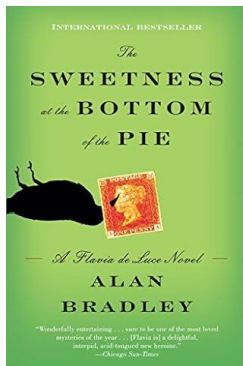


The Flavia de Luce series

By Alan Bradley



[The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie](#) (2009)

It is June 1950 and the sleepy English village of Bishop's Lacey is about to be awakened by the discovery of a dead body in Colonel de Luce's cucumber patch. The police are baffled, and when a dead

snipe is deposited on the Colonel's doorstep with a rare stamp impaled on its beak, they are baffled even more. Only the Colonel's daughter, the precocious Flavia – when she's not plotting elaborate revenges against her nasty older sisters in her chemical laboratory, that is – has the ingenuity to follow the clues that reveal the victim's identity, and a conspiracy that reached back into the de Luce family's murky past. Flavia and her family are brilliant creations, a darkly playful and wonderfully atmospheric flavor to a plot of delightful ingenuity.

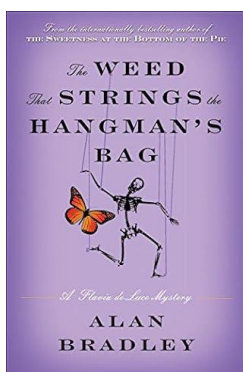
Anthony Awards Best First Novel (nominee)

Barry Awards Best First Novel

Dilys Awards Best Book

Macavity Awards Best First Novel

Agatha Award Best First Novel

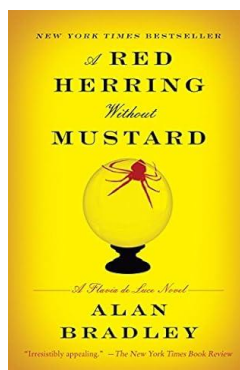


[The Weed That Strings the Hangman's Bag](#) (2010)

The story opens with the immortal words 'I was lying dead in the churchyard' (spoken, astonishingly, by Flavia herself) and ends with a funeral watched by the De Luce family on a newly-installed

television set. In-between, Alan Bradley weaves a hauntingly nightmarish tale that involves Punch & Judy – and in particular Mr. Punch's nemesis, the hangman, Jack Ketch – a frighteningly realistic puppet show, and a hitherto unexplored corner of Bishop's Lacey known as Gibbet's Wood. The plot, beginning with the arrival in

Bishop's Lacey of a travelling puppet show, features a grisly murder during a performance of Jack and the Beanstalk in the village hall and reaches back to an earlier, even nastier crime centering on an ancient, rotting gibbet that has lain like a shadow over the village for years. For Flavia, undoing the complex knot that ties these strands together will test her precocious powers of deduction to the limit – and provide a shocking insight into some of the darker corners of the adult world.



[A Red Herring Without Mustard](#) (2011)

Alan Bradley returns with another beguiling novel starring the insidiously clever and unflappable eleven-year-old sleuth Flavia de Luce. The precocious chemist with a passion for poisons uncovers a fresh

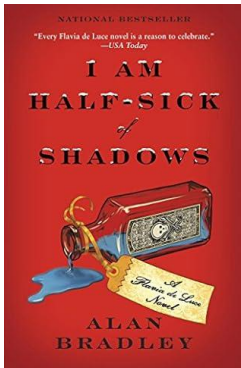
slew of misdeeds in the hamlet of Bishop's Lacey – mysteries involving a missing tot, a fortune-teller, and a corpse in Flavia's own backyard.

Flavia had asked the old Gypsy woman to tell her fortune, but never expected to stumble across the poor soul, bludgeoned in the wee hours in her own caravan. Was this an act of retribution by those convinced that the soothsayer had abducted a local child years ago? Certainly, Flavia understands the bliss of settling scores; revenge is a delightful pastime when one has two odious older sisters. But how could this crime be connected to the missing baby? Had it something to do with the weird sect who met at the river to practice their secret rites? While still pondering the possibilities, Flavia stumbles upon another corpse – that of a notorious layabout who had been caught prowling about the de Luce's drawing room.

Pedaling Gladys, her faithful bicycle, across the countryside in search of clues to both crimes, Flavia uncovers some odd new twists. Most intriguing is her

introduction to an elegant artist with a very special object in her possession – a portrait that sheds light on the biggest mystery of all: Who is Flavia?

As the red herrings pile up, Flavia must sort through clues fishy and foul to untangle dark deeds and dangerous secrets.

