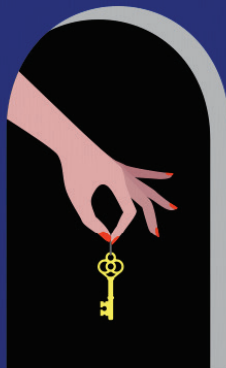


BOOK CLUB KIT

THE MYSTERY GUEST

A Maid Novel



NITA PROSE

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of **THE MAID**

AUTHOR LETTER

Dear Readers,

You may not realize it, but you kept me going. You really did.

For more than a year, I've been toiling away on this novel and, every time you wrote me asking for "more Molly" or "more Gran," your messages gave me the strength to carry on. You gave me a reason to write.

I'm delighted to share *The Mystery Guest* with you. While it's a stand-alone novel, if you've read *The Maid*, you'll recognize several characters (including Mr. Preston and Juan Manuel, and of course Molly and her beloved Gran). You'll also encounter an intriguing new mystery taking place at the Regency Grand Hotel, centering around the shocking death of the reclusive, world-renowned author J. D. Grimthorpe. But in this novel, you'll also get a glimpse into Molly's past, where you'll visit the luxurious but foreboding mansion Molly worked in with her gran when she was just a child.

I first got the idea for this book after visiting the Lewes Castle Museum in East Sussex, England. I noticed the most unusual pair of items in a display case: a mummified rat and an old silver spoon. The display was a memorial to a young servant girl who'd worked in the castle and who'd been accused of stealing a silver spoon from her employer. Despite protesting her innocence, she was fired. Years later, when builders renovated the fortress, they came across a rat's nest containing a mummified rat . . . and the missing silver spoon.

What I love about this true-to-life story is how it's a parable and a cautionary tale rolled into one.

*Be careful what you assume.
Nothing is as it seems.
The past resolves the future.
The truth won't stay buried forever.
The mystery will be solved.*

This little kernel of truth from a museum lodged in my subconscious mind. I began thinking more deeply about preconceptions and hasty judgments (we're all guilty of them), about the invisible workers in our midst (past and present), and, most important of all, how the voices of the departed don't always ebb after death but sometimes grow stronger—absence becoming presence, the greatest mystery of all.

I hope you enjoy this journey of the spirit with Molly and Gran. As with *The Maid*, this book doesn't really exist until you read it. It's my job to write the best fiction I can but to leave space for you to amplify my vision with your treasure trove of unique experiences and memories. In this way, your imagination completes my work.

Thank you, dear readers, for bringing *The Mystery Guest* to life.

With gratitude,
Nita Prose

You're Invited

TO JOIN THE *LAMBS*

*Ladies Auxiliary
Mystery Book Society*

DEDICATED TO THE OEUVRE OF

J. D. Grimthorpe

*Bestselling and award-winning author
of more than twenty novels*

World-renowned master of mystery

Reclusive, fiercely private, and utterly brilliant

THE MAID IN THE MANSION, *his first bestseller,*
made him a global sensation

HIS DEVOTED READERSHIP EAGERLY AWAITS HIS BIG ANNOUNCEMENT AT

The Regency Grand Hotel

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who did you first suspect might be responsible for J.D. Grimthorpe's death? What did you think about the red herrings in the story?
2. Who was your favorite supporting character, and why?
3. Gran has some of the best one-liners! What were some of your favorite quotes from Gran?
4. Molly says, "I've always been attuned to what others ignore." Why do you think Molly is able to see what others cannot? Do you think of yourself as someone who is often attuned to what others ignore?
5. Molly says, "Sometimes, fate has an uncanny way of delivering exactly what's deserved." In both good and bad ways, do you think fate delivered the proper ends for each character?
6. Did the ending surprise you?
7. How has Molly Gray grown as a character? What changes did you notice since first meeting Molly in *The Maid*? What do you think is next for our favorite maid?

CHARACTERS



Molly Gray

HEAD MAID AT THE
REGENCY GRAND HOTEL,
OCCASIONALLY AN
AMATEUR DETECTIVE

"I've always been attuned
to what others ignore."



Gran

GONE BUT
ALWAYS IN
MOLLY'S
HEART

"Sometimes in this life,
you have to do something wrong
to make something right."



Mrs. Serena Sharpe

GRIMTHORPE'S
PERSONAL SECRETARY,
PRETTY, SPHINXLIKE,
AN ENIGMA

"Mrs. Grimthorpe knew the
truth, but no one else."



Lily Finch

PETITE AND QUIET
MAID-IN-TRAINING.
IS SHE HIDING
SOMETHING?

"The maid is always to blame."



Cheryl

FORMER HEAD MAID,
BITTER FOR BEING
DEMOTED, LIKES TO GET
AWAY WITH DOING AS
LITTLE WORK AS POSSIBLE

"I thought it would be a good idea
for all of us maids to pool our tips
and then divide them evenly."



Detective Stark

IMPOSING,
NO-NONSENSE,
AND THOROUGH . . .
BUT UNDERESTIMATES
MOLLY

"Men don't just die suddenly
without a good reason. . . . They
usually require a bit of help."



J. D. Grimthorpe

WORLD-RENOWNED
MASTER OF MYSTERY
AND KNOWN
RECLUSE

"I find myself in the uncomfortable position
of having to make certain revelations to
you, my fans and followers."



Angela

HEAD BARMAID,
UNHEALTHILY OBSESSED
WITH TRUE CRIME

"If podcasts have taught me
anything, it's that the worst
things happen in the safest places."



Beulah Barnes

GRIMTHORPE'S
UNAUTHORIZED
BIOGRAPHER, WITH A
PENCHANT FOR CAT
SWEATERS

"All will be revealed when
I publish my official biography . . .
One day, the truth will out."

RECIPES

TEA

Bring water to a boil

Add one tea bag per serving to teapot

Let steep for 3–5 minutes

Serve with sugar, never honey (to avoid poison, of course!)

BISCUITS

2 cups all-purpose flour

4 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

½ cup shortening

¾ cup milk

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease a baking sheet.

Combine flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Cut shortening in until mixture has a fine crumb texture. Stir in milk with a fork to make a soft dough.

Knead 8 to 10 times, and then roll out to a thickness of at least ½ inch. Cut into rounds with a cookie or biscuit cutter. Place on the baking sheet, and allow to rest for a few minutes.

Bake in the preheated oven for 12 to 15 minutes. Serve warm.

Source: allrecipes.com/recipe/6740/tea-biscuits

