



Bethlehem Road

Anne Perry

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When Members of Parliament are murdered crossing Westminster Bridge, Thomas and Charlotte Pitt must sift through the many suspects to find the killer—before he strikes again

In the few minutes it takes to cross Westminster Bridge, Sir Lockwood Hamilton has his throat slit and is tied securely to the lamppost with his evening scarf. The killer then vanishes without being seen. Inspector Thomas Pitt thinks the motive might have been personal . . . or political. When a second Member of Parliament is murdered in the same way, politics appear to be the reason. Soon the suspect list includes anarchists and suffragettes. Public outrage mounts and fear grips London and Parliament after a third lamppost murder.

Deep in his end of the investigation, Pitt must rely on his wife, Charlotte, and Great-aunt Vespasia to explore the drawing rooms of the upper class for clues to the mystery. With burning social issues swirling around them, the three of them must solve the case before another MP falls victim to the Westminster cutthroat.

Bethlehem Road Details

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Author : Anne Perry

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From Reader Review Bethlehem Road for online ebook

Ira says

The reason why this crime happened is shocking, not expected at all.

Thomas get promoted after that to be a Chief Inspector, he expected thought the money will good for the family, even though he will dislike the job, you see, just sitting in the office instead go out there to do the investigation he love.

Luckily darling Charlotte not having that, she love Thomas too much and understood how he felt!:)

Jamie Collins says

1.5 stars. I've read a couple dozen of Anne Perry's Victorian mysteries now, and this is probably my least favorite. It has all of Perry's usual weaknesses - tiresome repetition and relentless harangues about Victorian social ills - combined with an especially weak ending to an initially promising mystery.

When Thomas can't figure out who is killing Members of Parliament as they're walking home after late sessions, Charlotte goes into action, borrowing clothes and using her maiden name while she visits with all the high-society ladies concerned. Husband and wife flail around looking for suspects with a personal motive, while the press worries about anarchists and Fenians.

The social issue highlighted here is women's legal rights, or the lack thereof, and Perry hits it hard with long rants from an embittered woman who has lost custody of her child. The lectures would perhaps be more interesting to a reader who previously had no idea that Victorian men held legal rights to their children, and to their wives' property and income, etc.

This book was published the same year as the first of her William Monk books. I like that series better than this one, and I keep hoping the quality here will improve.

Carole (in Canada) says

I would have to say, for me, this was the most intriguing Charlotte and Thomas Pitt novel! I never was expecting that ending!

Ms. Perry's ability to paint a scene, a character or the atmosphere will never cease to amaze to me. I am immediately drawn in and completely captivated with how she brings out the grittiness of life in Victorian England. Whether it be political, religious or personal, these issues are seamlessly written into the story.

In this novel, the murder of three Members of Parliament sets the city on edge with no real reason as to why. Finding suspects is even harder. There was one individual who I felt had some claim to responsibility in this story but not in the way I was expecting.

Anne Hawn Smith says

This was one of the more complex of the Thomas and Charlotte series. The story begins when a Member of Parliament is found on Westminster Bridge with his throat slit. There seems to be no reason for his death until a second Member of Parliament is killed in the same way. Suspicion falls on the suffragettes and especially one woman in particular who has been grievously wronged by one of the victims, her estranged husband.

As this series continues, Anne Perry is giving a riveting description of the state of women during the Victorian era when husbands had complete control of their wives including their money and children. At the time of this novel, laws had just been passed to consider a woman in her own right and not as chattel to her husband. She was also in control of her own money, but things were not a whole lot better. The prime suspect has had her children taken from her including her 6 year old daughter and was cast out without any resources never to see her children again. She was considered an unfit mother because she was a suffragette and, because she did not have independent means, was left to the mercy of friends or a life on the street. Some of the most extreme Victorian attitudes are fleshed out in this story making for some very interesting reading.

Chequers says

Solito romanzetto della Perry dove il finale e' come al solito racchiuso nelle ultime pagine e dove molte cose restano senza risposta.

Questa volta ha comunque il pregio di illustrare la condizione femminile nell'epoca vittoriana, anche se pur molto velatamente e solo per le classi alte.

