



The Merry Wives of Maggody

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Maggody, Arkansas (pop. 755) is perceived of as a two-bit hick town, filled with one-bit hicks. But Mrs. Jim Bob Buchanan seeks to change that perception with her latest scheme—a charity golf tournament. This presents a bit of a challenge, since no one in Maggody plays golf and there is no course. But when the prize for the first hole-in-one is announced—a top of the line bass boat—nearly everyone in town develops a new-found interest in the sport. The town goes golf crazy, trying to learn the sport in time to win the bass boat, with limited success and maximum domestic disorder. Sheriff Arly Hanks, who has better things to worry about, just wishes it would all go away.

When a small-town golf instructor wins the bass boat on the first day of the tournament, it looks like all the excitement is over. But the next morning, when he's found dead, sitting in the parking lot in the front seat of the bass boat, the prize is once again up for grabs and nearly everyone in town is a murder suspect.

The Merry Wives of Maggody Details

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Ladysatel says

Another rousing tale of the misadventures of the Buchanons in Maggody, Akansas. Sheriff Arly Hanks has her hands full when Mrs. Jim Bob (Barbara Buchanan Buchanan) decides to have a golf tournament to aid all the poor, suffering golf widows. Maggody does not have a golf course, nor anyone who plays golf. However, with missionary fervor Mrs. Jim Bob soldiers ahead and manages to create a golf course out of Raz Buchanan's marijuana field. She also coerces the local boat seller to put up a top of the line bass boat as a prize for the first hole-in-one. Various and sundry characters sign up for the tournament and the fun begins. Wives sneak off to practice playing golf. Husbands do the same without telling their spouses. One calamity after another ensues and two people are murdered. Ruby Bee spots someone at the festivities and goes into a funk. Sheriff Hanks tries to untangle the web of occurrences and solve the murders. A shocking revelation of a personal nature ends this book. Will Maggody ever be the same?

A good read for fans of this zany community.

Kim says

I haven't read any of the books in this series in a long time and only remembered that I didn't much care for it, but couldn't remember why. I was lazy when I went to the library and didn't feel like going downstairs to the stacks, so I just grabbed this off of the new book rack. As soon as I started reading, I remembered why. Every single person in the series is so unpleasant and Arly, the main character so depressing and passive. On top of that everyone in the town is a caricature - either a hayseed/inbreed mutant or redneck sumbitch. It ended up being a skim through to find out whodunit.

Helen says

Maybe a bit sillier than some in the series: could anyone seriously believe golf widows needed charitable support? However, I continue to find Joan Hess's books good, light-hearted fun.

Kathy says

You're just gonna love your visit to Maggody! Where else could you meet folks like Ruby Bee, Mr and Mrs Jim Bob, Boopie Buchanan and Chief of Police Arly Hanks? They've got quite a story to tell, so just grab a glass of iced tea, sit back and read to your heart's content. You'll be glad you did!

Janice says

A trip to Maggody is like no other place. Mrs. Jim Bob, the mayor's wife, decides to hold a charity golf tournament, and who better to benefit than those poor golf widows. The fun ensues. From the wonderfully named Buchanons to the idiosyncrasies of the townspeople, Arly Hank, local law enforcement, has her hands full. Plus her mom, Ruby Bee, has begun acting weirder than normal. Arly has to track down the killer of the winner of the bass boat (he got a hole in one), find out why her mom is acting so weird, and decide what to do about a personal dilemma. (her boyfriend is on location in South America and can't be reached) Second murder turns out to be winner's best friend.

This is the place where I have a problem. I am so tired of mystery writers deciding to spice things up to throw in a second murder. Can't we just deal with one at a time; this isn't gang wars or a drive by. Other than that the trip to Maggody was fun.

Mary says

About a little town in Arkansas, Maggody, the Chief of Police Arly, her Mom the local bar owner and a cast of idiotic characters. Truly LOL

Nancy Cook-senn says

Arly solves the murders of the visiting golfers, and plans to live happily ever after.

Minx -The Genre Minx Book Reviews says

This was a small town story about golf, widowers of golfers, and a murder mystery. I read this book for a reading challenge and I enjoyed the mystery but not the small town shenanigans.

Becky says

We listened to the audiobook and did not like the reader's voice--it just wasn't for us. That problem made it difficult to enjoy this story of loony people who are having a golf outing for an outlandish reason. Murders and mayhem result and Arly is the police chief in charge. Since I have enjoyed the Clair Malloy books, I would be willing to give another Arly Hanks book a try and just read it silently.

Rachel N. says

In the 16th and last book in the Maggody series Mrs. Jim Bob has decided to host a charity golf tournament for golf widows. A golf course is roughly formed in Raz's pasture, which still contains marijuana and

poisonous snakes, and an expensive bass boat is put up as a prize for the first hole in one. Several locals want the boat and they start learning how to play golf but when the tournament starts out of towner Tommy Ridner makes the first hole in one. Tommy is soon murdered and chief of police Arly Hanks is on the case. I would have liked more of the book to be told from Arly's POV since she is supposed to be the main character. I am a bit sad that this is the last book in the series. These books aren't deep but are good for a light mystery set in a zany town.

