



By Book or By Crook

Eva Gates

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Get bound up in murder in the first Lighthouse Library mystery!

For ten years Lucy has enjoyed her job poring over rare tomes of literature for the Harvard Library, but she has not enjoyed the demands of her family's social whirl or her sort-of-engagement to the staid son of her father's law partner. But when her ten-year relationship implodes, Lucy realizes that the plot of her life is in need of a serious rewrite.

Calling on her aunt Ellen, Lucy hopes that a little fun in the Outer Banks sun—and some confections from her cousin Josie's bakery—will help clear her head. But her retreat quickly turns into an unexpected opportunity when Aunt Ellen gets her involved in the lighthouse library tucked away on Bodie Island.

Lucy is thrilled to land a librarian job in her favorite place in the world. But when a priceless first edition Jane Austen novel is stolen and the chair of the library board is murdered, Lucy suddenly finds herself ensnared in a real-life mystery—and she's not so sure there's going to be a happy ending....

By Book or By Crook Details

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Author : Eva Gates

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Ruth says

The author says right at the beginning of this book that the idea of a lighthouse being big enough to house a fully operational library with separate living accommodation is a fantasy so that really sets the tone for the book right from the start. So I shouldn't have been too surprised by the woeful lack of research about the first editions of Jane Austen's novels. Or perhaps she did her research and then decided to completely ignore it because it would have ruined the plot!

But I still gave it 5 stars....because I loved it and I also learnt a lot about Jane Austen on the way. Not from the book you understand but because it made me want to find out more. I'll certainly be reading more of this series.

Lesa says

There's libraries. And, then there are charming libraries. And, they don't get much more quaint and charming than the Lighthouse Library on Bodie Island, North Carolina in Eva Gates' By Book or by Crook. This first in a new series will either make you want to move there to get a job in the library, or run, knowing the library is the scene of murder, theft, and possibly, ghosts.

Lucy Richardson fled to the island after she didn't want to marry the lawyer and family friend she'd been dating for years. Luckily, she is able to leave her job at Harvard Library, and become Assistant Librarian at the Lighthouse Library. She's so excited to be part of the reception where the library board and staff introduces the special exhibit of rare Jane Austen first editions. She isn't so excited when the library board president is murdered during the reception, and Lucy's new boss, Bertie, becomes the primary suspect because she had a loud argument with the victim, and was found with the body. And, it gets even worse when one of the Jane Austen books disappears. It seems not everyone likes Bertie, or the library itself.

Eva Gates excels at setting this new series in a delightful small town setting and enchanting library. She introduces a wonderful cast including quirky characters and two possible love interests for Lucy. And, of course, there's a perceptive library cat, Charles (named after Dickens). Lucy herself seems a little naive and young for her thirty years, but considering her background as the only daughter in a wealthy Boston family, it may not be surprising. I'm sure she'll come into her own in the course of the series, and won't let the rival for her job continue to scare her with ghost stories.

If you're looking for an enchanting getaway, a mystery to help you escape the winter doldrums, you can't go wrong with this first in a new series, By Book or by Crook. Cats, Jane Austen, books, and a lighthouse library. It doesn't get much more appealing.

Nora-adrienne says

I had a bit of a hard time getting into this new series. The characters were fine but by page 20 I really wanted to smack one or two of them. As I continued reading I found myself drawn into their lives and the library they all love. I'm most definitely looking forward to reading the next book in the series when it arrives in September of 2015.

Cathy Cole says

I love libraries. I love lighthouses. When I came across this first book in the Lighthouse Library cozy series, my eyes lit up, and when I discovered that "Eva Gates" is the pen name of one of my favorite authors, Vicky Delany, that was the icing on the cake. North Carolina's Outer Banks seems to be one of the hot settings for cozies, and By Book or by Crook fits right in with its neighbors.

I liked Lucy Richardson, even though she didn't win any points by staying in a relationship for ten years just to keep her parents off her back. Grow a spine, girl, because I have a feeling that those parents of yours won't be able to leave you alone in your new home!

Lucy is surrounded by an excellent cast of secondary characters who are a good mix of supportive and irritating. Fellow librarian Charlene's passion for rap music is a running joke throughout the book, and it's a joke I enjoyed since I personally didn't have to listen to the music. I did find it a tad worrying that Lucy has two prospective beaus. She may not be ready for them yet, but I've learned to treat romantic triangles with a great deal of suspicion, thanks to Janet Evanovich.

Lucy's fellow librarians are just the sort of people you'd want to work with, and here's hoping that Louise Jane never ever gets a permanent job in the lighthouse library. Louise Jane is the sort of person you'd just love to slap, and I figure the main reason why she so desperately wants to work in the library is that no one wants her there. (As you can see, this is a wonderful cast of characters because I seem to have gotten emotionally involved with them!)

Another perk of the book is that you really get a feel for what libraries have to deal with in this age of constant budget cuts. The author makes it clear that keeping libraries alive depends on the librarians, the patrons, and members of the library board and city government who all realize how vital these places are to communities.

