

Goodbye, Ms. Chips: An Ellie Haskell Mystery

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Ellie Haskell goes back to school in the “thoroughly entertaining series” (*Cosmopolitan*) that began with *The Thin Woman*. From Agatha Award nominee Dorothy Cannell, this delightful mystery is an education . . . in murder.

“*Ellie, the headmistress wants to see you.*” Words to strike terror in the heart of any inmate of St. Roberta’s boarding school. Fortunately for Ellie Haskell, she is no longer a pudgy, wayward pupil but a happily married mother and interior designer with a beautiful home by the sea. Rather, Ellie has been summoned thanks to her reputation as an amateur sleuth.

The headmistress, Mrs. Battle, has requested Ellie’s help in the investigation into the disappearance of a coveted lacrosse trophy. Unless the prize is found, someone will succeed in dealing the school a great deal of embarrassment. So, despite her less-than-rosy memories of her alma mater, Ellie begins snooping around St. Roberta’s—only to have her homecoming spoiled by the suspicious death of the recently retired games mistress, Ms. Chips. Now, with a killer possibly stalking the halls, Ellie must act fast to have a sporting chance at justice.

Praise for *Goodbye, Ms. Chips*

“Engaging Ellie provides a peak at boarding-school charms and horrors while solving one of her more intriguing cases.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“This humorous cozy is filled with sympathetic characters and an inside look at an English boarding school.”—*Booklist*

Praise for Dorothy Cannell and the Ellie Haskell series

“It is the absurd predicaments of her central characters that readers find themselves recalling, and Cannell is cunning at devising outlandish situations for them.”—*Chicago Sun-Times*

“Cannell is a master of subtle wit and humorous asides that lift her cozies to great heights. Before the influx of writers trying to out-humor Janet Evanovich, there was Dorothy Cannell. Long may she write!”—*Library Journal*

Goodbye, Ms. Chips: An Ellie Haskell Mystery Details

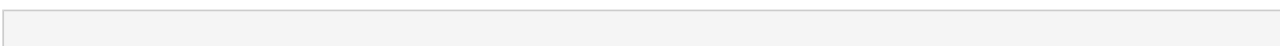
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From Reader Review Goodbye, Ms. Chips: An Ellie Haskell Mystery for online ebook

Helen says

I'm not that fond of titles that play off other authors' work but at least this one starts as a fair parallel. Marilyn Chips, the games mistress at St. Roberta's Boarding school, inherited money from the man she'd been married to for a couple of hours and decided to use part of it to build a new gymnasium for the school. The building is finished and needs only to be dedicated, at which event the Lovely Cup will be presented to the school which has won the lacrosse championship. This year the cup will go to another school because the teacher who took over from "Chippy" has not managed to bring the team up to a winning standard. That could be endured but the cup itself has disappeared, which would be more than embarrassing for the administration should it not re-appear before presentation day.

Because it is a boarding school there are all sorts of internecine squabbles, jealousies, and hatreds in both staff and student bodies. To complicate things even more what had been the chaplain's house has been turned into a place of rest and recuperation for "old girls" and two of the four current guests are trying to drive each other to either suicide or murder. Ellie is pretending to be resting from a time of serious nursing while actually trying to solve the mystery and also to clean her conscience from her own actions during school years.

Suspicions float back and forth, there are midnight visitors, going to lunches, heart felt discussions and violent temper tantrums. Friendships are made, sustained, and broken to bits during all this. There is at least an attempt to have the school run the way it would have to, although it seems to be possible to pull girls from routine at a moment's notice.

This is the 12th in the series and the idiosyncrasies that have been there still are - mostly Ellie deferring to her daily help, who dresses in taffetas and sparkles and does makeup with a trowel. I would have been happier if Rosemary and Tosca (the two warring old girls) had not been quite so extreme and surely if a cleaner could be scheduled to vacuum and change beds surely something could have been planned for meals. There does seem to be some food in the kitchen but nothing to work meals around.

