



An Untimely Frost

Penny Richards

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In 1881 Chicago, the idea of a female detective is virtually unheard of. But when famed crime buster Allan Pinkerton opens his agency's doors to a handful of women, one intrepid actress with her own troubled past is driven to defy convention and take on a new and dangerous role. . .

Since the age of eleven, when her mother was murdered, the life of the theater is all Lilly Long has known. Now twenty-two, she has blossomed into an accomplished Shakespearean actress. But after her innocence--and her savings--are taken from her by a seductive scoundrel, Lilly vows to leave the stage, enter the real world, and save others from a similar fate. Following in the footsteps of the country's first female detective, Lilly persuades Allan Pinkerton to take her on.

Lilly's acting skills are a perfect fit for her real-life role as a Pinkerton operative. But her first case is a baptism by fire as she is sent to the small town of Vandalia to solve the mystery of a pastor who disappeared with his family--and the church's funds. When Lilly arrives, she finds the mere mention of the reverend's name provokes enmity or suspicious silence. Shadowed by a second Pinkerton agent with an agenda of his own, Lilly begins to uncover Vandalia's sordid secrets. But she'll have to deliver the performance of a lifetime to survive the final act of this drama.

An Untimely Frost Details

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Author : Penny Richards

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From Reader Review An Untimely Frost for online ebook

Susanna - Censored by GoodReads says

My ARC courtesy of Kensington and NetGalley - much thanks. The opinions are my own.

I found a couple of historical errors - "feminist" was not a word in the vocabulary of Americans before about 1900, and Illinois had a "married women's property act" allowing for married women keeping their wages some 20 years before this book is set. The line that made me want to bash my head against the wall was our heroine's mental description of an old house that she was visiting as "a Victorian." No. Just ... no. No, no, no, no. no. But these pet peeves I caught may not disturb other readers, who may like the melodramatic tone, too.

On the up side: no sign of a love triangle.

There's clearly going to be a sequel. I might read it if it fell in my lap, but I doubt I'll go looking for it.

Linda Rooney-card says

Good fun! Sassy heroine in a tough situation with enough courage to try something outside society's view of her gender role and run a bit of a con to prove she is capable. Makes you root for her right from the beginning. Enough real situations with some that don't exactly go as she planned and a bit of real life comedy mixed in to keep you turning pages right up to a very satisfying and "I didn't see that coming!" ending

Linda Baker says

An Untimely Frost is the first volume of a new series set in 1880's middle America. Lilly Long is a young woman, orphaned at an early age and taken in by a traveling theatrical troupe. Lilly has developed into an accomplished actress but made a bad choice in her scoundrel of a new husband. After he attacks her and absconds with her life savings, Lilly decides that she needs to make a change. She is intrigued by an advertisement by the prestigious Pinkerton Detective Agency. The Pinkertons are looking for a female agent. Allan Pinkerton has hired women before with great success and Lilly thinks her acting experience would be a plus. The two Pinkerton sons, William and Robert, are not so enthusiastic however. Her first interview is a flop but Lilly manages by using her skills to get herself hired anyway. Her first assignment is a missing persons case in the small town of Vandalia, IL. One of the town's preachers and his family disappeared twenty years earlier, leaving a large property derelict. Lilly's client has hired the Pinkertons to find the family in order to purchase the property, Heaven's Gate. People in Vandalia don't want to talk to Lilly and she senses a deeper mystery than a missing persons case. And who is the handsome boxer who seems to turn up wherever she goes? Lilly's first assignment leads her into dark secrets and danger, but she refuses to give up.

Lilly Long is the very definition of "plucky" in her dogged pursuit of the truth. I am not as familiar with the constraints placed on women in 1880's America as I am with Britain's idea of propriety in the same period. It seemed to me that Lilly had a lot more freedom of movement and access that I would have expected. Perhaps the respect given to the Pinkerton badge accounts for her relative ease. She is a likable character who makes the sort of rookie mistakes that I would expect from a fledgling investigator; one who is more innocent than she appears. Penny Richards is obviously an author with a lot of experience in her craft, and one who has done her research. An Untimely Frost is a good read and I look forward to the next in the series.

Thanks to Kensington Books and NetGalley for an advance digital copy in return for an honest review.

RATING- 3.5 Stars

Carol says

Great read.....Lilly Long is an actress. Her husband robbed her of all her money then disappeared. Lilly decided she needed a change of occupation.

Seeing an advertisement in the Newspaper for a woman to be Pinkerton Agency agent, Lilly decided to apply.

With a little trickery, she lands the job.

In 1880's, a woman detective was a real rarity. But Lilly is a feisty, vivid, well defined character with a bold determination to succeed in a man world. Things are not always as they seem but Lilly manages to adapt to solve the puzzle.

