



# Champagne: The Farewell: A Vengeance in the Vineyard Mystery

*Janet Hubbard*

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NYPD detective Max Maguire flies to France to attend her friend Chloe Marceau's wedding. She meets the older and more urbane Olivier Chaumont, a juge d'instruction, or examining magistrate, and experiences a fairy tale evening. But when Chloe's widowed aunt is found murdered after the wedding dinner, Max and Olivier are shocked back into their respective professional roles. But to Max's chagrin, Olivier is put in charge of the investigation and she is banned from an official investigative role.

The value of vineyards and champagne companies is at an all-time high, and Olivier learns that there are several people attempting to gain control of Lea's business at the time of her death. Max, quietly using the sleuthing skills inherited from her famous detective dad, she insinuates herself into the victim's family until their long-held secrets begin to spill out like marbles from an overturned dish. After another family member is found dead on the day of Lea's funeral, however, Max puts her career, and her tentative relationship with Olivier, in jeopardy as her determination to find the murderer—and prove herself in the process—takes over.

## **Champagne: The Farewell: A Vengeance in the Vineyard Mystery Details**

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**Janet Hubbard**

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# **From Reader Review Champagne: The Farewell: A Vengeance in the Vineyard Mystery for online ebook**

## **David Weinfeld says**

good story, New York detective visits France to attend her friend's wedding. A murder takes place, but Max is told to stay out of the investigation. She works silently in the background and along with a French Magistrate solve the murders.

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## **Katy says**

I didn't quite finish this one. I was close to the end, but it was due back at the library. I wasn't so sucked in that I renewed it. I know - shame on me.

I think what this book lacked was...a lot. The characters weren't particularly intriguing, the murder wasn't particularly vile, and the plot twists weren't particularly twisted. All in all the story was predictable and dull.

But if you like a book that has a lot of French names in it, then go for it.

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## **Kathy says**

Champagne: The Farewell: A Vengeance in the Vineyard Mystery by Janet Hubbard

Max Maguire is finally going to France to see her best friend Chloe Marceau get married. Both Max and Chloe have been friends since Max went to the University in France. Max's mom wanted her to experience French culture which is where her mother, Juliette was from. Max's Mom had fallen in love with her dad. That was frowned upon in French society since Juliette was from the upper crust. She was disowned and gave up her inheritance to be with the man she loved. Juliette is hoping Max will have a good time and immerse herself in the daily life of French culture while she is staying with the Marceau family.

Max meets majority of Chloe's family and also the drama that Chloe's Aunt Lea brings along with her. Lea is seeing a man Ted Clay whom Max had known in college from New York. Lea announces that she is pregnant and she wants to sell her wine business. The family thinks Max is not fluent in French so they are free to think what they say to others. Max listens intently and writes everything down in her journal.

After the wedding took place tragedy falls when Ted had come upon his girlfriend Lea, dead on the ground. He goes to tell Max since he knows she is a detective with the NYPD. In France there are protocols that are in place that are quite different from the way things are in America. Max works side by side with Magistrate Olivier Chamanu.

Was Lea's news of selling the wine business that got her this way. Who and what was the killer's motive?

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## **C.A. says**

This was one of those cases where a great character is stuck in a blah book. I loved Max, the main character in this series. Born to a French aristocrat mother and a blue-collar Irish cop father, she is a unique combination of qualities. The story, about her going to her cousins wedding in wine country in France, not so great. It's one of those cases where you wonder just what the bride sees in the groom because you see an ass.

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## **Carol Gibson says**

Looking forward to the next in this series

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## **Teresa says**

While I did enjoy this book, there were moments when it didn't seem to flow as smoothly as others. I liked the character of French magistrate Olivier Chaumont much better than that of the heroine, American police detective Max Maguire. She didn't seem as complete a character to me.

The central premise of the story is a murder that takes place while friends and family have gathered together for a wedding celebration. Max has been a longtime friend of the bride; Olivier is a friend of the bride's family. They bump heads (as well as bodies) in the course of their individual investigations.

I did like the novel and would probably read this authoress again.

I did receive an advance copy of this book through NetGalley.

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## **TC says**

NYPD Detective Max Maguire is something of a disappointment to her French mother, due to her failure to fully embrace the French language and culture. As such she is delighted to help her prepare for a trip to France for friend Chloe's wedding on her family's grand estate in Champagne, near Paris. On her arrival she meets Olivier Chaumont, an examining magistrate who catches her eye as she overcomes the day old break up with her ex-boyfriend. The wedding is a beautiful, stylish affair but the fairytale is abruptly ended when the bride's aunt is found dead. Lea de Saint Pern was beautiful and successful, having taken over the reins of her late husband's champagne company.