Debra says

When the mayor's wife decides to host a golf tournament in the tiny town of Maggody, Arkansas to raise money for golf widows, the townsfolk have mixed feelings. While it will draw in tourist dollars, the town doesn't actually have half a golf course or any locals who know how to play. That doesn't stop the enthusiastic Mrs. Jim Bob Buchanon from bullying her way into rounding up volunteers, a patch of land to fix up, and a \$40,000 bass boat to offer as a prize for the first person to hit a hole-in-one. When the winner is found beaten to death in the boat later that night, Mrs. Jim Bob's already controversial tournament takes an even nastier turn.

The Merry Wives of Maggody is a funny book filled with eccentric characters like the Buchanon clan who are saddled with names like Bopeep, Bony (for Bonaparte), Falutin, Chikeeta, and Middlin. The protagonist, thirty-year-old Sheriff Arly Hanks, is ambivalent about the tournament as she has her own personal issues to deal with. Needless to say, Arly has more suspects than she needs, and even more attitude from arrogant, demanding players, never mind the Buchanons. Smart-mouthed Arly is an endearing character, though, who gives as good as she gets.

The large number of characters (I think there were at least a dozen in chap. one) made it difficult to keep them straight at first, however, author Joan Hess does a good job of developing each of the major players. If you love golf and humorous mysteries, then this book would be a great choice.

Dianne says

For the first time in this long running series, I did not finish one of these books. I didn't even care enough to see if Arly had chosen to have her baby, what happened to Jack or what was going to happen to the myriad of characters running through this slow paced flop.

I didn't care about any of these characters -for one reason, there were just too many of them so they were written on the thin side.

Learning about golf is like watching paint dry -learning how the Maggody people play it is like watching termites eating wood.

Stick with the earlier books and don't try to read them back to back!

Imjussayin says

The Merry Wives of Maggody - Arly Hanks 16

In A Nutshell:More madness in Maggody, Arkansas. The most reverent Mrs. Jim Bob Buchanan is hosting a fundraising golf tournament. It's a town without a golf course, but a boat as the prize. Then Chief Arly Hanks finds the winner on his prize. Dead.

More than one death happens during the golf tournament. But residents of Maggody don't want to stop the competition. There is a boat at stake. Nevermind that the residents of Maggody, all 755 cannot play golf.

I like this book. It is only the second one that I have read. I think I like Arly Hanks, but I am not sure why. She is smart but wishy-washy. Perhaps it's the Brit in me rooting for the underdog.

There are some strong characters. One of my favourites is Ruby Bee, Arly's mother. The humour hinges on most of the cast being disagreeable and the inbred hick stereotype. There is a danger with that growing thin. So, I would approach future novels with caution for that reason.

Entertaining.

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Book Rating

Sexual Content: U

Language: U

Violent: U

Would I read the next one or reread ?: Perhaps

My rating system (* = star)

0* Could not finish this book (waste of time)

1* Finished the book but didn't like it.

2* Finished the book it was okay.

3* A good read worth your time.

4* An excellent read often with a novel concept or unusual plot.

5* A great read. A prominent example of the genre

Nancy Wilson says

I think I am becoming a hard audience to make laugh, Maggody is a strange town and it is filled with weird characters. This storyline seemed all over the place but at the end I had figured out who did it times two, and who Fredrick was. I guess sadly if weird/eccentric is seen on a daily basis it becomes normal.

Barbara says

In this 16th book in the Maggody series, Mrs. Jim Bob Buchanon - the stuck up mayor's wife - organizes a golf tournament to benefit 'golf widows' (a term she misunderstands). The book can be read as a standalone.

To organize her tournament, Mrs. Jim Bob convinces a local moonshiner/pot grower to allow his property to be used for a temporary (very makeshift) golf course. She also bullies a ship retailer to donate a beautiful fishing boat (repossessed from a jailed drug dealer) as the prize for the first hole-in-one. The big boat is displayed in the parking lot of the local supermarket, where it's almost a tourist attraction.

The golf tournament - especially the boat - attracts a mixed bag of entrants including professional golfers, would-be pros, college students, high schoolers, and an ex-con. The players bring along spouses, parents, managers, acquaintances, and so on. In addition, many Maggody husbands and wives enter the tournament, though they've never played golf in their lives.

Tommy Ridner, a golf pro from nearby Farberville, makes a hole-in-one on the first day and can't stop bragging about it...to everyone's annoyance. Unfortunately for Tommy he's soon found dead on the fishing boat, his head bashed in with a golf club. Soon afterwards Tommy's best friend is killed in a similar fashion.

Chief of Police Arly Hanks investigates the crimes with some help from the Farberville sheriff. It's not that easy though because Arly's pregnant, not feeling too well, and missing her boyfriend Jack, who's far away for work. In addition, the suspects - just about everyone connected with the tournament - are often drunk, high, elusive, and untruthful.

Much of the charm of the Maggody series lies in the fun characters like: Brother Verber - the local pastor who preaches fire and brimstone but secretly loves 'sacramental wine' and soft porn; Ruby Bee - Arly's nosybody mom who runs the local diner/motel and likes to 'help' with investigations; Estelle - the beehive-coifed beautician who hangs out with Ruby Bee; Raz Buchanon - whose pig Marjorie has her own favorite television shows; and the cleaning girl, 'Perkin's eldest' - who vacuums a guest's room while wearing (only) loafers and a tie. In addition, descriptions of the many inbred Buchanons that populate Maggody are very amusing.

Unfortunately, much of the fun is missing from this book. The murder investigation plods along; the secrets revealed aren't too interesting; and the characters are flat and not as entertaining as usual. I got a few laughs but - all in all - the book isn't as good as previous entries in the series.

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