An intriguing mystery with suspense, twists and turns plus some historical fiction all wrapped into this book.

Thank you to Kensington Publishing for the eBook via Net Gallery.

Veronica says

3.75 stars

Lilly Long is a 22 year old actress living in Chicago in 1881. In response to past events both distant and recent, Lilly finds herself motivated to apply for the position as a female detective with the Pinkertons. As a new operative she's given what seems to be a simple enough case, on the surface, as her first assignment. What Lilly finds though is definitely more malevolent.

This is another book that I knew very little about going into but which I ended up enjoying immensely. The writing style flowed, with no jarring transitions, and Lilly came across as a competent protagonist...not without some moments of self-doubt but still able to muster her inner resources when needed. And if, at times, she seemed a bit too forceful in the face of authority considering her young age, well, I chalked it up to her being an actress and playing a part. The one sort of negative aspect is the ginormous chip Lilly carries on her shoulder towards men. There are reasons why the chip is there but the frequent harping on how men are evil and abusing scum got old fast. Hopefully this hostility will abate sooner rather than later..especially since evil knows no gender.

The actual case that Lilly works took some dark turns that I wasn't expecting so that was a surprise. The fact that she is now a Pinkerton agent opens up the series to traveling anywhere in the continental United States, which is appealing and different since most stories in this genre tend to remain rooted to one locale. Though there was only a small cast of supporting characters who will likely be pulled into future books, there was one with hints of a mysterious past and that piqued my interest. In short, this was a solid start to a new series.

Patrice says

I received a free copy of this in ebook format through Net Galley and the publisher, Kensington Books, for an honest review. If someone is looking for a clean, good intrigue/mystery story that is also in the historical genre than this book is for you. The story flows well, the characters are developed, and the writing is very good. The story kept me engaged throughout.

An Untimely Frost is the first book in the Lilly Long Mysteries series by Penny Richards. The main character, Lilly Long, is an actress with a traveling troupe. She is an orphan, recently married, and comes to be in a position that she never expected to find herself in. The life experience sends her in a new and different direction; when she sees an advertisement in the newspaper for the Pinkerton Agency.

I enjoyed this story very much. It is interesting to read how different things were in the 1880's, how far women have come, and the changes in society in general, compared to the 21st century. I will be looking for the next book in this new series.

Hilary says

I was pleasantly surprised by this one. From the description I was half-expecting a sort of historical romance with a touch of mystery, but really it's a historical mystery with some potential for romance - much more to my taste!

Although I'd correctly figured out part of it, there was enough intrigue to keep me going and the conclusion was even better than I'd imagined. Lilly is a reasonable character, using her talents as an actress but not spontaneously developing the ability to pick locks or break codes (as seems to often happen). She's a young woman with a past she must overcome, and a drive to help save other women from similar tragedy.

Let's just say I've already added the next book to my to-read list!

Disclaimer: I received a free copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Clare O'Beara says

This is a very enjoyable tale set in historic Chicago. A woman who is an actress decides to apply for the job of Pinkerton sleuth. She has been duped by a man who just wanted her money, and hopes to save other women from the same experience.

The only issue I had is that when we meet the head of the Pinkerton detection agency, son of the founder, he sits in his office for a couple of pages, thinking about all the background to his family and current position. The reader could have been informed in other ways, like a conversation or two, and the fact that we immediately jump to Lilly again makes it seem that this piece was inserted separately during editing.

Lilly is tremendous fun, a strong woman who is as respectable as she wishes to be but free from many constraints of society. She's wily and quick to learn, and well used to disguises. Her first case comes after a considerable amount of setting up the situation and she has to prove herself capable of doing the job.

I was sent an ARC and this is an unbiased review.

Michele says

A plucky young woman wronged by a thieving husband becomes a private detective, reinventing herself while uncovering memories of her mother's death and she seeks to solve the mysteries of an abandoned home and solves a long unsolved crime. Lilly leaves a career as an actor behind seeking to solve the mystery of what happened at a certain home. Her leads take her in directions she never anticipated, and of course, into danger. The setting is Chicago and Illinois in the late 1800's. Outside of a woman's husband and family, she has no legal standing and is an easy mark for unscrupulous people. Having been on the receiving end of just such a scam, Lilly wants to help women who have been wronged by men in particular and society at large. She is well on her way.

Fortunately Lilly is not a character to sit, simmer and not take any action to advance the story. It is a fast, enjoyable read. The characters and the storyline lend themselves to sequels (which are in the works) and I

look forward to what Lilly and Cade, another Pinkerton agent) get up to next. The book drops July 26. If you like novels set in this time period add this one to your TBR pile.

