



The Night Bell

Inger Ash Wolfe

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Michael Redhill's new Hazel Micallef mystery, written under the pen name of Inger Ash Wolfe, is his strongest yet. For readers of crime fiction who enjoy such writers as Giles Blunt, Linwood Barclay, Lee Child, Louise Penny, Peter Robinson.

The fourth novel in this acclaimed series is brilliantly paced, addictively suspenseful--the author's best yet. Hazel Micallef (played by Suzanne Sarandon in the recent film of the series' debut, *The Calling*) has become one of crime writing's most memorable detectives. Port Dundas, Ontario, is portrayed vividly in the series as the quintessential Canadian town. *The Night Bell* moves between the past and the present, as two mysteries converge. A discovery of the bones of murdered children is made on land that was once a county foster home. Now it's being developed as a brand new subdivision whose first residents are already railing against broken promises and corruption. But when three of their number are murdered after the find, their frustration turns to terror. While trying to stem the panic and solve two crimes at once, Hazel finds her memory stirred back to the fall of 1959, when the disappearance of a girl from town was blamed on her adopted brother. Although he is long dead, she begins to see the present case as a chance to clear her brother's name, something that drives Hazel beyond her own considerable limits and right into the sights of an angry killer.

The Night Bell Details

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From Reader Review The Night Bell for online ebook

Ashley Gillan says

First: This book is fourth in a series, but I'll be reviewing it as a standalone novel. As a standalone, the first couple of chapters are rough because the characters come at you fast and furious, as if you're already familiar with them. That made things confusing.

But stick with it, because this book is totally worth it.

There are three main story threads in this novel, which follows the work of a local Canadian police woman. The author loosely weaves them together in a way that's not forced, but delicately handled. It adds intricate layers to the novel which shows how skilled this author is.

Here they are:

- 1) In 1957, young local girl disappears and our heroine, Hazel, and her friend Gloria are among the last to see her alive. There were suspicions that Gloria's younger brother was involved. Was he? (Dun dun dun!)
- 2) In 2007 Hazel is put on a case, where human bones are found in a new housing development. The land they are found on used to be a home for orphaned boys, which seems to inspire only awful memories in those that lived there.
- 3) As Hazel and her colleagues work that case, homeowners in the new development - which is floundering - are brutally murdered.

Whew!

The story is deep and rich and kept me guessing until the very end. It's like a puzzle where you're trying to see how all the pieces come together to form the full picture. And you don't get to see that picture until the very last pages.

This author is obviously very talented at crafting a beautifully atmospheric story and creating characters that are compelling and intriguing. Couldn't put this book down once I got about halfway through.

I'll definitely be picking up the rest of the series to read more about them.

I highly recommend this book to everyone who is interested in a great mystery.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

THE NIGHT BELL is book four in the Hazel Micallef Mystery series, but I didn't have any problems reading the book, despite not having read the previous three books. However, since I have seen the movie I have some previous knowledge of the characters in the book. But, I don't think you have to read the previous books to enjoy this one.

READ THE REST OF THE REVIEW OVER AT FRESH FICTION

Lata says

Hazel is terrific as always.

Paromjit says

This is the first in the Canadian Inspector Hazel Micallef series that I have read. Hazel is in her sixties, divorced, a cop and lives with her ex-mayor mother who is suffering from dementia. The location is the fictitious town of Port Dundas, Ontario and it runs with a present day investigation, along with one from the past.

In the present day, bones of murdered children are found in what used to be Dublin House, a county foster home. It is currently a housing redevelopment site where the first residents are up in arms, protesting about lies and corruption from the developers. After the discovery of bones, 3 residents are murdered and a cop goes missing. The sets Hazel off remembering how in the 1950s, a friend of hers, Carol Lim, went missing and how her adopted brother, Alan, was blamed for her disappearance. Alan is long dead, but Hazel sees an opportunity to clear his name as she investigates. Hazel is told to step away from the case and let the RCMP take over. Hazel is not having that, and with a little help from the still recovering Sargeant James Wingate, continues her investigations.

This is a bloody and twisted trail as Hazel tries to get at the truth. The two investigations come together at the end. This is a well constructed story with complex plotting. The narrative is both compelling and gripping. An enjoyable and absorbing read which I highly recommend. I gather the first in the series, *The Calling*, has been turned into a film with Susan Sarandon as Hazel. Thanks to Pegasus Books for an ARC.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Fourth in this series, set in Port Dundas, Ontario, finds Hazel, a policewoman confronted with two different cases and another unsolved missing person that harkens back to her childhood. Hazel has a remarkable doggedness, loyalty to her family and her coworkers. Even when told to stop working the case, she finds a way around the order. A boys orphanage from the past with many boys unaccounted for, bones in a field of new developments, a murdered rather well to do couple, and a missing policeman. How these threads connect is the story.

