



Fruitful Bodies

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Professional cellist and amateur sleuth Sara Selkirk returns to investigate the mysteries surrounding the Sulis Clinic, a health clinic run by the attractive Dr. Golightly. Sara's former music teacher, currently staying at the Clinic, has lately become the unlikely suspect in a shocking murder at a local pub.

Fruitful Bodies Details

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From Reader Review Fruitful Bodies for online ebook

Lisa Lewis says

Same impression that I had of my first Morag Joss book: well written, interesting characters, not so much a great mystery. Again I figured out who the murderer was well before the end of the book - and I am NOT usually clever like that.

I may read more of her books, or not. I don't think my interest in these characters is actually enough to sustain the weak plotting of the whodunits

Katharine says

A book I thought I was going to enjoy but ended up by disliking pretty much all of the characters. The writing was good but the multiple viewpoints didn't work for me as characters were picked up and dropped. Amateur detectives are difficult to make remotely believable now and the heroine of this one only solved the crime by doing some very silly things. Ultimately a disappointment.

JenniferB says

Interesting and quite nice to read.

Eunira says

This is a well written mystery novel, the characterization is good, but something about this book didn't quite click for me. I'd like to read another by Joss, to see if I enjoy it more.

From Publishers Weekly

Follow-up to *Fearful Symmetry*, Joss's latest Sara Selkirk mystery offers another deftly textured evocation of an idyllic British locale. As the novel opens, famous cellist Selkirk comes across a former mentor whose musical star has drowned in alcoholism. She takes the woman in, despite the reservations of her boyfriend, police detective Andrew Poole, but when another friend, James, starts having stomach problems, she turns to Bath's fashionable Sulis Clinic. The clinic seems like the perfect answer to both problems—until Sara is drawn into the murky relationships involving its governing triad: the charismatic but secretive proprietor; his unstable organic farmer son, Ivan; and Ivan's wife, Hilary, a fierce if often misguided protector of both the clinic and her husband's fragile equilibrium. When a Japanese guest at Ivan and Hilary's isolated B&B is murdered, Poole enters the case with a vigor that further strains his already tense relationship with Sara. Then, clinic patients begin to die, luring Sara herself into detection and danger. An overly complex plot and a series of contrivances weaken the story, but Joss portrays characters and relationships that are meaty enough to satisfy.

Trish says

I picked this up because I thought the author was Scandinavian. I learned that Morag is a Scottish name, but the author is writing from and about England. Bath, really. This is the third book in a mystery series that stars a cellist (!) in whose life crime is as common as say, eating. She apparently met her current boyfriend as a result of some crime (not one she committed) in an earlier book. It works, actually, but it is light, and not terribly urgent. There is a place and time for such a confection--usually I am too busy.

Andrea says

This was a great little mystery set in Bath, England. I loved the setting and the British-isms that kept popping up. It kept me guessing until the very end and was a great, light read.

Cat. says

Once I got all the characters straight, this turned into a decent mystery tale. I sort of knew the bad guy from the get-go though I couldn't quite see motive till the end, but the characters were interesting: a concert cellist and a British police officer. And a cast of weirdos at a sort of spa-clinic. By "weirdos" I only mean that they are definitely all characters with a background and offbeat personalities.

The weirdest thing is that it made me want to visit Bath and stay in a B&B, despite the B&B in this story being rather...unpleasant-sounding.

Elizabeth Olson says

There is more than a whiff of P.D. James in the writing of Morag Joss, but her puzzle crafting stands on its own merits. I found this mystery a pleasant diversion in the midst of "heavier" reads and was enjoyably confounded until the very end.

Linda says

The posh Sulis Clinic is the setting for the third Sara Selkirk mystery, all of which take place in the ancient spa city of Bath, England. A renowned cellist, Sara spots her former music teacher amongst the audience at one of her concerts, and is dismayed to discover that now elderly Prof. Cruikshank has become a down and out alcoholic. Sara arranges for treatment at the Sulis, and becomes drawn to its charismatic director, Dr. Golightly. How the murder of a Japanese scientist becomes entangled with the affairs of the medical clinic sets the plot in action, and when a second death occurs among its patients, Sara, as is her wont, can't resist trying to assist Andrew, the Chief Inspector who is now her lover.

As a mystery, *Fruitful Bodies* is interesting enough, but Sara should realize by now that her attempts to be helpful are merely inept meddling. As usual, she stumbles upon a clue that happens to be valuable, and in

doing so, puts her own life in danger. This is a trope much overworked by many mystery writers, and it might be refreshing if there were no serendipitous escape. I'd like to see more about her own career, and would also like to see both Sara and Andrew take a more mature route to establishing their relationship. As things stand, I don't see how that can happen, and for now, it's the historic setting and the competent prose that keep me returning to this series.

Anna says

Chock-full of Literary British Mystery cliches, including little mini-chapters written from the point of view of various characters (just to give a little insight in to the *mis-en-scene*, you know, and maybe drop a few red herrings) which just happen to include a senile alcoholic and an indeterminately mentally ill person-- so intense and gritty! Take the embarrassingly stereotyped Japanese victim/suspect duo, the familiarly tortured romantic relationship between the main character and the main detective (hello? Lynley and Helen anyone?), add in some seriously labored prose, and there you have it. I'm sad, cuz I don't have much else around to read tonight.

Janellyn51 says

Well, I jumped in here where there were two previous books about the same characters....but, it was easy enough to get a grip on what may have gone before. I liked it enough to order the first two. Sara Selkirk a famous cellist, doesn't seem to go out of her way, or stick her nose where it doesn't belong, but at the same time, apparently, has a penchant for being conducive to helping her guy, who is a detective, solve crimes. That's an old story...but this was well written, and I enjoyed the romp. A chi chi health clinic, a crotchety old Scottish string instructor fallen on hard times, a messed up, wreck of a guy, son of the clinic owner.... two murders, and much mayhem.

Lindig says

Too slow, too complicated w/messy people.

Judy says

I like this series a lot - good setting (modern-day Bath), interesting characters (including the protagonist, a world-class cellist), and interesting views into the world of music performance.

H.N. says

Having now finished the "Sara Selkirk" mysteries, I feel I have something to say about them. They're beautifully written, all, and Bath is definitely a character in its own right. I definitely am a fan of Morag Joss's style, and in fact my stack of "to-reads" contains her most recent.

However. As an aspiring mystery writer myself, I hope I never make my characters do such stupid, stupid things. It was established, in the first book, that Andrew, a Chief Inspector, discusses cases with people he really shouldn't. He even notes it. "I really shouldn't be talking about this with you, but ..." By the third book, this is a tired plot device.

The other tired plot device - Sara Selkirk doing stupid things that put her in danger. Mostly, she does them when's mad at Andrew, but these various actions seem out of character for the usually calm, gentle person we've come to know.

Anyway, the "stupid" things vault me straight out of the story and into thinking about why the character would do something so stupid, and I really can't consider that to be a good thing.

K.B. Hallman says

Morag Joss creates amazing, damaged characters. No infallible people in her books.
