



Snow White Red-Handed

Maia Chance

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Miss Ophelia Flax is a Victorian actress who knows all about making quick changes and even quicker exits. But to solve a fairy-tale crime in the haunted Black Forest, she'll need more than a bit of charm...

1867: After being fired from her latest variety hall engagement, Ophelia acts her way into a lady's maid position for a crass American millionaire. But when her new job whisks her off to a foreboding castle straight out of a Grimm tale, she begins to wonder if her fast-talking ways might have been too hasty. The vast grounds contain the suspected remains of Snow White's cottage, along with a disturbing dwarf skeleton. And when her millionaire boss turns up dead—poisoned by an apple—the fantastic setting turns into a once upon a crime scene.

To keep from rising to the top of the suspect list, Ophelia fights through a bramble of elegant lies, sinister folklore, and priceless treasure, with only a dashing but mysterious scholar as her ally. And as the clock ticks towards midnight, she'll have to break a cunning killer's spell before her own time runs out...

Snow White Red-Handed Details

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From Reader Review Snow White Red-Handed for online ebook

Jacob Proffitt says

I just couldn't get into this book and after a couple of chapters simply gave it up. It wasn't anything *bad*, really. I just had a tough time engaging. Part of that is that the main characters, Ophelia and Prue, are present under false pretenses and outright fraud and are kind of bumbling about with no overarching goal (beyond simply "finding employment"). They lie and probably cheat (well, they *are* cheating in their lies) and just come across as mercenary. Which isn't *fatal* in me engaging with characters, but there has to be at least a hint of them being *more* than mercenary liars. And here there simply isn't.

But the thing that tossed me hardest was the jittery PoV. It didn't really jump as much as it felt like, but that's because the author had so little control over it. It made me dizzy, a little, because the narrative voice shifts from one character to another without warning. This may be simply poor exposition but having Ophelia ruminate on Prue's backstory or having Penrose exploring the inner landscape of Professor Winkler was just awkward. And frankly, switching so abruptly to Penrose was disconcerting on its own. Having Penrose in the midst of his own professional fraud made me feel like the author knew just one note for her characters but by golly, she was going to sing it *loud*.

So lots of fraud and false pretenses, and I could see how very tediously things were going to blow up and I decided I just wasn't interested. I might have stuck with it if I had cared about any of them, but since I didn't... well.

Jennifer Storm says

If you like your mystery served up with a clever plot, witty banter and a dollop of fairy dust you will love this new series. Ophelia and Prue make a classic sleuthing duo who can muddle their way through dark and enchanted forests to the most posh casino in Bavaria, and still be ready to break the house. Great fun!

Joni Bowen says

In Germany's Black Forest, a large castle looms on a hilltop surrounded by thick woods with a small town nestled at its base. A horse-drawn carriage transports four passengers to the castle: the demanding American lady of the manor, Mrs. Coop, prickly Amaryllis, gullible Prudence Bright and our heroine, Ophelia Flax. Shortly after their arrival, the castle buzzes with the news that Snow White's cottage may have been found buried in their woods. Experts have been called in to determine if it's real or a hoax, but how can they prove a fairy tale is real? It's preposterous! Yet . . . death by poison apple is only the first coincidence. Miss Ophelia, along with able but irksome Professor Penrose, begin their own inquiries, encountering a host of possible suspects while they race against time and the police to find Snow White's glass coffin and prove the identity of the murderer.

After receiving an advance reader copy of Snow White Red-Handed, I offer my honest review. First, I appreciate Ms. Chance setting this story in the mid 1800s, shortly after the Brothers Grimm completed their final revisions of the original story and within a decade of the death of both brothers. For this reader, it seems

a fitting way to honor them. As for my impressions of her story, I thoroughly enjoyed it and had a hard time putting it down. I was able to picture in my mind's eye each character; some are laughable, some frightening, some irascible and downright mean, others oily and conniving, and others endearing, witty and delightful. Ophelia's one-liners made me laugh out loud, but she is a determined, smart and worldly-wise young woman who possesses a bit of Holmesian deduction. And yet, my favorite aspect of this story, one which will keep me reading the series, is Ms. Chance's ability to conjoin the fairy tale with her characters' human history. It's quite original and deliciously clever!

Christina says

Solid mystery. I liked the MC Ophelia Flax and her friend Prue. She was capable and not pushy when it came to solving the murders. I liked the relationship between her and the scholar and look forward to seeing how it resolves. Definitely would recommend and will be reading the next one.

Chaitra says

I enjoyed this book more than I thought I would. Being a challenge reader, it's a book I discovered when searching for a color title. I generally do not care for mysteries in cozy mystery series, since they are way too obvious. I read them for the recurring characters, if they catch my interest.

