slowly as Ella researches the history of Arundel Hall and why it is cursed. I felt Phantom the cat should have had a more active part in the story and I kept trying to locate the island of Linhay, which was such a short drive or train ride from Scotland Yard. Once the murder had occurred, the pace increased and the reader is presented with several possibilities for the culprit.

For me the most interesting part are the questions raised towards the end of the book. What is the mysterious background of Ella's housekeeper and who is the person who telephones Yellow Cottage filling Ella with dismay? Definitely an invitation to read the next book. If you like a light read in the style of Agatha Christie or *Midsummer Murders* you will enjoy this novel.

Three and a half stars

Parker Cole says

I really enjoyed this book J. New. It was my very first cozy mystery and to be introduced to the genre this way was treat. I particularly loved the voice of the narrator. Although she is an English woman in the past, I found myself able to relate to her. Her dialogue is calming, slow, and deliberate. The way the story unfolded and the mystery was a natural thing. You get the idea she's involved in the story and not just narrating it. I liked that a lot.

I did figure out who the killer was but the second guessing was great because I didn't know if my guess was right. So it was very good. Great job

Grace J Reviewerlady says

Having read and been thoroughly entertained by the first book in Jacquie New's mystery series, I've really been looking forward to getting stuck into this follow-up. My expectations were not only met but exceeded in this tremendously exciting period mystery.

The first book was complete in its tale but left a tease to carry on in book two. Not one but TWO murders are investigated in this novel, both completely different types of killings, with plenty of twists and turns as Ella and Albert (and the reader) work it all out. The introduction of new characters brings plenty of life and I absolutely adored the inclusion of language such as 'posit' and 'perchance' which would have been heard daily at the time the book is set in.

Period murder mysteries are my 'go to' comfort reads and this is one of the highest calibre. Again, a little hint of what the next book holds is given on the last few pages, and I can't wait! Don't stop reading at the end of the novel as the author's bio is also well written and will make you smile.

I couldn't give a higher recommendation to this novel ... not to be missed!

I received an arc from the publisher.

Angela Petch says

The author gifted me this book and it is a new genre for me: a blend of Agatha Christie, Midsomer Murders, Sherlock Holmes and Downton Abbey. I found the array of colourful characters very interesting and liked the feisty heroine, Ella. No spoilers, but she has the unusual talent of paranormal investigator which allows for unusual plots and incidents. There is everything you would wish for in this story for an escapist read: a curse that lingers round an ancient, aristocratic hall, secret passageways, bodies but not too much gore, a hint of passion, eccentric characters, sumptuous meals and dinner parties, a handsome doctor. I found it hard to pinpoint the exact era of the story - it felt Edwardian or late Victorian to me, when in fact I think it is supposed to occur in the early 1930's. Nevertheless, it kept me entertained...and guessing...for a few pleasurable hours. The various tangles of red herrings and clues were cleverly exposed and the ending is also a tease...you will want to read the sequel.

ChillwithabookAWARD With says

The Curse of Arundel Hall by J New has received a Chill with a Book Readers' Award.
www.chillwithabook.com

"Well written with characters that are believable giving the reader a glimpse into how life probably was in such wealthy households of a bygone era."

"An enjoyable read and would not hesitate to read more from this author."

"It's not exactly Agatha Christie, but very readable with a good plot and strong characters, I rather enjoyed it."

Pauline Barclay
Founder of Chill with a Book Awards

N.A. Granger says

The Curse of Arundel Hall is a cozy, the second in the Yellow Cottage Vintage Mystery series. There is a lot to like about this book, but it does have its drawbacks.

Ella, following the death of her husband is given the strong suggestion by his boss, the British Home Secretary, that she forget about him and move away. She has decided to live on Linhay Island and take up residence in a refurbished cottage that was once a part of the Arundel Hall estate. There is a ghost living in a secret dining room that Ella discovers behind the kitchen, and she visits her friend, Harriet, the local librarian to find out more about her cottage and its history in relation to Arundel Hall. Her friend tells her a curse was placed on the hall by its first owner. Ella discovers a secret stairway from the hidden dining room to the cottage's upper floors, and a centuries-old skeleton of a woman at the bottom of the stairs. The skeleton gives evidence she was murdered. Ella is invited to the manor hall for a celebration dinner of the engagement of the elderly owner to a much younger woman who claims to have been a stage actress. The evening takes a shocking turn when one member of the dinner party is murdered. Ella again joins forces with Scotland Yard's Police Commissioner, her uncle, to find and catch the killer(s).

