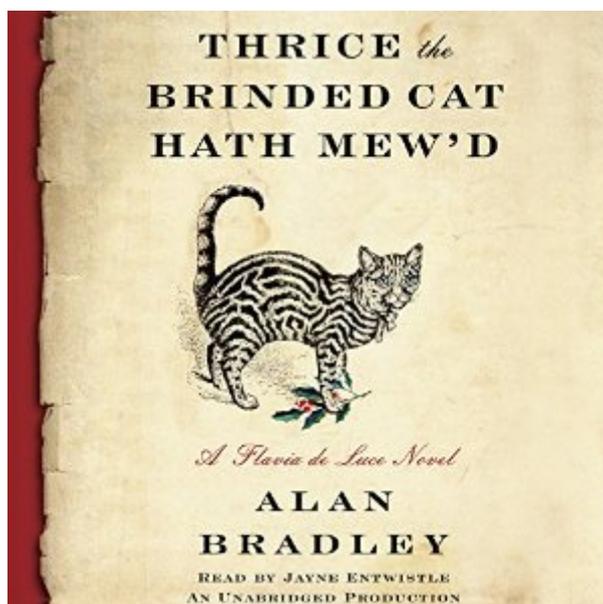


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Thrice The Brinded Cat Hath Mew'd: A Flavia De Luce Novel, Book 8



Synopsis

Hailed as "a combination of Eloise and Sherlock Holmes" by The Boston Globe, Flavia de Luce returns in a much anticipated new Christmas mystery from award-winning and New York Times best-selling author Alan Bradley. In spite of being ejected from Miss Bodycote's Female Academy in Canada, 12-year-old Flavia de Luce is excited to be sailing home to England. But instead of a joyous homecoming, she is greeted on the docks with unfortunate news: Her father has fallen ill, and a hospital visit will have to wait while he rests. But with Flavia's blasted sisters and insufferable cousin underfoot, Buckshaw now seems both too empty - and not empty enough. Only too eager to run an errand for the vicar's wife, Flavia hops on her trusty bicycle, Gladys, to deliver a message to a reclusive wood-carver. Finding the front door ajar, Flavia enters and stumbles upon the poor man's body hanging upside down on the back of his bedroom door. The only living creature in the house is a feline that shows little interest in the disturbing scene. Curiosity may not kill this cat, but Flavia is energized at the prospect of a new investigation. It's amazing what the discovery of a corpse can do for one's spirits. But what awaits Flavia will shake her to the very core.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When we last saw Flavia (*As Chimney Sweepers Come to Dust*), she was at a boarding school in Canada. I didn't think Flavia fit in Canada any better than she did and was pleased at her decision at the end of that book to return home to Bishop's Lacey in the England of the 1950s. The big question was, though, whether she (and the series) would regain her old form. The answer

is a resounding Yes! Flavia arrives home daydreaming about a big welcome from her family only to find that her father is gravely ill and in the hospital, and she is not permitted to see him. Fortunately, she soon finds a very interesting body, a local carpenter and woodcarver hung upside down in a frame on the back of his door. The challenge of resolving what led to his death perks her up immensely. When a local man sympathetically comments that finding a body must have been a shock, Flavia thinks, "How could I tell the dear man that murder made me feel so gloriously alive?" Her investigations eventually involve the works of a famous children's book author, a reputed witch, and, oh, yes, even a cat. The plot of *Thrice the Brinded Cat* is quirky and interesting, but as in the other books, the outstanding feature is the voice of narrator Flavia, the precocious twelve-year-old budding chemist and observer of human nature, along with her supporting cast: her rather difficult family, the cook and housekeeper Mrs. Mullet, her father's general factotum and all-round right-hand man Dogger, and her best and perhaps only friend---her trusty bicycle Gladys.

I have been accused of revealing too much when I review one of Alan Bradley's books, because he packs so much into the first ten pages that someone reading the review would assume the reviewer had just given away every precious detail. My warning is this: nothing I say as part of the synopsis comes from anything past page 30. If you read that as a spoiler alert, so be it. In *THRICE THE BRINDLED CAT HATH MEW'D*, Flavia returns (banished) from Miss Bodycote's Female Academy in Canada. Dogger, her father's faithful manservant and closest friend from the war, awaits with bad news: Father is in the hospital, gravely ill, with pneumonia. When she rides her faithful bicycle (Gladys) to visit the vicar's wife, Flavia is sent on an errand and discovers a dead body. And so the 8th book of Bradley's series begins. If you've not read the first seven, I urge you to do so before embarking on the 8th. The background, history, character interactions, murder, mayhem and fun in the prior books make this book all the more enticing. What's great about *THRICE THE BRINDLED CAT HATH MEW'D*? Here's the top ten list.

10. Alan Bradley gets better and better. The first book was a delight, but over the course of the series he has added so many layers of personalities and past histories and relationships and disasters. This, I think, is a much denser book than the first.
9. Flavia finally has some friends. As an incredibly smart and perceptive adult-in-a-child's-body, this has been a challenge.
8. Another bizarre death for Flavia to (secretly) investigate, hopefully leaving no telltale signs that she has again done some forensic investigating on her own.
7. You'll learn some chemistry. And it will be painless.
- 6.

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