Max and Olivier's potential romance is halted in its tracks as they are jolted back into professional mode. Max is refused a formal role in the investigation into her murder but is determined to help, using skills inherited from her well-known detective father. Olivier is also hindered by colleagues with their own agenda and the two soon start collaborating. Max's approach starts unearthing numerous family secrets and the duo compile an ever lengthening list of people with a motive to kill Lea. Their route to finding the killer is punctuated with a Will they, Won't they? romance and fabulous scenery, food and drink.

There was a lot to like about this book. The side of me that likes to learn as I read enjoyed the details about champagne production and the French judicial system. I also loved the setting and the descriptions of food. I've visited France several times and the writing reminded me of places I'd been and I could well imagine the

locations in my mind's eye.

There are a lot of characters, and suspects in particular, to keep track of but this was one of those books where I felt myself engaging with the story and trying to figure out whodunnit myself, unlike some books where I find myself feeling very passive about it, happy just to read and be told. The characters backgrounds were so different, from the German businessman hoping to buy Lea's company to the upper class French women. The little details about the mothers of the bride and groom seemed so precise and added greatly to my vision of these people.

Max is a character I warmed to from the start. She's got a hard to please mother, feels like she is living in her father's shadow and hasn't been lucky in love. However she is tough, has great instincts and is good at her job. Olivier, the apparently unflappable Gallic charmer is the perfect foil for Max and their potential romance provides another dimension to the story without taking away from the murder mystery element. My only criticism would be that I felt having learnt quite a lot about the two of them early on I didn't see a lot of character development while the investigation really ramped up. It felt like the characterisation was put to one side while the plot was moved along.

This is a stylish murder mystery with a hint of the sparkle of the Champagne that features so heavily. I'm hoping we'll see Max and Olivier again!

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### **Susan says**

NYPD detective Max Maguire visits the Champagne country to attend her friend Chloe's wedding and be distracted from her recent breakup. The handsome, older Olivier, who is an examining magistrate, looks like the perfect vacation fling. But they both click into professional mode when there's a murder at the wedding reception. A number of family secrets come tumbling out, and Max must also face her feelings about her mother's hostile French family.

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### **Amy says**

You know those days when you are in the mood to waste a few hours on something fun and frivolous? Sometimes, you just want - you *need* - to escape for a little bit into a book that asks no more from you than to simply read and enjoy.

That is Champagne: The Farewell.

Max Maguire is a lieutenant in the New York police force, and when her best friend Chloé invites Max to her French countryside wedding, Max packs up and heads to Europe. Shortly after arriving, she meets Olivier, a judge, and the two instantly are drawn to each other. But just as the two start to enjoy their own version of a wedding dance, they get interrupted. Léa, Chloé's cousin, has been murdered. And thus begins the mystery portion of this mystery-romance.

Max and Olivier set out to discover whodunit, albeit with neither terribly excited about working with the other. Max prefers to work alone, and Olivier does not understand Max's propensity to use intuition when it

comes to crime solving.

Our dynamic duo faces a host of prospective bad guys, both together and separately they interpret clues and identify the culprit. There are some red herrings, but if you pay attention, you will know who it is before they do.

The romance here is fairly tame, but it's sweet and fun. Max and Oliviér court each other, with her just as aggressive as he is. The sex scenes are very mild (almost too mild), which makes this book a fun, inoffensive choice.

Just like its namesake, this is a bubbly, intoxicating story with a romance and mystery that hooks you. Be warned, however: the characters drink a LOT of champagne, and you might find yourself craving some.

Published on cupcake's book cupboard. @VivaAmaRisata  
Thanks to NetGalley for the preview.

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## **Tracey says**

I had some hopes for this (received from Poisoned Pen Press through Netgalley, with thanks); I thought perhaps the book would take its tone from the beverage. I rather hoped there would be a brightness and sparkle, along with a look inside a champagne-making vineyard. In the immortal words of Lt. Uhura, "Sorry – neither."

What it was was the story of Max (short for Maxine) flying off to France for the wedding of her dear friend Chloe, and her involvement as an American (Cop) In Paris with the investigation of the murder that occurs at the reception. (Just to clarify: she wasn't IN the wedding, she was AT the wedding. Flew all the way from NY to not be in it.) Before, during, and after the wedding, sparks fly between Max and another guest, Olivier Chaumont, who happens to be an examining magistrate (juge d'instruction) – which means that when there is a commotion in the wee hours of the morning, the two of them have to put their clothes back on and go see what's happening. Apparently, a juge d'instruction does the job of a detective-grade cop in the US, because Olivier is the front-line investigator at every stage. And Max is right there with him, whether she's wanted or not. She investigates for the sake of her friend, but also (less attractively) to prove herself as an investigator; she only joined the police force because her brother, who died when he was twelve, would probably have followed in their father's footsteps into the force (how's that for strong motivation), but she has never seen it as more than just a job, and feels she has never had a case where she wasn't being looked after by some male cop. Lucky for her, despite the fact that she's in another country, no one seems to see her as an interloper for long – she wins over everyone with her stereotypical American charm – and she is given remarkably free rein.