The author creates a colorful world in Linhay Island, with wonderful, well-drawn characters, and after I got into the book, I found it very entertaining. Her descriptions convey the life on an island, the charm of Ella's cottage and the menace and gloom of Arundel Hall exceedingly well.

The main problem I encountered derives from the fact I hadn't read the first book. I had no idea that Ella could really see ghosts and that Phantom, which I thought was her cat, was also a ghost. This was compounded by a substantial first chapter going into great detail – although beautifully written -- about Ella's childhood. I had to wait until midway through the second chapter to be introduced to the woman's ghost. I also did not realize the era of the mystery until I took a close look at the stylish cover. More confusion derived from Ella's traveling back and forth from the city to Linhay Island by car and train. Was there a bridge or a ferry?

Finally, the book needs the hand of a copy editor. There were a sufficient number of errors to detract from the enjoyment I derived from the book.

Now that I have become acquainted with Ella and her abilities, and despite the shortcomings, I do look forward to Ms. New's next book in this series.

Patrick Hodges says

It was once a staple back in the days of literary yore to have mystery stories take place in a giant mansion with a sordid history, where people of highbrow nobility and lowbrow roguishness would congregate for a soiree of some sort, only to have one of them be brutally murdered. Then the detective/inspector would arrive, and on the last page, he would gather all the suspects in the drawing room and announce who the murderer was. (I can't help but wonder, in all the books that fit this description, how many times the butler ACTUALLY did it, thus giving birth to the cliché.)

The Curse of Arundel Hall pays homage to these stories, but with a few added twists. Ella Bridges is not only a terrific amateur sleuth, but she can see ghosts (including her spectral cat, Phantom). She's just getting used to her life in the idyllic Yellow Cottage, making friends with the locals, when things take a turn for the dramatic. A century-old skeleton found in Arundel Hall seems to bear out the curse that seems to hang over the place, and when an engagement party ends up with the bride-to-be dead, Ella must spring into action.

This was a fun read. I loved Ms. New's wonderful use of vocabulary (like "maquillage" and "epergne") and the characters were well-realized and believable, not to mention appropriate for the time period the story takes place in (1920's England). I look forward to more books in the series!

Barb Taub says

When I received a review copy *The Curse of Arundel Hall*, I noticed that it was the second book in the Yellow Cottage Vintage Mystery series. So I wrote to author J. New and asked if it was a stand alone or if I should first read Book 1, *An Accidental Murder*. She replied that while it works as a standalone, she thought it might help my review to read the first book as well, and sent a review copy along too. She was right.

I started reading and went back in time. But it wasn't to the mid-1930s setting of the Yellow Cottage series, which TV Tropes calls Genteel Interbellum Setting—that vaguely between-World-Wars era of women in furs and cocktail dresses, men in dinner jackets, country houses and estates, and sophisticated banter. No, I was once again a 10-year-old, home from school with strep throat and sequestered in my parents' bedroom to keep my germ-ridden self away from my siblings. Since my Irish-Catholic mother had already produced six of those siblings—with another on the way—that meant she stashed me in her room with the side-by-side twin beds in approved fifties ain't-no-sex-goin-on-here-nohow culture. (As their child-production count eventually topped out at ten, I never really quite got the point of those twin beds. Once, when I asked her, my mother said I should just be glad I didn't have twice as many siblings. I said if that was the case, she should have thought about moving that other twin bed to a different room. In another state...)

But I digress. The point (of course I have one—I'm a professional writer. Don't try this at home...) is that her bed had a bookshelf headboard which held her latest mystery books, currently all by Agatha Christie. So I read the (still socially-inappropriately titled) *Ten Little Indians*. Huh. Didn't see that ending coming. I picked up another one, starring an unlikely sleuth—a little old lady named Miss Marple, who investigates *When a Murder is Announced*. And that was it. My little California-based soul was hooked: on witty mysteries with literate British amateur sleuths, on fabulous British settings, on fantastic BBC productions, and most definitely on Dame Agatha.

For me, Agatha Christie's books succeed on two levels. Level One is first and foremost the characters. Each of them, but especially the detective, is fully rounded and fleshed out with charming idiosyncrasies or ominous foibles. On this level, author J. New succeeds brilliantly. Each character is introduced, brought to well-rounded existence into their place in that most idiosyncratic of all societies, a small English village. Protagonist Isobella (Bella) Bridges is a young widow whose husband died in somewhat mysterious circumstances. Two years after his death, she returns to the little village where her family spent happy holidays and purchases the Yellow Cottage after visiting with its owner—who, Bella later discovers, had already been dead for seven months when they spoke—who leaves her several mysteries to solve, including a ghost cat. Bella is a perfect example of her class—posh, casually prejudiced, and so supremely assured of her place in the world that she is perfectly willing to ignore fashion and custom when it suits her while unconsciously adhering to their dictates in almost every aspect of her life.