It was not too bad a piece of summer reading, but it oddly did not feel like an English story and the people didn't seem English either, in spite of knickers and half term holidays.

Cheryl says

A really fun cozy, and a little better written than most cozies. The heroine of the story, is often helped by her very odd housekeeper, who I first thought was her housekeeper. Then I thought she was a figment of her imagination, and later I realized the housekeeper was indeed real. The story takes place in a girls boarding school, which intrigued me, as it was a fantasy of mine to be sent away to one. Hmmm, what does that say about me?

Debbie says

I really wanted to like this book. It had a good premise and it had great characters. But it was so sloooooow moving. I skipped a lot of pages. I even fell asleep twice.

However, the ending, was pretty good. I liked the women making fun of Roseanne or Roxanne or whatever her name was. Boy, was she grouchy. I liked Mrs. Malloy as well. She had a few zingers as well. This appears to be a series and I think it could be a good one if a lot of unneeded descriptions and a lot of fluff were taken out.

Once I got to the last half, it picked up and I enjoyed it. Thanks Minotaur and Net Galley for providing me with a free e-galley in exchange for an honest review.

Ann says

Ellie Haskell has come a long way since she left St. Roberta's boarding school many years ago. Her friend now teaches there and asks Ellie to come find out who stole the Loverly Cup trophy. It would be bad publicity to involve the police. This is the 12th installment in the Ellie Haskell series, set in England. Leaving behind her husband and 3 children, Ellie goes to St. Robertas , only now she has a murder to solve along with the missing trophy. A good cozy for those who enjoy British sleuths.

Verity W says

*****Copy from NetGalley in return for an honest review*****

Didn't work for me I'm afraid. Whether it was jumping into a long-running series with no background to help me, or dialogue which didn't sound real (or British English) I don't know. But surprisingly for a cozy about a school (and a boarding school at that) it didn't float my boat.

Clare says

Having just participated in an informal online survey of when one decides to abandon a book, it was kind of funny that I put this one down after only 30 pages. I had read other books by this author but this one just didn't grab me at all. Seemed overly wordy and the plot was trite (an incident at an all girl boarding school in England). I don't think I have ever quit on a book so early on but there are SO many other good books to read!

Penny Marks says

This was my first book written by Dorothy Cannell. I enjoyed it. It was a light easy read full of just enough twists and turns to throw you off the scent of the real killer and thief. Goodbye, Ms. Chips has Ellie going back to her old boarding school to try and solve the case of the missing trophy. She really had a hard time at boarding school and was not looking forward to going back especially seeing Headmistress Mrs. Battle! I don't know about you but I know I wouldn't want to go back to school especially if I had to meet up with the girl who bullied me! YIKES poor Ellie. At least she is able to feel like she can find some retribution and find the thief and killer.

This book is definitely at an easy pace so it's not hard to keep up. I would have liked to have read the earlier

books to find out more history on the character Ellie.
I recieved this book from NetGalley for an honest review.

Linda Baker says

I started reading the Ellie Haskell Mysteries with the first of the series, *The Thin Woman*, originally published in 1984 and named in in *The Favorite Mystery Novels of the Twentieth Century* list. It has remained one of my favorites as well, a perfect light read. I read the entire series, I had thought, but did not remember this one. Ellie is now happily married to Ben Haskell, a successful chef and author, mother of three and an interior decorator. She doesn't remember her days at boarding school fondly but when her dear friend, Dorcas Critchley, asks for her help in recovering a stolen trophy cup, she can't refuse. Even though it means going back to St. Roberta's and confronting some of her own regrets.

The school has established a cottage for "old girls" who want to retreat for awhile and recharge after life reversals. Ellie hasn't had any reversals but it's a perfect cover for her investigation, with the help of her redoubtable and flamboyant "housekeeper" and partner in sleuthing, Mrs. Malloy. By the time the thief is uncovered, a murder has occurred and it is clear that much more than just a prank is going on at St. Roberta's. Ellie has lost none of her humor in the years since *The Thin Woman*, and also none of her imaginative way of looking at things. I did, however, miss Ben, so I think a series re-reading may be in order.