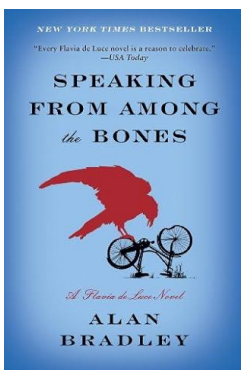


[I Am Half Sick of Shadows](#)

(2011)

It's Christmastime, and the precocious Flavia de Luce – an eleven-year-old sleuth with a passion for chemistry and a penchant for crime-solving – is tucked away in her laboratory, whipping up a concoction to

ensnare Saint Nick. But she is soon distracted when a film crew arrives at Buckshaw, the de Luce's decaying English estate, to shoot a movie starring the famed Phyllis Wyvern. Amid a raging blizzard, the entire village of Bishop's Lacey gathers at Buckshaw to watch Wyvern perform, yet nobody is prepared for the evening's shocking conclusion: a body found, past midnight, strangled to death with a length of film. But who among the assembled guests would stage such a chilling scene? As the storm worsens and the list of suspects grows, Flavia must use every ounce of sly wit at her disposal to ferret out a killer hidden in plain sight.



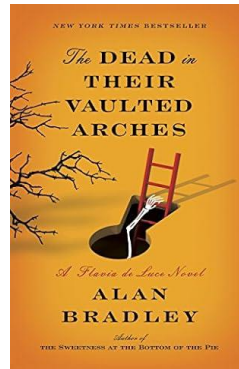
[Speaking From Among the](#)

[Bones](#) (2013)

Eleven-year-old amateur detective and ardent chemist Flavia de Luce is used to digging up clues, whether they're found among the potions in her laboratory or between the pages of her insufferable sisters'

diaries. What she is *not* accustomed to is digging up bodies. Upon the five-hundredth anniversary of St. Tancred's death, the English hamlet of Bishop's Lacey is busily preparing to open its patron saint's tomb. Nobody is more excited to peek inside the crypt than Flavia, yet what she finds will halt the proceedings dead in their tracks: the body of Mr. Collicutt, the church organist, his face grotesquely and inexplicably masked. Who held a

vendetta against Mr. Collicutt, and why would they hide him in such a sacred resting place? The irrepressible Flavia decides to find out. And what she unearths will prove there's never such thing as an open-and-shut case.



[The Dead in Their Vaulted Arches](#) (2014)

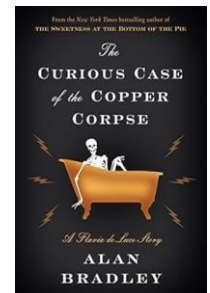
Two deaths, ten years apart, give Flavia de Luce the distraction she needs at a time when her family are more remote and dysfunctional than ever. Especially when a bizarre series of deadly events is casting a

long shadow over everyone at Buckshaw.

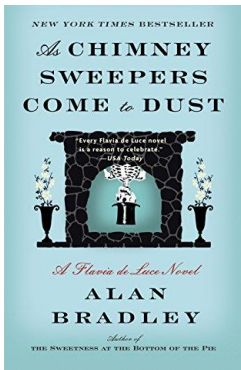
For Flavia, a gruesome crime to solve is only one of the mysteries confronting her, as she begins to unravel the shocking revelations surrounding the mysterious disappearance of her mother. And as she starts putting the clues together, she discovers an extraordinary tale of espionage and betrayal that may also be the key to her own destiny.

[The Curious Case of the Copper Corpse](#) (2014) (e-Novella)

A special eBook original short story, in which the eleven-year-old connoisseur of chemistry is immersed in her element: solving a mystery!



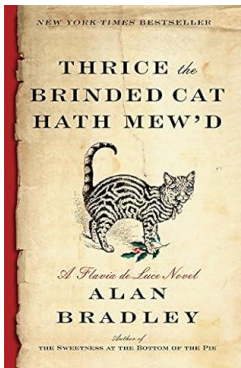
Murder! the letter says, Come at once. Anson House, Greyminster, Staircase No. 3. How can Flavia de Luce resist such an urgent plea? After all, examining a dead body sounds like a perfectly splendid way to spend a Sunday. So, Flavia hops upon her trusted bicycle, Gladys, whose rubber tires hiss happily along the rainy road, and arrives at her father's mist-shrouded old school. There, a terrified boy leads her to the loo where, sitting in a bathtub, is what appears to be a statue. But, no: To Flavia's surprise, the thing is in fact a naked dead man. Save his face, he seems to have been carved out of copper. Never one to shy away from the macabre, Flavia gets to work – only to find that when an investigation begins with a metallic cadaver, ever more curious twists are to be expected.