Having grown up in and around old houses, Bella accepts the ghosts with the same aplomb as she greets her quirky new neighbors. In the first book of the series, *An Accidental Murder*, most of the action centers around London, so we also meet Bella's brother Jerry and his wife Ginny, as well as Ginny's "Uncle" Albert, Scotland Yard's Police Commissioner.

Level Two of Agatha Christie's success is all about that surprise ending. Christie herself caught readers with the twist at the end by systematically breaking almost every rule of detective stories. There's a story—perhaps apocryphal—that Agatha Christie was almost kicked out of the Detection Club for breaking their rules of detective fiction, and only saved by the single dissenting vote of then-president Dorothy L Sayers. (Yep, there was such a club and they actually did write down rules for detective fiction.) And it's pretty indisputable that Agatha Christie—who served as its president from 1957-1976—also regularly broke most of those detective story rules. Of course readers are attracted to different types of mystery and detective stories. But one thing most agree is that they enjoy looking at the clues and trying to figure things out with—or before!—the sleuth. That's why “You're probably wondering why I've asked you all here” is a trope that's kept working so well for so long.

Again, J. New doesn't disappoint. In true homage to the genre, in *The Curse of Arundel Hall* all the suspects are gathered together in the drawing room while the detective lists each one's opportunity and motive for murder. The victim, American social climbing actress Patty-Mae, had revealed herself guilty of every sort of character fault, including that most unforgivable of all—bad manners. Although the author withheld a vital clue that solved the crime until that final summation, I have to admit that the identity of the murderer would have been just as complete a surprise to me at either point.

Wikipedia defines a cozy mystery as “...a subgenre of crime fiction in which sex and violence are downplayed or treated humorously, and the crime and detection take place in a small, socially intimate community.” True to the definition, sex, profanity, and violence are “behind the door” and only gently referenced. Sleuth Bella is an amateur who gathers a posse of essential helpers—in this case the Police Commissioner, his chief medical examiner, and her own well-connected family.

I did have a couple of places where the required “willing suspension of disbelief” was more of a stretch. And the writer's device of ending each chapter with somewhat heavy-handed foreshadowing—“Little did I know it would be sooner than I expected.”—got old quickly. But the thing that raises this series to five stars for me and makes me anxious to read the next book, is the genre mix of paranormal with cozy mystery.

Bella sees ghosts, and even talks to them. Her cat, Phantom, is usually a ghost. Except (he's a cat after all) when he's not. Mixing the paranormal elements with the main mystery, and adding dessert toppings of secondary mysteries, puzzles, and mysteriously puzzling ghosts, keeps the story lively and makes the reader look forward to learning more about the characters (both living and dead).

As a cozy mystery, as a paranormal detective story, and as a completely entertaining series in a historical setting, I am delighted to recommend *The Yellow Cottage Mystery* series.

I received this book from the publisher or author to expedite an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Anita Dawes says

I am always on the lookout for something different and unusual to read, and *The Curse of Arundel Hall* was not disappointing. A well-written murder mystery set in the 1930s, transporting you back to another time

with the old-fashioned language and way of life.

The main character, Isobella Bridges, or Ella, reminds me of the Agatha Christie heroines, although this particular lady is not an old spinster. Young and adventurous, life has not been kind and moving to the fairy tale cottage on Linhay Island was supposed to be a retreat from the world.

After a slow, scene-setting start, Ella discovers that a ghost of a woman haunts the cottage. Undaunted, it turns out she has a flair for such things and sets out to solve the mystery. She finds the skeletal remains of the woman hidden behind a secret panel. A murder soon follows, linking Ella's cottage to nearby Arundel Hall, the subject of an ancient curse.

She discovers that Arundel Hall has been plagued with bad luck ever since the eleventh Duke of Norfolk built it for his wife Marion who sadly died in childbirth. The next wife went insane, and the third wife nearly drove him to murder, but she vanished, never to be seen again. Shortly after that, the Duke sold the Hall, cursing it as he left.

I really liked Ella, cheerfully determined to get on with her life and solve every problem that life throws at her, something that comes in handy in this adventure, as she figures out how to open various secret passages and hidden rooms.

This story is filled to the brim with exquisite detail and old-fashioned scenarios. The dialogue between the characters is amazing, the vocabulary perfect for the period. I loved the paranormal twist to the story, just enough to give the story an extra depth – although personally, I would have liked more.

