



Cardington Crescent

Anne Perry

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When Charlotte Pitt's sister is charged with murder, she and her husband Thomas must work fast to clear her—and find the real killer

As Inspector Thomas Pitt works to resolve the case of a dismembered woman, his womanizing brother-in-law, George March, Lord Ashworth, is poisoned with his morning coffee at the country estate of his cousins. The primary suspect? Charlotte's sister, Emily, the murdered man's wife and Pitt's sister-in-law. Charlotte and Pitt take on the March clan with the help of Great-aunt Vespasia, their formidable relative and a member of the clan, to break through the wall of deceit and silence. When Sybilla March, George's suspected paramour, is found strangled by her hair and Emily is the one who found her, the case would seem hopeless—for anyone but the indomitable Pitts.

Their pursuit of the truth takes them down a path of corruption, depravity, and murder, from the elegant townhouses lining fashionable Cardington Crescent to the horrifying slums of London.

Cardington Crescent Details

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Author : Anne Perry

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From Reader Review Cardington Crescent for online ebook

Karen says

This is the eighth book in the Thomas and Charlotte Pitt series. I was surprised to realize that I had read that many stories pertaining to them. Guess that is what you get when you have a interesting series.

Charlotte's sister and brother-in-law, Lord and Lady Ashworth, are staying the month at his relatives. Unfortunately, Emily's husband, George seems to be having an affair with his cousin's wife. Emily is heartbroken but there are rules, spoken and unspoken, in Society and she has no choice but to act unaffected or unaware of the situation. Finally, in a last desperate attempt to save her marriage, she flirts with another guest visiting also. That very night, Emily overhears her husband having an argument with his lover. Later, he comes to Emily's room and she realizes that things will be just fine between them. The next morning, Emily's world comes crashing down worse than she ever imagined. Her husband is died and the doctor says it is murder. in a house full of her husband's relatives with only one that truly cares for Emily, Charlotte comes to help her sister. Thomas is in charge of the case but he has another important case that needs solving--the unidentified cut-up corpse of a woman. The problem is that even in Victorian times, the spouse is always suspected of killing their loved one. Charlotte has to help her husband find the real killer before Emily is socially ruined or worse yet hanged for the murder. To make matters worse, the family is banning together and insisting she is the murderer especially after the lover is killed also. Two deaths and no clear suspects. Emily fears she will be blamed or maybe the man she flirted with got so carried away with the situation that he killed Emily's husband thinking that opened the door for him. Who could possibly be the real killer and Why? The fear and drama are mounting and the tension is unbearable.

This is an excellent mystery. The drama is intense and if you have read other books in this series, you will feel for Emily and many of the other characters. You also could read this book as a stand-alone and enjoy it just as much. The love that the main characters feel for each other's and the people that matter to them make this series so good. You hurt for them and cheer for them in the middle of the fear and suspicion that follows a murder. I loved how you did not know who the killer was until ever so far into the story and until you understood the motive, you still were half unsure if you had the correct suspect. I am reading to hunt down the next book in the series and keep on being entertained.

Mike says

Another very good story from Anne Perry although I must say, the last two books of her's that I've read that involve Thomas and Charlotte Pitt end rather abruptly. Anne has a very good sense of how to build up her characters, the locations she chooses for her stories seem extremely real to the reader and many of the characters can really infuriate you. The smugness, the completely blind and ignorant way the wealthy seem to live in the Victorian period never ceases to amaze. One minute they speak of God and Christianity and the next they're bad mouthing their family members and twisting proverbial knives into their kin. The mysteries that were created in this particular book brought two miserable and nasty realities to the reader- one is dealing with baby farms and the other is how a wealthy man and his absolutely hideous mother care not about anything but their own selfish desires and the havoc it causes.

Also, it's extremely infuriating to see how women had to play the part of "children" to some degree and not even be able to confront their own husbands when they were unfaithful, lest it be shown as bad taste, etc. The way Emily had to deal with her husband's stupidity and blatant wooing of another woman in plain sight was completely tasteless and pathetic on his part yet she couldn't do anything to stop it and is even told to grin

and bear it.

Alexandra says

1/17/18 \$1.99 for Kindle.

Jamie Collins says

Until the last few chapters, I was thinking that this was the best of the Charlotte & Thomas Pitt novels so far, despite the fact that it's heavy on repetitious sexist ranting from the aged Victorian patriarch. It's too bad that the book's ending is so weak.

Charlotte's sister Emily is Lady Ashworth - having married as far above herself as Charlotte married beneath. Emily's husband is murdered just after an embarrassing episode where he was flirting with another woman, and Emily falls under suspicion.

