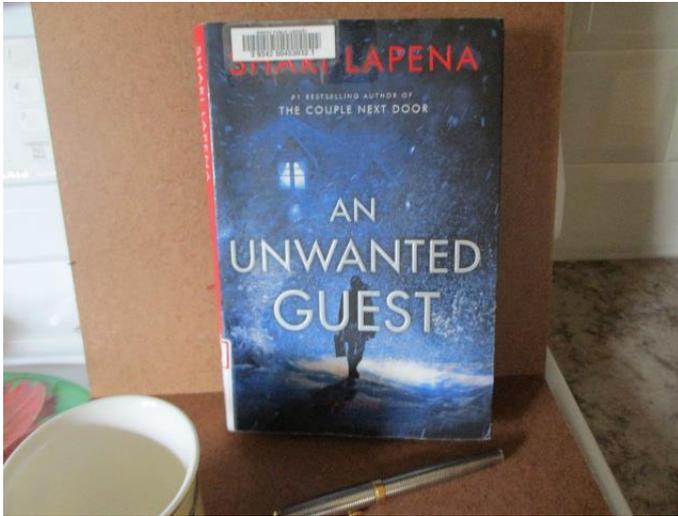


# An Unwanted Guest

By Rod Fraser

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This book is a page turner, a good old-fashioned story of multiple murders at a remote lodge called Mitchell's Inn in upper New York State. The book reminds me of the Agatha Christie novel *'And then There Were None'*.

The inn "boasts spacious old rooms with huge wood burning fireplaces, a well-stocked wine cellar and opportunities for cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing or just curling up with a good murder mystery."

In short, it seems a cozy getaway for a relaxing winter weekend. But a severe winter blizzard “has [intervened to] cut off all contact with the outside world.” In storms such as this, there is every possibility the lodge will soon be without electricity.

Only a few of the guests (and none of the staff) have managed to arrive at the lodge. James and Bradley, the owner of the lodge and his son, are going to look after their few guests on their own—at least until the roads clear and their staff can get to work.

With no bartender available, Bradley loads a cart with drinks and serves his guests in the lobby, a lovely room with a fireplace and comfortable seating. He explains the bar is closed for the evening. Everyone seems agreeable to this, and they proceed to get to know one another.

Dinner is served as a buffet in the dining room. The guests enjoy themselves, people watch and start their weekend. In a few hours, everyone is in bed to await a very disturbing morning.

Overnight, the ice storm rages and the power finally goes off. The lodge is left without lights or heating. There is wood for the fireplaces and oil lamps to provide light, but it still is a chilly, uncomfortable morning. Made all the more so, when one of the guests is discovered dead at the foot of

the stairs.

It looks like an accident, although David Paley has his doubts. He insists the body be left where it is, until the police can investigate. When a second guest is found dead later Saturday afternoon, the guests, as well as James and Bradley, start to panic. There is a killer loose in the lodge. It is likely one of the guests.

Over the course of the weekend, the guests search the inn for the killer, and watch each other warily, in the event it is one of their own. Two more guests are killed before the police arrive to investigate. The electricity is finally restored to the lodge and the roads are cleared. Civilization has returned to Mitchell's Inn.

Has the killer been found? Well, you'll have to read the book to find out.



I think this is a fine story. It is certainly a page turner. Although it has a lot of characters, I didn't have any difficulty keeping them straight. The author made it easy by mentioning their names often and providing key details to help me along.

Speaking of the author, Shari Lapena is a Toronto writer, born in 1960, who worked as a lawyer and English teacher before she became an author. She

has written six novels, three of them in as many years. She has a new book out in 2019, '*Someone We Know*', which I plan to read shortly

I read. '*The Couple Next Door*' a couple of years ago and liked it. It is probably her best known novel and highly recommended.

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