I would defy anyone to try to guess who the murderer is, or why it happened. Just when you think you have figured it out, you are led to another possibility.

The “Spartacus” moment towards the end of the book (I won't add any spoilers) was hilarious and the classic cliff-hanger had me yearning for the next book, but I will read the first book in this series while I am waiting. Definitely, worth all of five stars...

Brigitta Moon says

A Cozy Murder Mystery

This is the second book in the series and I have enjoyed them both. This book is full of mystery and surprise. The best part is never knowing the final puzzle piece until our cozy snooper has it. If you're looking for enjoyable and entertaining characters, they are located between the pages of *The Curse of Arundel Hall* along with the mysterious curse. There is nothing like reading a good mystery and being left with a phone call that leaves you breathless waiting for the next addition in the series. I certainly hope Miss New writes with the speed of a race car driver.

Brigitta Moon

Tony Parsons says

Mrs. Bridges (mother) had told Ella Bridges (23, narrator) & Jerry (younger brother) the bad news. Mr. Bridges (father) had lost the textile mill.

He later died of pneumonia.

The funeral was held in the local church & believe it or not those that had once worked at the factory came to pay their last respects.

Aunt Margaret (mom's sister) who lived in Sheffield became our guardian.

She had lots of wealthy & prominent suitors after her.

Jerry got a scholarship to Oxford.

Fast forward, Ella & John (Jr. trade minister) get married.

He later passed away.

Now a widow Isobella "Ella" Bridges (Physic/Paranormal Investigator) was headed to Linhay Island (France).

Jerry had married Ginny.

Meadham (Linhay Island village). Sir Robert "Bobby" Harlow (retired city financier) was the current owner of Arundel Hall (large Manor House, Smuggler's Cove).

Patty-Mae Ludere (American actress, fiancé) would soon be his wife.

Sir Harlow was giving Bella the very detailed history of the place.

After finally removing Bella's cast from a bicycle accident Dr. Nathaniel Brookes decided to ask her out.

Bella called Sir Albert Montesford (Ginny's Godfather, Scotland Yard's Police Commissioner) to come investigate Phantom, & other bizarre goings on in the Manor.

Hobbes (Sir Robert's butler) mentioned to the dinner guests Ms. Patty-Mae had been killed.

Mr. Edgar Rutherford was brought in for questioning.

Sir Montesford proceeded with the interrogation.

Dr. Brookes, Ms. Harriet Dinworthy, Ella, & Albert Montesford (Commissioner of Scotland Yard, Ginny's Godfather) were next.

Fingerprints were also taken.

Will the murder mystery be solved & someone brought to justice?

I did not receive any type of compensation for reading & reviewing this book. While I receive free books from publishers & authors, I am under no obligation to write a positive review, only an honest one. All thoughts & opinions are entirely my own.

A very awesome book cover, great font & writing style. A very well written cozy murder mystery book. It was very easy for me to read/follow from start/finish & never a dull moment. There were no grammar/typo errors, nor any repetitive or out of line sequence sentences. Lots of exciting scenarios, with several twists/turns & a large set of unique characters to keep track of. This could also make another great murder mystery movie, or better yet a mini TV series. A very easy rating of 5 stars.

Thank you for the free Goodreads; Making Connections; Author; PDF book
Tony Parsons MSW (Washburn)

Manasa Kannan says

J.NEW IS MY NEW FAVORITE AUTHOR!

I would like to thank the author for sending me a copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

This is the second book in the series 'yellow cottage mystery'. This book can be termed as a 'stand alone' but some elements will be understood only after reading the first book.

"It's been a pleasure, Miss Bridges. I seldom meet a mind as bright as yours."

I was hyped to read the novel as it is a mix of all my favorite genres. It definitely lived up to the hype. The plot is intriguing and the characters are well developed having their own voices. The right amount of mystery with a dash of paranormal made this book a joy to read. A lot of characters appear on this book and each one of them have their own unique voice. Isobella, the protagonist cannot stop running into trouble and the kind she stumbles upon are highly mysterious. The adventures she experiences are nail biting and makes the reader want more of it.

The plot is truly interesting and the dialogues are just lovely. The book, having been written by a British author adds that vibe to it. Additionally, the theme is based on a historical time which relays the 'coziness'. Since I'm a huge fan of British novel, I practically devoured this book. The story leaves you guessing till the end and I can assure you that you will be surprised.

It ends with a cliffhanger which I absolutely adore in any book. It has the element of suspense which bugs your mind to the core. I'd definitely recommend this to a fellow mystery lover. I'm looking forward to reading more of the author's books in the future and I'm sure I won't be disappointed.