So Detective Inspector Thomas Pitt does his police thing, and Charlotte does her behind-the-scenes, I-used-to-be-rich-and-privileged-too thing. The mystery is fairly intriguing at first and I was hoping for a clever twist, but alas, the ending is weak sauce.

Carole (in Canada) says

As book #8 in the the Thomas and Charlotte Pitt series, Cardington Crescent is the best so far for me. I did find the beginning just a bit slow but the suspense just kept building until the very end. Parts of a dismembered woman are found throughout an area of modest means. Then Charlotte's brother-in-law, George, has been poisoned in his relative's home. Emily is being suspected by the patriarch and his mother as the prime suspect for she had 'married up' in their opinion. For Inspector Thomas Pitt, he doesn't expect to be able to solve the first murder, but he does his best, along with Charlotte, to prove Emily's innocence.

The mindset of the upper crust of Victorian society was incredibly conveyed in this book. You could just feel the suffocating strictures and the hypocritical actions of all. It is amazing the secrets harbored within an individual let alone a family. As Charlotte stated "We never do know anyone else completely. And nor should we - it would be an intrusion. And I daresay, at times it would be painful and destructive. And perhaps boring. How long would you stay in love with someone you could look through like glass, and see everything? One has to have mystery somewhere ahead left to explore, or why go on?"

I have now come to expect rather abrupt endings once the crime has been solved. It is not necessarily in a way we would expect, and I certainly didn't see it this time. But the scandal of it all would be contained but at such a price.

Gail says

This was kind of a two-fer, where investigating one mystery helps solve another only minimally related. Well done and a Good Read.

Katy M says

This one highlights societal and family expectations and pressures...

...and is, as with all her books, as relevant a commentary today as the time frame it is set in.

I never put spoilers in my reviews.

Anne Perry is a master of the written word. Every word, phrase, paragraph is placed for maximum effect. There is no filler or waste. She has obviously researched the era exhaustively. Her insight into the human condition is uncanny.

There are always many layers to her tales. The main storyline is Pitt and Charlotte, his police work and the mystery of the case he's working on in the particular book in this series, set in Victorian London. Then there is the social commentary almost as background. Ms. Perry shines a spotlight on the disparity between the classes, much of which is relatable to the disparity in income and the economic situation in the U.S. at this time. There is no preaching, it's presented simply as the setting of the scene. Her description of the physical aspect of the city and its environs paints as clear a picture as a movie.

You will come away from every book in this series changed a little bit. Entertained, enlightened, with a much clearer picture of Victorian London at that time frame. Be prepared, it's almost impossible to put down any of her books mid-read.

You will find yourself thinking of them long after you've come to the final word of her glorious works

Tad Richards says

A bunch of summer reading mystery novels together. Sue Grafton is always dependable, always good. John Maddox Roberts is a new discovery for me. A private eye in ancient Rome is a great idea -- the historical stuff is excellent, the characters and the writing good too. Very readable. I could have used one more plot twist in each of them.

This one is terrible. I'm frankly not all that impressed with Anne Perry's Victorian backgrounds, though they're not bad. But when I was about two thirds through, I realized -- nothing has happened in the last hundred pages. She shows up at the mansion, realizes any one of seven people could have done it, but she has no clue which one. Then he shows up, and realizes any one of seven people could have done it, but he has no clue which one. Then back to her, realizing...

and so on.

Falina says

I love this kind of well-written historical mystery, with plucky main characters and hints of darkness and complexity. This was several books into the series, but I never felt like I was missing anything by not reading

the earlier books. I'll read more books of this series if I can find them.

Lori says

My favourite in this series so far. Suspenseful, tragic and fast-paced. The idea of Charlotte and Emily holed up in a stuffy and unpleasant home with a murderer makes this a very enjoyable read that goes much too quickly.

Marjorie says

Very good, except ending vague!! And abrupt. I wish Perry had made a smoother, more detailed ending... I didn't think there was closure; and after all that tension !!

Kathy Davie says

Eighth in the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt mystery series set in late 19th century London.

The Story

The Eustace March is having a house party and part of its intention is to vet Jack Radley and arrange his marriage to Tassie. For some reason, George, Emily, and Aunt Vespasia are part of the party; Vespasia is Eustace's mother-in-law and George's great-aunt. William and Sybilla March are also visiting.

As the members of the party pursue the activities of upperclass-dom, George takes up an overt flirtation with the very willing Sybilla with whom he is falling in love and Emily is terrified at the thought of losing her George. Emily's misery is showing and making George angry [prick!] and Emily determines that she will fight fire with fire and become the life of the party. It does work...on Jack. This does catch George's attention and Emily believes they have a chance again only to find that chance forever shattered when she finds George dead in his bed.

