



Death and a Cup of Tea

Jess Faraday, Editor

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These cozy mysteries will pair perfectly with a cup of tea—just don't spill it when a laugh at irony or a gasp at the big reveal strikes.

In this collection of eight stories, tea and murder connect each tale, with both used to varying degrees within each story. As with the subgenre of cozy mysteries, these stories downplay graphic violence and sex, resulting in entertaining stories with a touch of irony and lighthearted endings.

In “Edith Jones Got Game,” tea and murder serve as a vehicle for a character study of protagonist Edith Jones—a tough, dedicated medical examiner who was a star basketball player in college. Author Lee Mullins reveals how Jones’s hardened personality is tested when she develops a bond with the children of a murder victim. The narrative moves between Jones’s personal and professional life, effectively contrasting her personae and making for a fast-moving story.

In “Miss Winser Will Pour,” author Albert Tucher effectively captures perfectionist librarian Beatrice Winser’s eye for detail: “Whoever had shelved the book had not done it carelessly.” And it is during the fifteen-minute tea break that Winser observes the staff interaction that helps her crack the mystery behind some seemingly malicious behavior.

“Fear on Eight Legs,” by Lynn Finger, is a mystery that is out of this world. Sassy protagonist Sofia is investigating the murder of her scientist friend Enzo, who was developing green tea. As one of the longer pieces, the story allows more time to develop the character of blind genetic mutant Sofia in a futuristic world where sci-fi concepts are conveyed in terms clear enough for non sci-fi readers. Besides creating and maintaining suspense with a unique plot, the narrative offers some nice social commentary about superficiality and ego.

A cup of tea is usually served up with a touch of murder in this collection of entertaining and diversely different short stories.

MAYA FLEISCHMANN (Fall 2015)

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