The mystery in By Book or by Crook provides both the high and the low points of the book. The high point? The killer is hiding in the best place of all-- right out in plain sight, and I cannot believe I didn't figure out the person's identity. The low point? I had a very difficult time suspending my disbelief when it came to the lack of security in place at the library for the exhibit of priceless first editions of all of Jane Austen's novels as well as one of Austen's notebooks. I could easily go on in more depth about this, but I don't want to slip and give away too much of the story.

Lack of security aside, I really enjoyed this book. The author took the rather unfeasible idea of putting a library in a lighthouse and made it work with wonderful descriptive passages, an excellent cast, and an intriguing mystery. I'm looking forward to heading back to the Outer Banks for the next book in the series!

✱ Jennifer says

The story gets 4 stars but the editing barely deserves 1 star. Some of the worst big-publisher editing I've seen, with a slew of errors. Great story and characters, though and a very well-plotted murder. The author got screwed on this one.

Full review: <http://jenn.booklikes.com/post/116962...>

Linda says

I enjoyed the idea of a lighthouse being used as a library. If you're a Jane Austen fan, a library fan, and a lighthouse fan, this is the cozy for you!

Julie says

This book (unintentionally) reads like a cross between a mystery and Harry Potter, where there is a lighthouse that appears normal from the outside, but expands to fit a few thousand extra square feet once you enter its magical doors. Its fine to set a mystery at a popular summer resort area, to appeal to beach readers. But then to completely ignore the setting you've chosen is ridiculous. The author's note admits that the lighthouse could not house the library, except in her imagination. So why not create an imaginary lighthouse? Why refer to stone walls when describing the brick Hatteras lighthouse? The setting, characters, and plot were extremely improbable. It feels like the author had a story written, her editor or agent suggested she write a seashore mystery, and add a little Jane Austen twist to appeal the rabid Austenites, and she wrestled this story into the requested bounds. Very disappointing, and I won't be reading any more of Eva Gates's work.

Yvonne says

Starting a new series from the first book is so much fun. The idea of a library housed in an old lighthouse appealed to me. The setting is charming and perfect for a cozy mystery.

Our amateur sleuth is Lucy Richardson. She recently fled Boston after her boyfriend wanted to take their relationship to the next step and she didn't want to. In fact, he really didn't want to either. Their wealthy parents were the ones who really wanted the marriage and Lucy had no intention of giving in. She heads to Bodie Island on the Outer Banks of North Carolina where she gets a job as a librarian. Her first assignment is setting up an exhibit to showcase a set of Jane Austen first edition novels.

Lucy is stunned to find that so many people in town despise her. In fact, one person who made his feelings publicly known is the head of the library board. He states quite loudly for all to hear that he intends to get rid of her. So, when he is found murdered in the library, all fingers point to Lucy and her boss. When the Jane Austen books are stolen – one by one – everyone is all too ready to put the blame on Lucy and run her right out of town. She has no intention of sitting quietly by and letting that happen.

It took me a little time to warm up to the characters in this book. Most of the supporting characters weren't very likeable, but I did like Lucy and the people she worked with at the library. Although her boss, Bertie, took me some time to like. Did I mention the library has a cat named Charles (named after Charles Dickens, of course.)

I have to admit, I knew who the killer was rather early in the book. It didn't ruin anything for me as there were several different possibilities so I could really have bought any of them being the culprit. I'm already reading the second book in the series.

FTC Disclosure: The publisher provided me with a copy of this book to review. This did not influence my thoughts and opinions in any way. All opinions expressed are my own.

Carla Johnson-Hicks says

The first in The Lighthouse Library Mystery series. It has everything you would want in a cozy mystery: a library that is housed in a lighthouse, the protagonist living upstairs in the lighthouse, a small town, a murder, some thefts and a bit of a budding romance.

Lucy has returned to her summer stomping grounds on Bodie Island on the Outer Banks. She has quit her job of 10 years in the library at Harvard and turned down her boyfriend's proposal and wants to start a new life. She has been hired as Assistant Librarian and is busy with the borrowed Jane Austin books they are exhibiting. When a prominent member of the library board is found dead at the opening night for the exhibit, Birdie, the head librarian is the initial suspect. Lucy wants to help Birdie and does what she can to find the actual murderer. When books start disappearing from the locked library, everyone's job is in jeopardy.

I enjoyed this book, the plot moved relatively quickly and the characters were fun. I loved the quiriness of Birdie, the head librarian who also teaches yoga. Some of the patrons were annoying and that gave us insight into some of the other characters. Lucy is a bit of a wimp when the story begins, but she develops a backbone as the story progresses and I loved seeing that. Charles the cat stole many of the scenes he was in. He definitely has a personality all his own and it seems he can read Lucy's mind at times. I definitely will continue with this series. I listened to the audio version of this book. The narrator was okay, but I did feel her attempts at changing her voice for different characters was not successful. I will probably listen to the next one though as it was still not a bad narration.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

Two of my favorite things, libraries, and lighthouses, so when they are combined it really gets me excited.