[As Chimney Sweepers Come to Dust](#) (2015)

Banished! is how twelve-year-old Flavia de Luce laments her predicament, when her father and Aunt Felicity ship her off to Miss Bodycote's Female Academy, the boarding school that her mother, Harriet, once attended across the sea in Canada. The sun has not yet risen on Flavia's first day in captivity when a gift lands at her feet. Flavia being Flavia, a budding chemist and sleuth, that gift is a charred and mummified body, which tumbles out of a bedroom chimney. Now, while attending classes, making friends (and enemies), and assessing the school's stern headmistress and faculty (one of whom is an acquitted murderess), Flavia is on the hunt for the victim's identity and time of death, as well as suspects, motives, and means. Rumors swirl that Miss Bodycote's is haunted, and that several girls have disappeared without a trace. When it comes to solving multiple mysteries, Flavia is up to the task – but her true destiny has yet to be revealed.

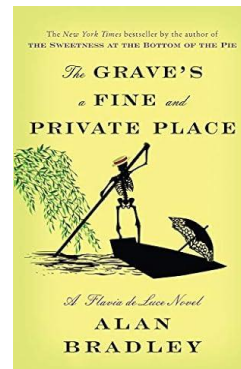
(Also includes the novella *The Curious Case of the Copper Corpse*)



[Thrice the Brinded Cat Hath Mew'd](#) (2016)

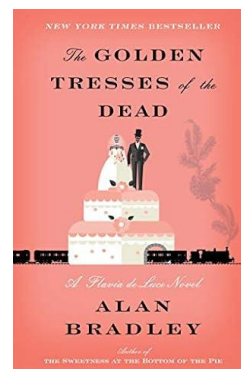
In spite of being ejected from Miss Bodycote's Female Academy in Canada, twelve-year-old Flavia de Luce is excited to be sailing home to England. But instead of a joyous homecoming, she is greeted on the docks with unfortunate news: Her father has fallen ill, and a hospital visit will have to wait while 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.



[The Grave's a Fine and Private Place](#) (2018)

In the wake of an unthinkable family tragedy, twelve-year-old Flavia de Luce is struggling to fill her empty days. For a needed escape, Dogger, the loyal family servant, suggests a boating trip for Flavia and her two older sisters. As their punt drifts past the church where a notorious vicar had recently dispatched three of his female parishioners by spiking their communion wine with cyanide, Flavia, an expert chemist with a passion for poisons, is ecstatic. Suddenly something grazes her fingers as she dangles them in the water. She clamps down on the object, imagining herself Ernest Hemingway battling a marlin, and pulls up what she expects will be a giant fish. But in Flavia's grip is something far better: a human head, attached to a human body. If anything could take Flavia's mind off sorrow, it is solving a murder – although one that may lead the young sleuth to an early grave.



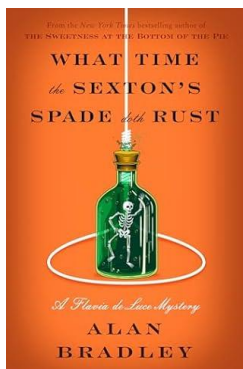
[The Golden Tresses of the Dead](#) (2019)

Flavia de Luce, the twelve-year-old chemist and amateur detective is eager to turn professional. She and her father's valet, Dogger, have founded a detective agency, Arthur Dogger & Associates, and unexpectedly cut into their first case during the revelry at her sister Ophelia's wedding reception.

After an eventful ceremony with a missing best man and spontaneous ventriloquist act, spirits are high as Feely and her new husband head for the towering and beautifully iced wedding cake. But as Feely slices into the first piece, a scream rings out – the bridal cake contains a severed human finger.

Delighted, Flavia wraps the finger in a napkin and whisks it away to her chemical laboratory. By studying the embalmed skin, the indentation of a ring, and the slope of

the fingernail, she'll not only be able to determine the identity of the victim - but also point a finger at a killer.



[What Time the Sexton's Spade Doth Rust](#) (2024)

Flavia de Luce has taken on the mentorship of her odious cousin Undine, who has come to live at Buckshaw following the death of her mother. Undine's main talent, aside from cultivating disgusting habits, seems to be raising Flavia's dander, although in her best moments she shows potential for trespassing, trickery, and other assorted mayhems.

When Major Greyleigh, a local recluse and former hangman, is found dead from a breakfast of poisonous mushrooms, suspicion falls on the de Luce family's longtime cook, Mrs. Mullet.

But Flavia knows the beloved Mrs. Mullet is innocent. Together with Dogger, estate gardener and partner-in-crime, and the obnoxious Undine, she sets out to find the real killer and clear Mrs. Mullet's good name.

Little does she know that following the case's twists and turns will lead her to a most surprising discovery-one with the power to upend her entire life.

[Official Alan Bradley Website](#)

**This booklist created in March 2024 for the
Just Desserts Mystery Fiction Discussion Group | SDC**

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