As much as he likes Emily, even Thomas is concerned that she may be the murderer. A grave concern when yet another murder occurs within the house. Fortunately for Emily, Charlotte arrives to stay...and detect. The resolution of it revolving around the family dynamics and dysfunctions...with a little help from yet another murderer.

The Characters

Lady Ashworth, Emily, is married to George in what has been, up to now, a very happy marriage. She is also Charlotte Pitt's sister.

Charlotte Pitt married seriously down, class-wise, when she insisted upon marrying Thomas Pitt, the son of a gamekeeper and now a detective with the Metropolitan Police force in London. Of a naturally curious bent, Charlotte regularly "helps" Thomas solve cases by using her upperclass connections---sometimes with Emily and Vespasia's help. It's been a lovely collusion as it provides a showcase for discussing social issues of the day---and satisfying to Perry's readers as Vespasia collaborates with the powers of the day to do something about those issues.

Thomas is a social misfit in more ways than just marrying way above himself; he also thinks himself good enough to enter *anyone's* house...gasp...by the front door. He does try hard not to make political waves, but he still "don't take no shit". Ya gotta love him just for that! Together, they have two children, Jemima and Daniel.

Aunt Vespasia, Lady Cumming-Gould, was beautiful as a girl and has retained the beauty and the confidence to be honest and compassionate...and a very smart, no-nonsense woman in her older years. She doesn't put up with much from either Eustace or Mrs. March---go Vespasia!

The characters relevant to this particular story include Eustace March who is the head of the family and a more overbearing, self-righteous, know-it-all prick I never want to encounter again. He has a dark, disgusting secret, which only reflects his attitudes. Between him and his mother, they manage to tear everyone apart over and over as they combine forces to railroad Emily.

William March is the son of the house and an accredited painter and in 12 years of marriage to Sybilla has not yet managed an heir. A lack his father and grandmother never cease to rail about. Sybilla herself is a beauty in both looks and personality, too bad about her morals, flirting outrageously with George.

Tassie March is the daughter of the house and takes after Vespasia's side of the family---she has a compassionate heart. However, she also has carries a family-destroying, bloody secret.

Jack Radley is, like Emily, an outsider amongst the Marches with only his face, his personality, and his wit to recommend him although Eustace is courting him for his bloodline. If he marries Tassie, Eustace might get his peerage.

My Take

As ever, Perry does a lovely job of recreating the sense of the late 19th century through the dialog and the mores, culture, and styles of the time. The part I don't understand is why Emily and George and Aunt Vespasia are even staying at the Marches. They *all* live in London. Why would they be spending weeks at a house where they can't stand its matriarch or her son??

I also resent the summary on the back of the book where it claims that George is a womanizing aristocrat. Sure, he's an aristocrat. But this is the first time [in the series] that George has behaved this way. This does not make him a womanizer!

This is just like book covers...don't the summarizers or cover artists ever read the damned book??!

Now that I have that off my chest. It's a very frustrating and terrifying read as there seem to be no clues to help clear Emily and the only allies she has are Aunt Vespasia [I do love this woman!] and Jack, the man she suspects of having killed George.

The Cover

The cover is...different. In two shades of gray, there is an inch-and-a-half diameter circle rich with an empurpled London street scene at night which doesn't appear to have anything to do with the story.

Chequers says

La trama e' intrigante e ben narrata, pero' come tutti i libri della Perry la conclusione e' veloce e senza troppe

spiegazioni. In questo caso avrei voluto una conclusione un po' piu' esauriente, non in mezza pagina! La Perry e' cosi': pagine in cui ti attira con le sue descrizioni, ed un finale sempre troppo corto.

Moira Fogarty says

My first Anne Perry mystery; I enjoyed her world-building skills, the rich details of the Victorian era that set the mood perfectly. This was a classic "English country house" mystery, with limited suspects and a single investigator (Pitt) with sidekick, but the true sleuth is Pitt's wife Charlotte. Some excellent suspense moments, my only complaint is that the conclusion, where the murderer is revealed, felt flat and too speedy. There was no real explanation of motive, everything was simply alluded to vaguely. Otherwise, a strong book, I will read more from this series. Next: Seven Dials.

Barbara says

I have become totally addicted to these. I started the series while home with the flu and I'm up to #10 and just waiting for my library hold to download. I am thoroughly entertained. Reading them consecutively, one right after the other, is probably not the best approach since there is some necessary descriptive repetition of the main characters, but her knowledge of the political and historical concerns of the time along with the delineation of the differences between the various classes make for an entertaining read. Her description of the fashions of the times in terms of dress and home decor provide a sense of place and time moves along as modern conveniences like electric lighting and telephones are gradually being incorporated into the story. Perfect for when I can't handle the real news. I'd rather read historical mystery fiction.