This book, on the other hand, is the complete opposite - everyone and their cousins have an ax to grind with the people who bite the bullet, and there's confusing Snow White lore on top of that. I enjoyed it thoroughly for a good bit of the book, after which my interest started to flag when there was *yet another* curve-ball in the plot. I must say I stopped guessing which of the people were the killer, by the time it ended I wouldn't have been surprised if it was Snow White herself who came back from the dead to kill some annoying people. Why not? Everyone else had put in an appearance after all.

However, the prose is good, and has an engaging heroine in Ophelia Flax. In fact, one of my grouses about this book is that having been so resourceful and smart all through the book, the final denouement was denied her. She spends the last bit (view spoiler), with the annoying professor not only solving the mystery, but also (view spoiler). Except, obviously, I found him loathsome. It's probably the first time I'm hoping for a triangle in the series. I did like Prue, who is kind of charming-stupid, and her beau Hansel. I will read the next in the series.

Miriam says

Could not suspend my disbelief regarding any element of this story (the characters' relationships, what they were doing where, the marriage, the plot, anything) and didn't find the writing or characters interesting enough to make more effort.

Nidofito says

That title is so much better than the book.

Honestly, the whole thing spun out of control so fast (as most cozies do) that I'm still trying to figure out the ins and outs of it. I did appreciate the faster pace in the latter half of the story, though, the POV hopping was jarring. Did she really need to have all those POVs?

The jury's still out on whether I'll read the sequel or not.

EDIT:

Christina ~ Brunette Reader's convinced me to read the sequel. Bug her if my next review for this series is scathing. :P

Dawn Michelle says

This is **not** your typical cozy; there is way more detail and a **lot** more going on than in what a typical cozy reads as. The story is much more involved and I have to say that I really enjoyed it. It *was* a bit slow at the start, but then it built up steam and next thing I know, I was up until 2am finishing it. :-) And once I got use to the fact that there was not a ton of humor in this and that it was going to be way more detailed, the story flowed easier for me as well. I think I was trying to "force" it into a particular way of reading when it wasn't written that way at all and once I realized that, the book just flew.

I will be reading more of this series; I like the characters very much and I was pretty surprised at who the "bad person" was in this one. I had inklings, but the author does a really good job of throwing a ton of red herrings in your way.

JohnMichael says

A fun read. I would describe it as "Once Upon a Time meets Downton Abbey."

Blodeuedd Finland says

I could not figure out who the murderer was in this one..wait, who was it now again? Oh right. See, I am so bad at this, but that is good cos else it would get boring.

Ophelia and Prue are actresses, and now they are not. Now they are maids and going to Germany. To a castle where in the woods Snow White's cottage has been found. Alas murder! The owner of the castle is killed and Ophelia sets out to solve the murder. Now she is not a stupid girl who just wants to solve a crime. No, she has to. Lives are at stake and fingers are pointing at everyone. Also there is the fact that they totally lied about being maids.

I did like the whole Snow white thing the best. There is nothing magical about this mystery. But then the

story (if we take a way a few things), is just about a girl with a wicked stepmother who meets dwarves and falls for a prince. In the middle of all of this is the who killed him? There is also the hunt for the truth behind Snow White.

I saw that the next book takes place in France and will have something with Cinderella in it, cool.

Nick says

????4 COZY STARS!????

Snow White Red-Handed is a brilliant historical fiction set in the 1800's. First when I discovered the book I thought it would be a fairy tale retelling and I am not a big fan of re-tellings. But this book is quite extraordinary and unique. It's a mystery tale filled with thrilling and suspense moments. I literally couldn't put the book down for a moment.

As I said this book takes place in Germany in 1867 and as a historical novels lover I quite enjoyed this one. Also it reminded me The Grimm Brothers and their magnificent tales.

This book tells a lot of facts about the Forest and The Snow White story. The plot is well described in its details and I must say I learned new interesting things about the story. Also the way author collides the fairy tale with clues. I must say there are some quite catchy clues and some very hart to point. That's the beauty of the novel.

The author did a great job describing **the characters**. The main character Ophelia is such a unique character with an awesome sarcasm. Also the connection between the duo (Ophelia and Prue) is so natural. One of the reasons I liked this book is that the characters felt real and I did engage with them a lot. Especially with the main one.

Also, this book contains my weakness of novels, *sarcasm*. There were moments I couldn't stop laughing for minutes. Beside the humor, the story is filled with suspense moments. Every page shows something new and the characters intentions are so complicated fun to explore.

The story follows two friend Ophelia and Prudence who are actresses. After losing their jobs they become maids serving in the castle owned by the millionaire called Mr. Coop. After a time he is murdered with a poisoned apple, and the fault falls on Prue. Now Ophelia is up to clear the situation and find the real murderer.

I recommend this book to every readers out there, especially to the ones who enjoy fairy tales. This is not your usually tale re-telling. It's a brilliant story filled this action, mystery, clues and real suspense moments.

