



A Spoonful of Poison

M.C. Beaton

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Cranky but lovable sleuth Agatha Raisin's detective agency has become so successful that she wants nothing more than to take quality time for rest and relaxation. But as soon as she begins closing the agency on weekends, she remembers that when she has plenty of quality time, she doesn't know what to do with it. So it doesn't take much for the vicar of a nearby village to persuade her to help publicize the church fete--- especially when the fair's organizer, George Selby, turns out to be a gorgeous widower.

Agatha brings out the crowds for the fete, all right, but there's more going on than innocent village fun. Several of the offerings in the jam-tasting booth turn out to be poisoned, and the festive family event becomes the scene of two murders.

Along with her young and (much to her dismay) pretty sidekick, Toni, Agatha must uncover the truth behind the jam tampering, keep the church funds safe from theft, and expose the nasty secrets lurking in the village--all while falling for handsome George, who may have secrets of his own.

A Spoonful of Poison Details

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The Flooze says

I don't think Agatha will every truly grow up...but reading about her wouldn't be half as fun if she did.

It's difficult to review each book when you're binge-reading as I am. Though every story has its distinct features, there are inevitable similarities that might make reviews repetitive.

But that said, it suddenly strikes me that - unlike some other cozy mysteries - Agatha Raisin is never boring. The series avoids being twee. The long-standing characters develop over time. The new characters fit in well with the old and have their own distinct personalities. The mysteries are varied and always puzzling.

The constants are Mrs. Bloxby's patient bravery, mischievous Charles' forgotten wallet, Roy's fickle fashions, and Bill's steady presence (and horrible parents). And, of course, Agatha's fervent hope for love and affection. Though she drives me mad at times, I can't help but feel a kinship with Mrs. Raisin - one that keeps me on her side no matter what foolish obsession she entertains.

flaminia says

unammerda, una stella.

Louise Culmer says

Agatha Raisin is persuaded to publicise a church fete in another village, but unfortunately someone spikes the homemade jam with LSD, and two people die. As well as solving the murders, Agatha (of course) falls in love again, gets very jealous, and has problems with a dodgy member of staff. Also she reveals a surprising passion for 'the Road to Mandalay' by Rudyard Kipling, even singing it in a restaurant. Agatha is an absurd and often exasperating character, but she is full of vitality and oddly endearing. Whatever else she is, she is never dull, which makes these books more interesting to read than many other series, which often seem to centre around rather bland women. Agatha Raisin is never bland.

Suzanne Elizabeth Anderson says

Have you ever read a book that was so bad it was good? That was my first impression of this MC Beaton book. I had no idea that she was such a popular cozy mystery writer. In fact, I accidently stumbled across her book while purusing the shelves at my local library while waiting for a book I'd put on hold to arrive.

While I waited I grabbed the book, sat down, and started reading . First impressions: the writing is atrocious, clunky descriptions and dialoge, disjointed narration that jumps from the mind of one character to another. You can imagine how dumbfounded I was when my librarian informed me that MC Beaton was in fact a very popular cozy mystery author.

You may be even further surprised to find that on my next visit to the library I actually picked another in the

Agatha Raisin series. Am I a literary masochist? Nope. MC Beaton's saving grace is the in fact the character she's created in Agatha Raisin.

Agatha is delightfully horrible, she insults everyone, she enjoys a smoke and a gin and tonic, she's middle aged and has an expanding middle, divorced and on the prowl. In a word, she is compelling. Therefore, I will put up with the bad writing, the eye-rolling dialogue, just so I can read more of the adventures of dear Agatha.

Susan Webb says

The more I read about Agatha Raisin, the more I like her! She is bossy, rude, lies, falls in 'lust' easily, yet she is funny and she gets the job done. She does not give up and will yell 'snakes and bastards!' and tell you to 'sod off' if you say something to her. I enjoy this series.

Ali says

You know where you are with Agatha Raisin, they're not taxing books, not complicated and they each run pretty much along similar lines. In this one we the good old village fete and a bizarre poisoning. I was glad this didn't go over the top again like we had a couple of books ago, the story is more reminiscent of earlier A R novels except for the detective agency and the new characters. I did think this one did seem a bit padded out. As if M C Beaton had to write a certain length book and the plot didn't quite fill it. This is an easy cosy read, enjoyable enough, Agatha is her usual self, as is Sir Charles, Mrs Bloxby and Roy - always glad to see these old favourites, I'm just not so convinced by the newer characters like Toni and Harry. I was amused to see Agatha raging over the smoking ban - which brings things up to date a bit - amazing therefore that Agatha never gets any older, something the actual A R would be delighted by. I have the next 2 in the series tbr - and will read them, but maybe my love of A R is waning.