I liked Max, too, superficially; as often happens, putting a little more thought into her and her story lessened my liking. The story begins with her drawing a line via text with her current boyfriend, also a cop; a few pages later he breaks up with her by text (in textese, yet). She is completely unfazed by this – I mean completely: she reads the text and doesn't skip a beat, and never looks back. Throughout the book she keeps a journal, as she says all cops do, which is a combination of personal reflection and detailed reviews of her investigation. Part of this includes notes for a hypothetical future conversation with a hypothetical therapist.

As I mentioned, I had hoped for a look inside the wine industry. Instead, I got a look at the politics of the

wine industry; the narrative didn't follow any character into an actual winery until near the end, when Chloe leads a tour into the "caves", the storage cellars. Finally, I thought, some insider stuff. But no. While Chloe leads her tourists off one way, Max goes another, and the narrative follows her. By the end of the story, I knew the names of several high end champagnes (at least one of which was fictional, if not more – and they might as well all be for the personal experience I'll ever have of them); I learned that Perrier makes a champagne (though it may not be THAT Perrier); I learned that the region designated as Champagne may (unless *that* was fiction) be expanded... Anything I learned about the making of the wine was incidental to the characters' conversations. What I learned about instead was, sort of, French investigative procedure (it's very different; autopsies are not standard procedure and it's considered bizarre for cops to attend; French politics, a bit; some seriously ugly oblivious-wealthy behavior; and the French attitude toward Americans (oh dear). And um....that's all I've got. (Except for the observation that if this book was accurate a lot of French murders must go undetected.)

Setting aside the usual spattering of typos – some quote marks were missing entirely, for example, which made the read challenging, but that should hopefully be fixed by the actual release – the writing left a bit to be desired. Hopefully other things will be picked up as well, which were not simple typos but errors that should have been caught much earlier in the editing process:

- the remark "It wasn't meant to be" is followed some five lines later in the same block of dialogue by "she thought it was meant to be".
- In one scene, "Chloe had a lilt in her step" – I don't think that's possible. If it is, it shouldn't be. (OK, it *can* be used this way (definition 3 wherever I looked this up, "A light or resilient manner of moving or walking"); I've just never seen it, and I still think it was a poor choice):
- On one page, Max "was almost overcome by hunger"; three pages later, with no food intake in between, "Max wasn't hungry".
- Random screwed up sentence (not the only one, by a long mark): "We think [ ] may have hidden evidence. That she may have hidden some evidence." But tell me – do you think she might have hidden some evidence?
- One character has his jaw broken in a fight. Half an hour later he is speaking, albeit painfully, in complete and coherent sentences; a few pages and hours later he is speaking in full and coherent paragraphs. A couple of days later "Max noticed that his jaw had almost healed." Wow. Remarkable care in these French hospitals.
- Worst of all, though, and possibly least likely to be fixed, was the oft-repeated phrase "their eyes interlocked". No. Just – no. Absolutely not. It made me flinch the first time; after the fourth or fifth time I wanted to yell.
- Just an observation: Max tells her father at the beginning of the book she'll see him next week; it's pretty clear that seven days is what she intends to spend in France. (Though what she intended to do after her friend went on her honeymoon is unclear.) She's a New York City detective; judging purely on the fictional NYPD cops I've seen just taking one day off without interruption is almost impossible– yet she seems completely unconcerned about the length of time it will take to solve this case she's horned in on. She has no right to work it, strings are pulled to allow her access, which she abuses, and the odds against a solution being found in seven days are pretty damn high – yet she never shows the least concern about whether she'll be able to see it through.

The characters are inconsistent; Max is likeable, emotional, annoying, dispassionate, and lets everyone around her believe she understands no French at all because at first she is shy to correct the misapprehension and then later because it turns out to be useful. Then there's the whole thing with her boyfriend; she didn't even shrug it off. It was as if she barely noticed. Olivier is noble and has been hurt in love, but neglects to mention his super-model current fling to Max until it's a bit late; he is kind of a jerk. And he and Max spend the week or so covered by the book flipping back and forth between intense dislike and unbridled lust until I wanted to slap them both, hard. Max reminded me of a commercial for the Paltrow *Emma*: "I love John!"