~an honest review in exchange for an ARC

6/27/16

Wynter Phillips says

Richards cleverly creates a character who takes on the role of a Pinkerton agent after dealing with her own personal struggles and confronting others. Forcing herself to remain strong and confident, Lilly Long takes on the mysteries of her first case, and the unsolved crime in a foreign town with people who refuse to talk about the past. Richards nearly puts together a compelling plot and a momentous climax.

Jenny Q says

I really wanted to love this. Technically, there's nothing wrong with it. It's just a little too tame for me, it moves very slowly, and I felt like I wasn't fully getting inside Lilly's head at times. When a book is just not grabbing me, I have to move on.

Jennifer says

The description for this novel, the first in a historical mystery series, caught my attention on NetGalley and I'm glad I requested it. Though it's not perfect, there's a lot to like here and I have hopes that the series will get more interesting and nuanced as the books continue. Also, it's set in 1880's Chicago and involves the Pinkerton Agency and how fun is that.

Lily Long is a young actress in the Pierced Rose Theater Troupe whose brief marriage to a con man ends with him stealing her savings and leaving her with an even greater mistrust for the male species. The only exception to that is her foster father, Pierce Wainwright, who, along with his wife, Rose, raised Lily after her mother was murdered. Pierce and Rose manage the acting company that Lily is part of. The novel opens with Lily trying and failing to recover her life savings and feeling both anger at her husband and at herself for being taken in so easily.

Lily's sense that her world privileges men over women and that many young women, like her, are being taken advantage of or worse, leads her to apply for a job with the Pinkerton's, which is opening a field office in Chicago and looking for a female operative. Though Lily is too young by a decade for the advertised position, she is confident that her acting ability will get her the job and she is not wrong (how she does this is one of the things that I enjoyed about the book).

The hiring of a woman at the Chicago office has created strife in the Pinkerton Agency. The father, Allan Pinkerton, in ill health but still in charge, thinks a woman could be an asset. However, his son, Robert, is vehemently opposed. His other son, William, isn't sure what to think but following his father's orders, he hires Lily on a trial basis.

Lily's first case seems simple enough—travel to a town in Southern Illinois and determine what happened to the owners of a property after they left town years before. However, this is a mystery novel, and a simple case is never really simple. The property owners were a minister and his wife and not only did they leave town suddenly but they left with a lot of church funds. Lily's investigation stirs up some town secrets that many would like to keep hidden and trouble ensues.

The mystery is not earth shattering but it's fun to see Lily work to figure things out and she often plunges into dangerous situations without thinking things through, which seems pretty realistic for someone in their early 20's. There's also a mysterious but handsome man who seems to be following Lily and you know this character is going to play an important role in Lily's future (but I appreciate that it didn't happen in this book).

This was a good start to a series and I'll definitely follow Lily into her next adventure.

*I received an ARC of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest/unbiased review.

Leann Hickman says

So so soooo good! I did NOT see that ending coming! Definitely looking forward to the next Lilly Long mystery!

Anne Morgan says

This is a series that I think will improve over time. The only character that gets any attempt at depth is Lily, but there is potential for a few minor characters to become more flesh and blood in future books. The mystery was not too complex (perfect for a first case) but I was left wishing that we'd gotten to see more about the villains. They were, much like the book as a whole, a little too stereotypical to be truly satisfying. But Richards' obvious talent for writing, research, and world development will hopefully expand into creating multiple, three dimensional characters and mysteries with more depth to them in future books.

A decent, though slightly disappointing, start to a new mystery series with definite potential.

For my full review go to:

<http://bookwyrmsreader.blogspot.com/20...>

Ian says

First in the a New Series.

In 1881 Chicago, the idea of a female detective is virtually unheard of. But when famed crime buster Allan Pinkerton opens his agency's doors to a handful of women, one intrepid actress with her own troubled past is driven to defy convention and take on a new and dangerous role. . .

Since the age of eleven, when her mother was murdered, the life of the theater is all Lilly Long has known.

Now twenty-two, she has blossomed into an accomplished Shakespearean actress. But after her innocence--and her savings--are taken from her by a seductive scoundrel, Lilly vows to leave the stage, enter the real world, and save others from a similar fate. Following in the footsteps of the country's first female detective, Lilly persuades Allan Pinkerton to take her on.

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Oh I so loved Lily Long in this New Historical mystery. A woman battling her own torments and fears, while making a new start in her life as a Pinkerton Agent.

A good set of characters, in a well plotted and written mystery.

I await eagerly for the next instalment.

I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book. Published by Kensington Books and downloaded via NetGalley.

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