



How to Host a Killer Party

Penny Warner

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How to Host a Killer Party Penny Warner
Don't let murder crash your party.

Presley Parker was just happy to get her party planning business off the ground. Now she's gotten the gig of the year, planning Mayor Davin Green's sumptuous "surprise" wedding for his socialite fiancée, to be held on Alcatraz.

But when the bride is found floating in the bay and the original party planner is found murdered, Presley becomes the prime suspect. If the attractive crime scene cleaner, Brad Matthews, doesn't help her tidy her reputation, she'll be exchanging her formal wear for prison stripes...

How to Host a Killer Party Details

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From Reader Review How to Host a Killer Party for online ebook

Cindi says

Ok, this will be the weirdest review ever. I really disliked this book and almost quit reading it twice. The heroine is so aggravating and ditzy she should never be allowed to go anywhere alone - and certainly not driving. She would think things like, "oh that girl from that movie who went into the basement with all the lights out is too stupid to live" but then she would do and say whatever popped up in her non-filtered little mind and trust me, it was stupid. Other than the way she treated her facility-based aging mother, I absolutely couldn't stand her.

The problem was that I wanted to find out whodunit. There certainly were fresh ideas (she's a party-planner, regardless of what she wants to be called) and a physical setting (Treasure Island, CA) I had never heard of before. Other than her mother, the secondary cast and crew weren't all that well-developed but played their slap-stick parts just fine. I knew Brad wasn't what he seemed but he seemed cute to me so I forced myself to keep reading.

So how do I give a book 4 stars when I disliked so much about it? I don't know, I just felt the storyline was worth 4 and the writing style was nice; I just won't read any further into the series. I may see if Penny writes anything else before I put her on my "drop-author" list however Party-Planner Mysteries is going on my "drop series" list right away.

Sarah Sammis says

Last January Booking Through Thursday asked for our recommendations of "favorite unknown" authors. I posted about Penny Warner and quickly received a lovely response from her with an offer to review her newest book, How to Host a Killer Party. I was even invited to the launch party which I attended and came home with bookmarks and other fun stuff. So please go into this review knowing that I am a fan who carried my review copy around as if it were glued to my hand for the week I was reading it.

In How to Host a Killer Party, Warner introduces a new sleuth, Presley Parker, a party planner who lives and works out of Treasure Island. Her first big event is the crime themed wedding of the San Francisco mayor, staged on Alcatraz. Unfortunately for Presley the girlfriend and then the original event planner are murdered.

Even if I hadn't been a fan of Penny Warner's, I would have wanted to read this for a number of reasons. First and foremost: my experience with event planning. Secondly, the location: it's set in and about San Francisco. Finally, the genre: it is a cozy mystery, a favorite genre of mine.

My grandmother worked as a wedding coordinator. It was a job she sort of fell into. As she was also my primary care provider after school while my parents worked, I fell into being her assistant. So starting off a new mystery series with a wedding reception gone completely wrong gave me a personal connection making the book all the more special. As it turns out Penny Warner, when she's not writing, she works as an event planner (doing more than just weddings). Her experience comes through in How to Host a Killer Party.

Next is the location: San Francisco. It's not San Francisco as viewed by an outsider (Fisherman's Warf, Golden Gate Bridge and Sausalito as a neighborhood). Instead, it's San Francisco from an insider: Treasure

Island, San Francisco State, and Sausalito being a city in North Bay). Although the mayor in the book is fictional, anyone who's familiar with the City's politics will nod along and snicker. Likewise, Treasure island's history and current revival is there making me want to plan a drive out there.

Finally there's genre. I like all sorts of mysteries but the cozies are lovely to curl up with or read in snatches. I did both with this book: carrying it in my purse to read whenever I could and enjoy a chapter before bed.

As it turns out, the second book in the series is coming out in August. I plan to treat myself to a copy of How to Crash a Killer Bash for my birthday.

I received a signed copy from the author for review but I would have bought a copy anyway.

Linda says

3.5 stars. Good first entry in the series. I liked the characters and the San Francisco setting was fun. I caught on to the culprit just a hair before Presley.

Gaby says

Posted at: <http://oh-my-books.blogspot.com/2010/09/...>

A surprise party, Alcatraz and a murder...

Presley is just starting as a party planner and all of the sudden she's planning one of the most important parties ever, Mayor David Green's surprise wedding. If this party goes as planned, she will be the most famous party planner in the city! But of course, parties never goes as planned.

The bride is dead, and everyone thinks she did it. When the Detective doesn't believe her, she starts her own investigation, looking for the murderer. After all, this may be just like one of those Murder-Mystery Parties.

Presley, the protagonist, is fun and fresh. I'm not sure about her age, but she sounds young and happy with herself. I liked that even being a suspect, she didn't get depressed or "I'm too stupid to think". She is independent, intelligent and sometimes acts a little immature. She's also a psychologist and likes to evaluate everyone, even herself and her cats. It was easy to relate with her, mainly because of the lack of description about her, but also because she loves chocolates and cats, and who doesn't love at least one of them?

The secondary characters were acceptable. Maybe a little bit more about them could have been better, but they were nice. My favorites were the mother, and Brad, the cute guy/maybe a cop/maybe a suspect. I'm hoping more of these two in the next book, and a little bit more romance. They would be a cute couple.

It was fun and easy to read; and I was suspicious of everyone. They all seemed to have a possible motive, and even while sometimes I was very sure about who was the murderer, I didn't have a clue of why or how. Of course the cops didn't seem to be doing a good work finding this murderer, and I could have thought about a couple of other characters besides Presley to be the principal suspect...but it worked for the plot.

