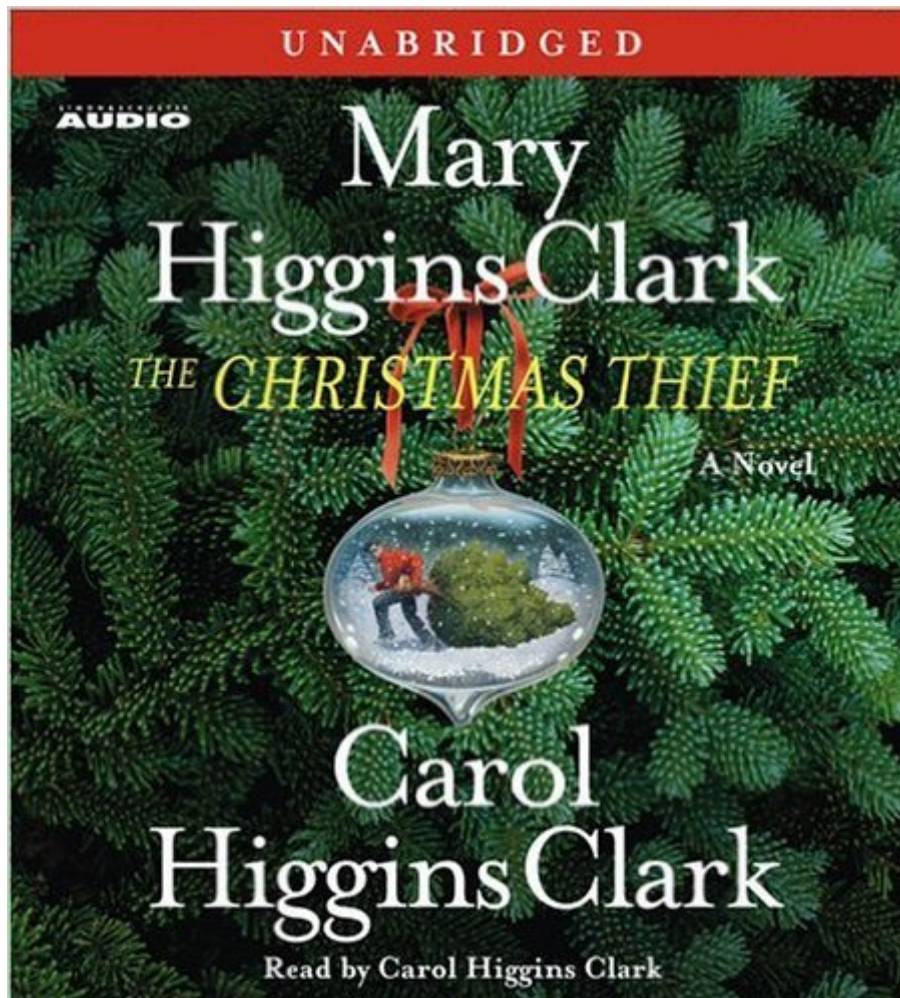


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The Christmas Thief: A Novel