Julia says

This story was intriguingly different - in a good way! It seemed equal parts cozy mystery, gothic novel, with the underpinnings of the grown-up Snow White tale for a framework. I loved the principle characters, and although the supporting cast felt dizzyingly large they were well-identified throughout. There were plenty of twists and turns, enough red herring to make a meal on, and I was completely taken in.

Overall, this was one of the best first-in-a-series mysteries that I have read in quite a while. I'm looking forward to the next one of these lovely stories!

Wart Hill says

That was fun

Vilia says

This review was originally posted on Backchatting Books

Most well-bred 19th century ladies would have an attack of vapours if their financial prospects suddenly

turned bad but Ophelia Flax and Prue Bright are American actresses rather than ladies and are made of sterner stuff. Ophelia wheedles jobs as maids for them in a fantastical Black Forest castle complete with Snow White's cottage. Things take a turn for the worst when their employer's husband is poisoned and Prue becomes the main suspect.

Ophelia is a thoroughly unusual young lady and was a delight as a protagonist. Her chequered career as trick rider in the circus and Variety Hall actress serve her surprisingly well as a lady's maid. Not even a murder or having to pander to her employer, the irascible Mrs Coop, can keep her down for long and her keen wit kept the novel from getting too serious.

Prue might be beautiful and have more adventures than Ophelia but she is hardly quick witted. Locked up for a crime she didn't commit, she uses her feminine wiles on the gardener Hansel to repeatedly escape the tower she is incarcerated in. The burgeoning romance between the two is sweet but never overwhelms the plot.

Professor Gabriel Penrose is another odd duck with an unconventional background. He is a true believer when it comes to fairy tales but feels he has to publicly denounce them to keep the respect of his colleagues. Maintaining this façade became increasingly difficult when he realised that the so-called Snow White's cottage he was sent to investigate was probably real. Ophelia and Gabriel compliment each other well and I hope we see more of them together in future novels.

Chance's spin on the Grimm Brothers' *Snow White* was entertaining and kudos to her for not taking the easy route and adopting significant aspects of the original. There are many sly references to the Grimm Brothers' tales though and you'll have to concentrate if you want to catch them all. Some of the obvious ones include Mr Coop being killed by a poisoned apple, an old crone and a lost slipper. The pace is fairly leisurely which works well as it gives us time to get to know the characters and get immersed in the story. My only minor quibble with the book was the sheer number of secondary characters that we were introduced to. They add flavour to the book and muddy up the suspect list nicely but it was a bit hard to keep everyone straight.

This is not a fairy tale retelling but rather a historical mystery with significant fairy tale aspects interwoven throughout. I heartily enjoyed it and can't wait for the next in the series.

Debbie Lester says

What do you get when you combine a cozy mystery with a fairy tale? Snow White Red-Handed the new book from Maia Chance, that's what. The publishing world, as well as, the movie industry and television has been awash with so many fairy tale re-tellings that many readers may not think twice about a new one. But This book is quite different than what we've seen before. It is a historical cozy mystery set in the late 1800's and one that parallels the possible existence of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. With everything from dwarf skeletons to poison apples, this is an interesting way to tell a whodunit.

What I liked:

I felt like this book was extremely unique. Not only is it set in the past in the time period of the original Grimm's fairy tale of Snow White, it is also a clue based mystery. There were so many interesting facts about the Black Forest and the surrounding towns, about the possibility that Snow White really lived and tidbits about the two actresses that end up as ladies maids and sleuths. This was a very creative endeavor by Chance and I truly enjoyed trying to figure it all out.

Ophelia Flax and her partner in crime Prudence are a great crime duo. They start out seeming to be resourceful young women who end up with jobs as ladies maids to the annoying Mrs. Coop. When they end up in the middle of a murder, it's up to Ophelia to prove not only that Prue is innocent of the crime, but that Snow White's final resting place may have really existed. I loved Ophelia. She was funny and clever and had me rolling with her snarky sense of humor. I am a huge fan of sarcasm and dry wit and she had it to spare. A great new cozy heroine!

All of the details about Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs were beautifully done. Chance interweaves the fairy tale lore throughout the book and makes it a large part of the mystery itself. Mr. Coop being done in by poison apple was a great touch and I felt like this book was a great nod to the Grimm brothers and their tales. There were so many motives it was a little bit of a task to keep them all separate, but it certainly was not predictable. The clues were easy to understand but very hard to pinpoint. I didn't figure this one out until the main characters did and that's somewhat rare for me. But that made it all the more interesting.

Bottom Line:

I thought I had seen just about every kind of cozy mystery theme writers could come up with, but this mash up of a cozy with a fairy tale was brilliant. All of the original Snow White tidbits were fun to read about and to see where they would pop up in the book next. I loved the main character and found her humor appealing. This one was truly enchanting.
