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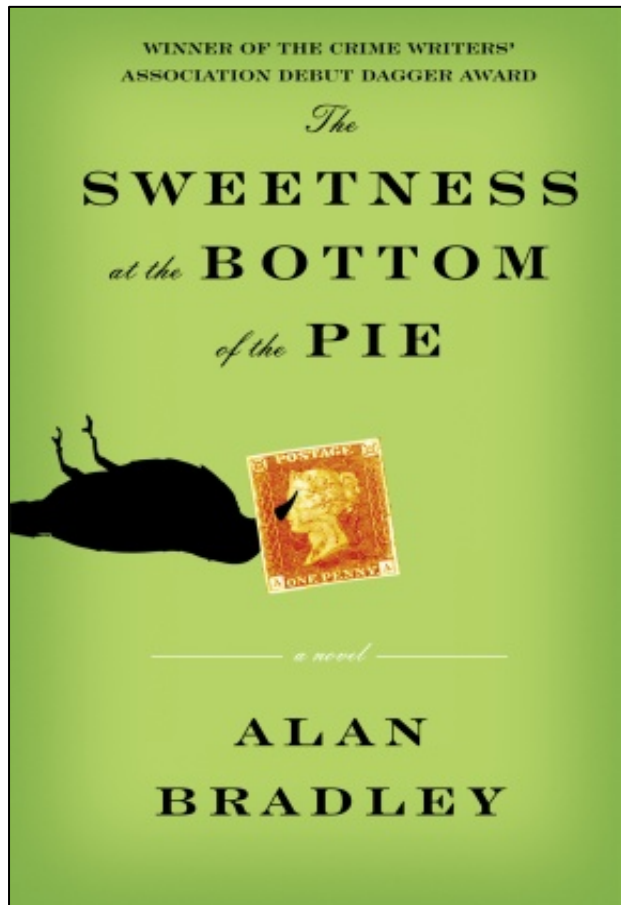
A corpse in the cucumber patch, a rare philatelic treasure, a bizarre Victorian chemistry lab, and a revolting recipe for custard pie...these are the ingredients for summer 2009's most delectable mystery!

THE SWEETNESS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIE by Alan Bradley won the Debut Dagger Award, and introduces a new breed of detective: a pigtailed eleven-year-old with a passion for poisons.

Alan Bradley introduces one of the most singular and engaging heroines in recent fiction: eleven-year-old Flavia de Luce, an aspiring chemist with a passion for poison. It is the summer of 1950—and a series of inexplicable events has struck Buckshaw, the decaying English mansion that Flavia's family calls home. A dead bird is found on the doorstep, a postage stamp bizarrely pinned to its beak. Hours later, Flavia finds a man lying in the cucumber patch and watches him as he takes his dying breath. For Flavia, who is both appalled and delighted, life begins in earnest when murder comes to Buckshaw. "I wish I could say I was afraid, but I wasn't. Quite the contrary. This was by far the most interesting thing that had ever happened to me in my entire life."

To Flavia the investigation is the stuff of science: full of possibilities, contradictions, and connections. Soon her father, a man raising his three daughters alone, is seized, accused of murder. And in a police cell, during a violent thunderstorm, Colonel de Luce tells his daughter an astounding story—of a schoolboy friendship turned ugly, of a priceless object that vanished in a bizarre and brazen act of thievery, of a Latin teacher who flung himself to his death from the school's tower thirty years before. Now Flavia is armed with more than enough knowledge to tie two distant deaths together, to examine new suspects, and begin a search that will lead her all the way to the King of England himself. Of this much the girl is sure: her father is innocent of murder—but protecting her and her sisters from something even worse...

An enthralling mystery, a piercing depiction of class and society, **The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie** is a masterfully told tale of deceptions—and a rich literary delight.



"THE SWEETNESS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIE offers the reader the precious gift of a richly-imagined and luscious new world - but uniquely so, for this is the world of Flavia Sabina de Luce: an 11 year-old, utterly winning, and altogether delightfully nasty piece of work. An outright pleasure from beginning to end."

—Gordon Dahlquist, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Glass Book of Dream Eaters*

"A wickedly clever story, a dead true and original voice, and an English country house in the summer: Alexander McCall Smith meets Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Please, please, Mr. Bradley, tell me we'll be seeing Flavia again soon?" —Laurie R. King

"Utterly charming! Eleven-year-old Flavia de Luce proves to be one of the most precocious, resourceful and...well--just plain dangerous--heroines around. Evil doers—and big sisters--beware!"—Lisa Gardner



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