I also enjoyed the Party Planning tips you can find at the beginning of every chapter, and at the end of the book.

As my first cozy mystery, I loved it. I'm going to keep reading this series.

Myhotstylist says

What a breath of fresh air for the cozy mystery genre!

It was such a pleasure getting to know Presley Parker, Event Planner and owner of Killer Parties, in San Francisco.

When the mayor hires Presley to host a surprise wedding for his fiance, Ikea Takeda, things go wrong when the bride to be washes up dead in the bay.

Having had numerous people attending the party, Presley turns into the number one suspect, so she uses her party planning skills to catch the murderer. Things dont always go well for Presley, and she finds herself in some sticky situations to catch the real killer.

Bottom line: I really enjoyed this book! Presley is a very cute character. Shes surrounded by an eccentric group of friends and co-workers that help her out along the way. Its fun how Presley pre-thinks her current situations by remembering scenes from old movies. Even though I guessed the killer extremely early on, (hey im getting pretty good at this) the plot moved quickly, and the reveal scene was action packed. I liked how the clues were sprinkled throughout the book, which helped me confirm my guess.

I am eagerly awaiting the next book in this series, and hope the author continues to write them!"

Ami says

When it comes to cozy mystery with 1st person narrative, the key, for me personally, is that I have to at least like the main character so that I want to follow her sleuthing journey. Unfortunately, I find Presley Parker to be ANNOYING AS HELL!!!

Not only she tries to diagnose everyone she meets, she hides evidence from the police, she tries to get the answer by saying "I'm trying to help the police find out who might have had a reason to harm the victim". WTF?! Pretentious and arrogant much?!?

There is this one scene where she sneaks in as a reporter and tries to ask question of motives to the Mayor, which makes me want to knock her in the head. I feel like she justifies her actions because "she has ADHD". Yeah. Not! She's judgey and she's manipulative (she fakes an invitation using another character's identity in order to "catch" the killer, hmpf!!) ... let's just say that I pretty much skim the rest of the story (while silently wishing that she becomes the victim) and be done with it.

Definitely NOT going to read the rest of the series for sure.

Jocie says

This was a light, cute, and fun cozy mystery, with interesting characters. I did guess who the murderer was pretty early on in the book, I would have liked a little more difficult suspect, but never the less I did enjoy reading this and look forward to reading the next books.

Amelia-Irene says

This is the first of a new series.

Presley is getting her business off the ground as a party planner. She was downsized at the university and her mother is in a care center with Alzheimers. She has had to downsize her lifestyle, but things are starting to look up when the Mayor has her throwing a combination fundraiser/surprise wedding for him and his fiance at Alcatraz. Everything seems to be going okay. Her help has it all set up, the guests have all arrived and everyone is just waiting for the lucky couple to arrive. They arrive, but its obvious they have been fighting. When the mayor says its a surprise wedding for them, the bride is furious and takes off. No one can find her so they assume that she's caught a boat back to the mainland... The next day there is a couple of surprises in the wing. A lot of possible suspects, a new man across the hall & more. I want to see how this new series grows.

Candace Davidson says

dnf

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

This book was a fine debut to what, hopefully, becomes a long-lived series. The humor, plot, unusual characters, and locations were an instant draw to me. Having lived on Treasure Island during it's Navy/Marine Corps days, I was intrigued by the facts of history that the novel pulled out and thought the Island has become far more interesting than during my 'tour.'

Event Planner, Presley is the type of gal ready to try anything once. She even attempts a Mayoral wedding on Alcatraz...

My attention was caught just reading the wedding 'surprise at that,' invitations. I was laughing away. This is a book that if I list much more will give away the best parts and I want you to discover the book by yourselves...so...

I'm off to "How to Crash a Killer Bash" in my future TBR pile

Diane ~Firefly~ says

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First Presley decides that having ADHD means she is great at multitasking and decides that while driving is a good time to write down information about the crime. That's right, she is s

Stacey says

3.5 The first in the Party Planning mystery series. This cozy is a fun and quick read. I like the setting of Treasure Island just a boat ride from San Francisco.

Presley Parker is an event planner and owner of Killer Parties. She is planning a surprise wedding for Mayor Davin Green and his unsuspecting beautiful socialite fiancée, Ikea Takeda. The party will take place on Alcatraz Island. In the prison. Everyone who's anyone will be there. Everything starts out well until the mayor pops the question to Ikea while everyone waits expectantly for the gushing yes. She says no and runs to catch the next boat off the island. Every well-planned party can have mishaps. Ikea turns up dead in the water and Presley is the #1 suspect. An even paced case as Presley tries to clear her name and find the real killer. The cast of characters is great and party planning tips at the beginning of each chapter is fun.

Melodie says

Started out slow, but picked up steam as it went along. A murder at a party on Alcatraz. How'd Presley get caught up in the whole thing!

Glen says

A wonderful start to a great series.

After Presley Parker gets fired, she starts a party planning business on Treasure Island in San Francisco. Her mother was big in the business back in the day.

Presley gets her first big break when the mayor asks her to plan a party on Alcatraz, where he plans to ask a woman to marry him.

Bad idea.

The fiancee is murdered, and a number of other murders follow. To keep her business and herself alive, Presley has to find the killer.

Penny Warner is one of the most underrated authors of cozy mysteries.

Becky says

I found this book to be annoying. The main character is a psychology professor turned party planner. She psycho-analyzes all the other characters in the book, assigning various mental illnesses. And everything she herself did was because she had ADHD. Maybe it's because I know annoying people who do this in real life, but it just rubbed me the wrong way.