Lucy Richardson is the newest librarian at The Bodie Island Lighthouse Library but her hiring has some people quite twitterpated. One thought the job should have been hers, others didn't think the position was necessary, and even the head of the library board wants to get rid of her. The head librarian and the staff at the library are thrilled to have her join them, especially with the Jane Austen exhibit and programs starting.

An event took place for friends of the library to see the exhibit before it was opened to the public. Just as Bertie, the head librarian, is ready to announce a special addition to the exhibit the head of the board is found dead. Because of his position to get rid of Lucy, she becomes a suspect but Bertie is the one that leaps to the top of the police's list. Then one of the Austen novels goes missing.

Did Bertie remove the book to throw suspicion away from herself? Or is the real killer a thief too? Or are there 2 criminals on Bodie Island? Lucy hopes to close the book on the case by answering all those questions.

First, the author starts the book saying there would not be enough space in a real lighthouse to include all the books, staircases and rooms she has written into this book, so on the basis of the library's structure the reader

must suspend reality and I was fine with that. I just imagined a huge lighthouse, bigger than I have ever seen. Think of it – each level has a special purpose. The main floor for the usual adult fiction and non-fiction with a special alcove and program areas. The next floor is filled with children’s books and programs. The third level for rare books, maps, etc. And the fourth floor a unique living space where Lucy has made herself at home. There is also a working lamp at the top. What a glorious setting with wonderful views! I would love to suspend the reality far enough to take me there.

Ms. Gates introduces us to fine characters. The library staff is made up of Bertie, Lucy, Ronald, the children’s librarian, Charlene, research librarian, and Charles, the library cat in residence. Lucy’s aunt, uncle, and cousin, along with the mayor, a nice detective and a not so nice detective round out what I assume will be the regular supporting cast. We also meet some unique friends of the library. Some were easy to like, others took some warming up and others were written to be not very likable. The author did a great job with this cast.

The murder mystery was not easy to solve. There was an entire room of suspects with an opportunity to commit the crime. The missing book mystery was also difficult because it could have been anyone from library regulars to someone off a bus that brought tourists in for the Austen exhibit. The library really should have had some kind of security person watching over the priceless items, but I don’t think there ever imagined the number of people that would pass through their doors for this event. I had a certain library patron at the top of my list but it was just a feeling. As the proof was all revealed I was surprised I actually was right.

I enjoyed everything about this story. Thee characters were very engaging, the mystery was very well written, and the setting was to die for.

I am late to the party on this series, but I am going to get all caught up before the fourth installment, The Spook in the Stacks, comes out on June 12.

Julie Durnell says

I loved this first in a new series to me-the setting was terrific as it is one of my favorite places to stay and I have visited the Bodie Lighthouse before. The idea of it as a library and being able to live/work there too would be a fantasy come true! I enjoyed the cast of characters and hope to read more of them in the next book!

FangirlNation says

In By Book or By Crook by Eva Gates, Lucy realizes she needs a new start on life after refusing the proposal of her longtime boyfriend. So she quits her job as a librarian for Harvard and goes to visit her favorite aunt in North Carolina to regroup. Before she knows it, Lucy has gotten a new job as Assistant Librarian for the nearby Bodie Island Lighthouse Library. The public library has just taken a three- month loan of a priceless set of first editions of all six of Jane Austen’s novels, and Lucy’s first introduction to the library board is the party to celebrate the opening of the new exhibit. The chair of the library board is furious to see that the head librarian, Bertie, has hired an assistant in Lucy, saying that the library should not waste money on a new employee. After antagonizing everyone else at the party, the chair of the board disappears upstairs, where Bertie finds him stabbed to death.

Read the rest of this review and other fun, geeky articles at Fangirl Nation

Debbie says

Really, how could this not be a good book? We have a cozy mystery set in a library, in a lighthouse with a hero cat... You just know it's going to be a good read, how can you miss?

Jonathan says

Usually I like to keep up with new series in the "cozy mystery" genre, but I was running low, so at my last trip to Barnes and Noble I picked this up because I liked the premise and cover. I'm glad to say that this book lived up to my expectations and even more!

The characters were great! Some were likeable, some not so much, but they were all realistic. There were no absolutely perfect characters in this book. However, by the end of this book the author seems to setting up a love triangle. I sincerely hope she doesn't go through with it. Love triangle seem to muddle up mysteries.

The mystery was good, plenty of suspects and clues, and the ending left me pleasantly surprised. The setting was also nice, it was very similar to Ellery Adams' *Books by the Bay Series*.

Overall a pleasant series that will b added to a favorites shelf. I hope the next book lived up to this one.

Lisa Ks Book Reviews says

With BY BOOK OR BY CROOK, the first book in the Lighthouse Library Mystery series, author Eva Gates is off to a great start to what will be a wonderful series.

The setting is this story is stellar. A library in a lighthouse on the Outer Banks? Yes! More please.

Protagonist Lucy Richardson is smart and plucky. She, as well as the cast of supporting characters are sure to be favorites to readers.

With a suspenseful plot and unexpected twists that kept me guessing until the reveal, this book was hard to put down. I eagerly await the next installment in this series.

Ms. Gates has found a true fan in me.