This is one series that it definitely helps to have read the previous installments, not much time is spent going over back stories. Fairly fast paced, Hazel's mother, a ex judge who is sadly losing her marbles at times provides a great deal of humor. Also loved seeing Hazel as a young girl, tenacious even then. Although I had guessed some of the answers by books end, there were still some surprises, one big one in particular.

ARC from publisher.

Hannelore Cheney says

Hazel Micallef has just become one of my favorite detectives. This was my first taste of this acclaimed series and it certainly won't be my last. I tore through the *The Night Bell*, loving every bit of it. The novel moves between the past and the present, which I enjoyed and everything comes together at the end in a very satisfying way.

On the verge of the opening of a new new subdivision, fragments of children's bones are found on the site of an old children's home. At the same time, 3 of the new residents are murdered. Hazel, trying to solve both cases, reminisces about life as a 14-year old, when her adopted brother was suspected of being involved in the mysterious disappearance of a young girl.

What a terrific mystery! A Canadian series is something I can't resist, so now I'm off to order the first 3 books...

Thank you, Netgalley, Pegasus books and Inger Ash Wolfe for introducing me to this series in return for an honest review

Pat says

Book #4 in the Hazel Micallef series. I love this series because Hazel is a woman in her late fifties, early sixties who is dealing with multiple issues in her life - the changing of her Port Dundas police department to upgrade the department, her mother beginning to have dementia problems, Hazel trying to eat healthy and not drink so much which neither is going well - all the things I find relate-able.

This installment begins with an interview of a man who stayed at Dublin Home, a home for abandoned children. He still remembers the sound of the night bell, a bell at the back door of the home that would signal someone coming in. The children were told the tale of Old Father Crumb who would come at night and steal the boys away. Indeed, the next day, someone would be gone but the staff would insist the children were adopted or their parents returned to claim them.

A good addition to the series. Crimes from the past and present collide as Hazel and her squad are also faced with new issues in their department of Port Dundas police. The first half of the book was a bit confusing and could have benefited from some editing but the last half made up for what was lacking.

Recommend if you follow this series. Highly recommend the series.

Sarah says

Hazel is back and this case bring back an incident from her childhood. I love that this one kept me guessing till the end :)

Anna At A Wondrous Bookshelf says

It seems that lately I have been giving books in a series a try. I used to only read books in a series if they were the first book in the series or if I had read the previous books. Well, *The Night Bell* doesn't fall in

either one of my categories as it is book number four of the Hazel Micallef series, but I still gave it a try. This novel employs the narrative technique of past and present times. The book starts in 1957 when Hazel was a young girl and introduces the story of the unsolved crime of child, which Hazel's brother may or not have been a part of. Wolfe does a good job at telling these two parts of the story, the past 50 years ago, and the present times in 2007 and skillfully merges these two parts of the story for the great finale. Overall, this is a great mystery book with wonderful twists and an intricate plot. Does it do a good job as a stand alone novel? I didn't think so. By book 4 of a series, there were a lot of characters that jumped in the story and that I had no clue who they were. It would've worked better if the author had re-introduced some of the characters for the people (like me) unfamiliar with the previous books. My bet is if you read the other books in the series you are going to love this new installment.

I'd like to thank NetGalley for providing me with a free copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Jaksen says

The first book in the series I was sort of disappointed in...

Sixty-four year old Hazel Micallef, detective in a small town in Port Dundas, Ontario, is on a new case after the discovery of human bones outside what used to be a home for boys. (Yep, it's a trope, but a good one; this stuff is still turning up in the news today.) But at the same time she's thinking back to 1957, when she was 14, when a girl she knew disappeared suddenly.

The two mysteries entwine as Hazel labors under a lot of restrictions - her mother's dementia; problems with her superior (trope-trope); the fact the RCMP intervene in what Hazel believes should be HER investigation - in order to solve the mystery of whose bones these are and how'd they get there. There's a lot of researching, done by an investigator who's having problems thinking/expressing himself due to an earlier injury. (Happened in Book #3 of this series.) But wait, there's more, including a murder and a possible kidnapping...

Look, there's a lot to take in here...

My issues, and why the three stars - there's a huge problem of believability here. Yes, many mysteries and 'detective fiction' ask the reader to suspend disbelief, but the central premise - and I won't give it away here - seems just so ludicrous I kept thinking there's MORE here, got to be MORE because the way to solve the 'villain's' problem is so obvious! (I mean, should be to the villain.) I won't go full-spoiler-on, because I just don't feel like it.