Synopsis

Mary Higgins Clark, America's Queen of Suspense, and her daughter, bestselling mystery writer Carol Higgins Clark, have again joined forces to create a suspenseful and humorous holiday tale. Alvira Meehan, the lottery winner turned amateur sleuth, teams up with private investigator Regan Reilly to solve another Christmas mystery. In *Deck the Halls*, they rescued Regan's kidnapped father. This time they get in the middle of a case involving a beautiful eighty-foot blue spruce that has been chosen to spend the holidays as Rockefeller Center's famous Christmas tree. The folks who picked the tree don't have a clue that attached to one of its branches is a flask chock-full of priceless diamonds that Packy Noonan, a scam artist just released from prison, had hidden there over twelve years ago. An excited Packy breaks his parole and heads to Stowe, Vermont, to reclaim his loot. Once there, he is horrified to discover that his special tree will be heading to New York City the next morning. With a bumbling crew consisting of Jo-Jo, Benny, and an unsuccessful poet, Milo, he knows he has to act fast. What Packy does not know is that Alvira and Regan are on a weekend trip to Stowe with Alvira's husband, Willy; Regan's fiancé, Jack; Regan's parents, Luke and Nora; and Alvira's friend Opal, a lottery winner who lost all her winnings in Packy's scam. On Monday morning when they're supposed to head home, they learn that the tree is missing, Packy Noonan may be in the vicinity, and Opal has disappeared. From two of America's beloved storytellers, *The Christmas Thief* is filled with suspense, comic characters, and holiday cheer, and is sure to delight its readers. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Christmas Thief, Mary & Carol Higgins Clark's annual Christmas fluff, is, as usual, as fast and easy read. It is, however, quite forgettable once you've done reading. Alvira Meehan, the former cleaning lady whose life was changed when she won the lottery, and her husband Willy are heading to Stowe, Vermont, for a long weekend with their friends Nora Reagan Reilly, the detective novelist, her funeral director husband, their detective daughter Reagan Reilly, and her fiancée Jack (no relation) Reilly. Alvira invites her friend Opal, a lottery winner who gave her money to a con man and lost it all. Besides skiing, they are looking forward to watching the cutting down of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. Packy, the con man who has been in jail for the last twelve years, and his two henchmen Benny and JoJo are also heading there to retrieve a flask of diamonds, his ill-gotten gains from his scam, from the giant blue spruce where he hid it before he was apprehended and sent to prison. Naturally their paths cross and, of course, Alvira, Reagan, and their families save the day. This is a short book, which isn't bad for an evening if there are no good programs on television or a brief car trip. I was not happy that we didn't see much of the Meehans or the Reillys. Opal is a sympathetic character, as is Milo, the "poet" who helped Packy and his gang but didn't know he was doing anything illegal. Packy is rather nasty, so it's good to see him get his comeuppance. And the tree's owners are too obsessive about the tree and its fate. That just doesn't ring true. I'm not sorry I bought the book, and the price was right, but it's nothing that will stick with me over the long run.

It is truly scary when one thinks of the relative intelligence of the audience this author attracts with trash like this. (Five stars? What planet do you live on and do they have books?) This effort firmly cements Mary Higgins Clark's place with the other sellout authors who indeed have talent but now rely on their minions of mindless fans who buy anything with their name on the cover, (i. e. See James Patterson, Dean Koontz, etc.) The dialogue is forced, juvenile and unrealistic and the premise assinine, (who the hell would climb a tree to hide \$70 million in diamonds? And then the person who first discovers them, does the same damn thing. Haven't these rednecks heard of safety deposit boxes?) I'm sorry, but reading a book is not like watching TV where you can put your brain on autopilot. It requires cognitive processes so the fact that this book is considered a light, airy, holiday read doesn't excuse the author from putting this drivel out, (especially for sale). If my brain is engaged enough to be reading it also needs to be challenged to some degree. Clark fails miserably on that level (among many others). Word to the wise, avoid this manure like the clap, unless you have a habit of flushing your money down the toilet. I will never pick up another Clark novel.

Both writers are ones I enjoy, but their effort to turn out a light holiday mystery is indeed rather lite. Maybe they feel the sinister villains of MHC's very popular and very suspenseful novels are too heavy for the holidays. This has the feel of the cozy mystery, but not enough character development. I must admit I've always been a bit disappointed when Mary Higgins Clark's latest book is just short stories or is an Alvirah and Willy story. I'm always hoping for a new heavy duty full-length suspense novel that will worry me and keep me awake until I finish it. Much as I wish I could give these very competent authors five stars, the story just isn't meaty enough for that. Go ahead and give it a read, but don't get your expectations up. Turn on the Christmas tree lights, get a cup of cocoa and zip through its 204 pages.

I was very disappointed with this book. I was hoping for a good Christmas mystery, and it was far from it. I love Mary Higgins Clark's books, but this was poorly written and very boring. I wouldn't even borrow this one from the library.

I just thought this was great reading! I've read every Mary Higgins Clark book - sadly none of Carol's yet but I'll get to them. Have also read each of their teamwork books - thought this was just as good as any of them! It's lighter reading than Mary's "serious" mysteries - but that's the idea - just a fun Christmas-themed book. Such a fast read and it's still a mystery but not SCARY - just fun to follow along. This was set in Stowe, Vermont, primarily, at or near the Trapp Family Lodge (think von Trapp family from Sound of Music) and since I'm a fan of that film it was extra fun. If you want blood and gore from a mystery, this isn't it. If you want a quick read that has some heart-pounding moments - go for it!

I'm glad that I only checked this out from the library. Her stories have really seemed to lack substance recently and this is no exception. No suspense in this one. From reading the book jacket, most of her fans could have wrote this for her. These recent books are so watered down recently, they don't qualify to even be in the adult section of the store. Boring!

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