Ellie says

A Spoonful of Poison is a recent entry in the Agatha Raisin cozy mystery series of M.C. Beaton. If you enjoy Agatha as much as I do, you will not be disappointed. If you have not read the series (and you like humorous, British cozies featuring middle-aged women, again, as I do), I urge you to do so.

However, I would suggest beginning with the first in the series (or at least somewhere near the beginning) since Agatha's life as greatly evolved (in some ways) since she first retired from her successful public relations firm to an English village where she struggles to adjust and finds herself become a (somewhat) nicer person as well as a detective of murder crimes.

Agatha does not totally change, thank goodness. She remains acerbic, sarcastic, slightly vain, and moved easily to infatuations with attractive members of the opposite sex, regardless of their suitability-of lack thereof. She is also randomly kind and self aware, a lovely combination.j

I'm grateful for this series: it makes me feel good!

Berit??? says

When I picked up the first book in the series a year ago I never thought I'd love it so much I'd be on book 19 by now....

I've just read three of the books in the series in a row, so I must admit they slightly blend together.... The author even enjoys using the same names, in all three of the books there were different Jimmy's, different Georges, and in two of the the books there Were Phyllises; I'd venture to guess there is a Jimmy in every single book, not to mention that Agatha's ex-husband was named Jimmy, and her on again off again love interest is named James(She was actually married to him at some point).... this book had Agatha on the case, a little different this time somebody put LSD in the jam.... Tony is still around, still such a great addition to the series, and Agatha does seem to get a little jealous because Tony is younger and of course more photogenic..... and now James is getting remarried, of course to a much younger woman, Agatha is just going through a crisis now.... always fun to spend time with all of these characters....

*** there is also a Trixie in this book and the following book, just adding to the name list :-)

Amanda says

I really don't know why I read the Agatha Raisin novels. I love Hamish Macbeth so of course I decided to try Beaton's other mystery series, but found that I really dislike Agatha a lot. Because I am a compulsive reader I just had to read all the Agatha Raisin novels in the series that I could get from my library, even though a lot of them annoyed me. This one was just too much. These novels are just so repetitive, in every single one the same character flaws are stressed, the same sentiments expressed (I think I counted three times in this one particular book where Agatha says that she hates how Charles uses her home as a hotel - yet she never once did anything about it - just like the dozens of other times you read the same scenario in the other books).

Agatha never ever grows up, not even a teeny bit, and it is getting really old. Yes, she is immature and incredibly insecure and horribly pushy and not very nice and overall annoying - I'd like something to change somewhere! Now, I know Hamish Macbeth has his flaws, and yes, Beaton beats the same old issues with him as well, but he does move on and grow through the series. He still hasn't gotten past Priscilla (something he should have let go by now and I am starting to get fed up with as well), but his women issues are not self-inflicted, they are largely the result of huge misunderstandings, Hamish always has good intentions but things just go wrong and he never really attempts to explain anything to anyone (also a bit annoying). Okay, so the Macbeth series can be just as annoying (if she were real I'd shoot Jessie Currie), but its much easier to forgive the repetitiveness and stagnancy because Hamish is likeable and good and I've got a bit of a crush on him. Agatha, well, she deserves to be miserable and alone.

Cyndi says

Agatha is hunting for romance while murder keeps getting in the way.

Deanne says

Good fun read, with Agatha Raisin and the gang.

Lee says

Ever the loving Agatha is off again. Solving mysteries and wondering is she ever going to find someone to love or lust. I totally love these series of books. It's easy reading, funny and totally keeps you going till the very end.

I say this after every book. I can't wait to read the next one.

Damaskcat says

Agatha Raisin is asked to publicise a village fete by her friend Mrs Bloxby. Before long she has taken on the task with her usual enthusiasm and the village of Comfrey Magna is inundated with reporters when a well known star is persuaded to open proceedings. Everything is going well until someone jumps to their death from the church tower.

Agatha feels responsible and sets out to investigate ably assisted by staff from her detective agency. But it isn't just the strange effect which the jam has on some of the visitors to the fete which needs investigating and the villagers seem to have more secrets than any collection of people is entitled to have.

As ever this is a fast paced and intriguing mystery with a far from perfect heroine who is all the more endearing for her very human faults. I thoroughly enjoyed it and read it in less than 24 hours. If you want an intriguing mystery without an overload of violence this could be one to try. The dialogue is amusing and Agatha's ever present yearning for a handsome man to sweep her off her feet complicates her detective activities. This is the nineteenth book in the series.

Richard says

As always Agatha does not disappoint. The mystery is entertaining, with some unusual twists along the way. Developments with her ex-husband and Toni are quite unexpected.

Suzanne says

Agatha Raisin always frustrates me with her silly, emotional decisions (especially about men), but I keep coming back to her. She's fun. :)