(cut) I hate John!!" There was little in-between. It was a bit like that for everyone in the large and sometimes confusing cast (I still have no idea who some of those people were): positive, then negative, and back again, with little "medium". The character I thought most successful, Chloe's uncle Antoine, unfortunately doesn't last the whole book, and even his character became muddled with UFO conspiracies. The German character brought in to be the Obvious Villain everyone wants to be the killer was a cliché straight out of a WWII-era movie; the stereotyping was embarrassing.

The mystery culminates with another cliché, a silly 80's action movie chase through those wine storage cellars in which the killer's identity is noted by Max but clumsily hidden from the reader – and any suspense that might have existed in this scene is horribly confused by a combination of style and typo. A chapter concludes with Max in grave danger; the following chapter begins with Max and Yves playing tennis. Wha - ? It took me a while to determine that that should have been "Marc and Yves", and even that was confusing; the chapter remains with Olivier to create a completely silly cliffhanger for Max back in the caves.

This is apparently intended as the beginning of a series in which Max's relationships and career will be straightened out. Happily for my TBR list, I am not moved to care about either.

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### **Andy Plonka says**

The best part was the information about Champagne, both the wine and the region. The worst part was the introduction of many characters whose relationship to each other was confusing until halfway through the book. Definitely one to be read in one sitting or several close together so you can keep everyone straight in your mind. A cast of characters and their relationships to each other would have been most helpful. An adequate mystery, just not a great one.

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### **Alec Hastings says**

A good murder mystery, of course, is like a jigsaw puzzle. Bit by bit, the reader--along with the detective--puts the pieces together and a picture begins to emerge. Ms. Hubbard gives us a very enjoyable puzzle here, and it is great fun considering the clues and figuring out "who dunnit." I liked the characters too. I'm a murder mystery buff, and it's always interesting to think about the elements that make some stand out. Nick and Nora Charles in the film adaptation of Dashiell Hammet's *Thin Man*, for instance, give the viewers some snappy dialogue, and their personalities are essential to the story. So, too, the romance between the intelligent and beautiful NYPD cop Maxine Maguire and suave French aristocrat Olivier Chaumont gives zest to Champagne. Add the author's intimate knowledge of the Vallee de la Marne in the wine country of France--the geography, history, foods, wines, the people themselves--and you have a few hours of great entertainment ahead of you! Bon appetit!

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### **Lucie Paris says**

A detective story who match up to the sparkling bubbles of Champagne, a subtle and precious golden nectar where the action takes place.

In a very closed provincial bourgeoisie, the author managed to portray an heavy atmosphere of envy, jealousy and secrets conducive to commit a crime.

A credible novel, well documented, in which the reader really feels to be in the heart of the action. The clues and proofs are received, analysed in front of the reader's eyes. So, he can speculate and look for tracks along with the duo: Olivier and Max.

If I liked the freshness and spontaneous of the young American, yet I found the author a little hard with her vision of the French. As if living on the old continent made its inhabitants pompous, straddling the labels and dusty. In short, sad and procedural beings far behind in terms of justice.

Even if it was to plunge the reader into an atmosphere full of tradition and heavy history still very present nowadays, I found the pictures and clichés quite disturbing. But I'm sure this is my personal pride who is talking ...

Ditto for the many details given on how to conduct an american investigation worthy the serie "CSI". This gives a bad impression of the French police forces.

As if they were unable to solve business due to red tape, administrative hassle, war power and egos. But it also looks bad and stereotypical for the American police: cowboys without finesse used to resolve crimes as if they were working at the chain.

But as a reader, I was embedded in the footsteps of the murderer of Leah and I tried to unmask the perpetrator since the first minutes of the tragedy. I enjoyed my part of Cluedo's player and I even asked for more at the end. So, I look forward to what will happen between Olivier and Max...

A good novel that takes you behind the scenes of a dream world where secrets reveal themselves only after nightfall or behind velvet curtains.

Lucie

<http://newbooksonmyself.blogspot.fr...>

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### **Matt says**

This book has a little bit of everything: murder, intrigue, revenge, well painted descriptions of the French Champagne region, and a satisfying conclusion. I found myself trying to solve the crime throughout the book, and it was only at the very end that all the pieces fell in to place. What more can you ask for in a murder/mystery novel?! This is the first published novel by Janet Hubbard, and an impressive debut. I look forward to reading more of her work and, hopefully, further exploits of an extremely like-able protagonist... Max.

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### **Katie says**

Glass of champagne, yes please!!! I would highly recommend having a few bottles in the fridge while your reading this book.

I thought this book had great ideas and a lot of potential, although it was missing something. The first 100 pages were a bit slow, at one point I thought about abandoning it; although, at about page 160 I became engrossed. The plot developed and I became invested in the characters. I am going to read the next book, and I'm in hopes that because I already know the key players the story will be able to flow a bit more freely.

Happy reading!!!

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