The beginning of the book was choppy, too, and if I were a new reader coming into this series I'd be thinking - Who is that? What? He did what when? What? Even having read Books 1 - 3, which I liked, I was confused by what was going on among the 'regulars.' There's a lot of give and take and banter among them, all of which seemed artificial and forced. (Like a bad movie or TV series where the majors just trade jokes and think they're very witty, wink-wink.)

Nah, I wasn't in on any of their chummy jokes; thought too much was introduced too fast; and the case that Hazel was investigating, even though told by her superior not to, was simply baffling to me. Bones, murders, a missing girl, a bunch of missing boys, corruption involving a new housing/shopping complex, and even a

kidnapping? It was a mess, not to be easily sorted out in the next 250 pages.

So a miss for me. I gave it three stars instead of two only because I do love Hazel, her mother and Mr. James Wingate, one of the 'regulars.' Otherwise, I sit here sadly disappointed.

Joanne Hurley says

From the very first book by Inger Ash Wolfe - The Calling - I've been hooked on this series. They're all good, but this is the tightest from a plot line standpoint, and the narrative. I cannot wait for the next.

Ellen says

The Night Bell by Inger Ash Wolfe.

This was my first Detective Hazel Micallef mystery but it won't be the last.

The prologue is an interview of Hibiki Yoshida by Detective Sergeant James Wingate in regards to the Dublin Home which he lived in as a youngster. There have been children unaccounted for for over 50 years. During the interview Yoshida reports of a bell ringing on certain nights just before a child would go missing. An unknown person referred to as Old Father Crumb would enter their dormitory at night and carry a child away with him.

Detective Hazel Micallef's life has covered more than those 50 years since those boys had gone missing. She remembers very well her childhood friends and acquaintances. Hazel recalls when she was only 14 1/2 years old and Carol Lim went missing. Was Carol a runaway or did someone actually kidnap her?

The story develops into a cold case mystery that was never explored. Children missing or kidnapped. Were they still alive somewhere?

At the same time Hazel is dealing with her elderly mother living at home with her.

Detective Hazel Micallef is no push over. She is bound and determined to get to the bottom of both these cases even if she has to do it herself. She's just the type of detective I want to read more about.

I really enjoyed this story and have already checked out the first in this series, "The Calling".

Kmalbie says

I did like Micallef's character and the story line. The author does create some witty banter that is entertaining. However, I had a hard time getting through it, eventually skimming through to the end.

It seemed a little disjointed, not necessarily by moving through timelines, but there would be dialogue then something would happen. Done. Dialogue, event, done.

Gatorman says

Disappointing entry in the series, definitely my least favorite in an otherwise terrific series. Disjointed and inconsistent in both plot development and characterization. There is a good story here that just never fully develops. Plus, the book is poorly edited for which there is no excuse. 2.5 stars bumped to 3 only because it's better than most books I give 2 stars.

Luanne Ollivier says

I have been eagerly awaiting the fourth book in Inger Ash Wolfe's fantastic Hazel Micallef series - The Night Bell. I got my hands on a copy - and devoured it in two days. I will now be eagerly awaiting the fifth book!

The Night Bell takes us back to Port Dundas, Ontario and Inspector Micallef of the Ontario Police Service.

Wolfe employs one of my favourite narrative techniques in The Night Bell - past and present - with the resolution coming as the storylines finally fit together in the end.

We meet young Hazel in 1957 and get a glimpse into an unsolved crime from those days - the disappearance of a young Port Dundas girl. We also meet Hazel's adopted brother and get to see Hazel's mother Emily in her prime. (I really enjoy Emily's wicked sense of humour and caustic one-off's.) The present is 2007. Bones are found on a housing development site - are they human? Two residents of that housing enclave are found brutally butchered and a cop goes missing - or was he taken? And Hazel is told to back off, as the RCMP come in and take over the case.

Well, that's like waving a red flag in front of a bull. Hazel's temperament and drive simply won't let her accept that order. She's obstinate, intelligent, tenacious and not the easiest person to get along with. Hazel finds some wiggle room in the order and begins investigating the bones case on her own - with help from still recovering Sergeant James Wingate. Where that investigation takes them is a page ripped from today's newspaper headlines. As are the political machinations amongst the varying police forces.

New faces and old populate the pages of The Night Bell. The mysteries in Wolfe's books are always well-plotted, engaging and intriguing. But, it is the characters that have captured me. Wolfe pulls no punches in their personal lives - I'm both hopeful and worried about what the next book will bring. Hazel is nearing retirement age - but I really don't want to see the end of this series. I also enjoy the 'local' settings of Ontario, Toronto and the mythical but very vivid in my mind, Port Dundas.

This is such a fantastic series! Although you could read The Night Bell as a stand-alone, do yourself a favour and start from the beginning with The Calling.