Thanks to Netgalley and Random House Alibi for this visit with old friends. Hopefully, others will discover the charming Ellie Haskell Mysteries.

Carol says

Ellie Haskell returns to her prior boarding school at the request of her friend, Dorcas who is now head of games there. Ellie is an interior designer plus amateur detective. The Loverly Cup given for the top team in lacrosse each year has gone missing

Dorcas wants Ellie to return to find the cup without anyone knowing what she is doing.

The descriptions were solid scenes enabling the reader to see the school and know the teachers as the story progresses. It even went so far as to what Ellie packed in her suitcase

Thief, deceit, bullying, false friends, murder, zany characters, the Gray Nun, humor and a touch of romance make this an intriguing read.

This is book #12 in the Ellie Haskell Mystery series.

It can be read as a stand alone

Thank you to Net Gallery and Alibi for this eBook.

My opinion is my own.

Shorty says

I have read other books in this series, and found them somewhat enjoyable. But no matter how hard I tried, I could not get into this one. By the time I got to 2/3rds of the way through, I could care less what happens anymore, as nothing has happened so far... I cannot finish this book, either. I don't know if I will read any more of this series, unless the author actually does something with these wacky characters. I hope you liked the book better than me.

Gwen says

Don't waste your time...very slow-moving mystery (who cares who dunnit?)

Miriam says

this is "nancy drew" for adults who never outgrew the originals.

Nancy says

Murder at a Boarding School

Ellie Haskell's alma mater, Sr. Roberta's, has a problem. A silver lacrosse trophy, the Lovely Cup, has been stolen. The timing is particularly bad because Ms. Chips, the beloved games mistress, has retired and Dorcas Critchley, Ellie's friend, has taken the position. Unfortunately, her lacrosse season was not as successful and Ms. Chips, and so the cup is scheduled to go to another school. Being missing, is a blot on St. Roberta's reputation.

Ellie can think of almost any place she'd rather be than St. Roberta's. It's not just that she broke Ms. Chips nose playing lacrosse, she has a secret that makes her dread seeing the school again. However, she agrees to take the case and soon finds herself sharing the guest house with several other old girls one of whom was her nemesis when they were students.

This is an amusing book reminiscent of girl's boarding school novels. The characters themselves bring up the similarity which leads to humorous anecdotes. The book is fun to read because of the unusual characters and Ellie's description of her reaction to events. However, aside from the question of who took the Lovely Cup, these isn't much of a mystery until very late in the book when Ms. Chips is found dead at the bottom of some slippery steps. At first it seems to be an accident, but as Ellie investigates, she realizes it was murder.

I recommend the book for the odd characters and the amusing anecdotes. However, if you're looking for a mystery where you can follow the clues, this will disappoint.

I received this book from Alibi for this review.

Susan Johnson says

2.5 stars

I really wanted to like this book more than I did. It takes place at a girl's boarding school in England, something that has always interested me. The protagonist, Ellie, returns to her alma mater to discover who has stolen the lacrosse loving cup. At this point I was less interested as I am not sure what lacrosse really is but I stuck with it.

Ellie is apparently an interior designer but dabbles in detection. She does not have fond memories of her time at the school but comes to confront her demons. All the makings of a good story. Unfortunately it was not. It was slow. I figured out who did the deed rapidly. I knew who committed the murder before the murder actually happened which just tells you how obvious it was.

There is a character, Mrs. Malloy, who is Ellie's housekeeper/advisor/partner who is completely annoying. I could tell that the author thought she was great but she's not. Even worse, when Mrs. Malloy wasn't around, Ellie talked to her in her head and Mrs. Malloy did not have one interesting thing to say.

This is apparently part of a series but I won't be picking any more of them up. There are too many cozy mysteries that I like better.

Thanks to Net Galley.

Brenda Worley says

I normally l.o.v.e the Ellie Haskell series, but I was really disappointed in this one. For those who started at this one- go back to the beginning, you'll see what I mean.