Perfetto per chi e' stressato, come me in questo periodo, e non vuole pensare ne' coinvolgersi troppo.

Lori says

Promising start to this story but disappointing finish.

Bodosika Bodosika says

Starting Words: Hetty stood at the Westminster bridge and stared across the dark roadway at the man lounging rather awkwardly against the beautiful three-headed lamppost on the far side.

Ending Words: She did not ever see Pitt come in the door, ashen-faced, Forbes at his elbow, but she felt his arms go round her as she breathed in the familiar smell of his coat feeling the texture of it under her cheek.

The story had to do with a lunatic who had a grudge against member or members of Parliament (MP) who live on the South side of river of Westminster bridge and before you know it three members of Parliament (MP) are dead and nobody seems to know who is doing the killings and why.

The narrative was smooth and I guess nobody tells a story about Victoria London like Anne Perry
I enjoyed it and i will give it 3stars

writer... says

Great details of the era, characters I enjoy , and plotting that keeps me thrilled to be in suspense as Thomas and Charlotte Pitt work out the solution...

Allison says

I'm going to have to think about this one a bit. The mystery part of it was excellent as always. The characters were great. It's a little different than the Pitt books have been so far in that you don't find out who and why on the second to last page, you find out the who a bit sooner. So, that's a fun difference. What left me a little bit unsettled is that the plot seems to be just a prop for her soapbox of women's rights. Not that I don't think women should have rights or be able to vote or have property of their own if they want. But, at times I wondered if she was condescending to women who "bear and raise children and order a house which is a refuge of quiet and decency" (although I'm not sure how anyone could have quiet and children in the same house). I'm ready to think about something now other than women's suffrage. And I'm sure that we're supposed to not like the bad man character and feel so sorry his the poor suppressed yet strong wife but I thought the woman a bit stupid and the man's character developed contradictorily. Perry usually touches on issues of the day, but this was a little overload to me.

I think this is the first book so far where Thomas hasn't tried to forbid Charlotte from getting involved in his cases her own way. It's nice to see them working together, but I wondered what brought about the 180 degree change. Maybe that he knew the book was about woman's rights and so he wanted to give his wife some rights. Smart man. He would have seemed like quite a jerk if he did his usual "I forbid you to meddle in this dangerous case" bit in a book that was about women's property, thoughts and actions being controlled by men.

Some of the names in this book tripped me up. Is it really possible that there were actually brothers and a sister in 1880's England named Jasper, Garnet and Amethyst? Seriously? And Zenobia? Cuthbert? Parthenope?

A few quotes I liked "A woman's appearance is her fortune, and what she seems to be will be the measure of what other people assume she is." I'm not sure if Perry was trying to make a statement about the 1800's, but to a large extent, things haven't changed much.

"Pitt was unruffled: it was faintly satisfying that their dislike was mutual" Just sort of funny to me.

On a different note, I do sort of wonder, if Society is really as small as it is said to be in every one of these Pitt mystery books, why Society hasn't caught on that Charlotte Pitt is a policeman's wife and is trying to discover things about you. But, no character so far has said anything like "Ah yes, Charlotte Pitt, I remember my friend Afton from Cardington Square talking about you".

Mira says

It's not a conventional detective tale, but would be fab for those interested in historic London. I found it very slow paced and a little dull

Indee says

The murders are grisly and the book gives a good insight in to the social and political views of women's suffrage in Victorian England. But all in all the pace of the story becomes very slow towards the middle and picks up only towards the very end.

Jenny says

I like that Anne Perry usually tackles a different social issue in each of her books; in this case it was about women's suffrage and the "right to the franchise." However, it felt a little drummed over our heads (not dissimilar to an earlier installment that focused on slums). I also didn't love that we didn't really have a good variety of suffragettes- we met Parthenope Sheridan and she seemed normal, but we spent the most time with Florence Ivory and her friend Africa, both of whom came across as manly and hard; Charlotte and Pitt think they are each are capable of murdering because of their passion for the cause the injustice done to Florence by the removal of her daughter from her care.

(view spoiler)

Bettie? says

Read by Davina Porter

Description: *The gentleman tied to the lamppost on Westminster Bridge is most elegantly attired—fresh boutonniere, silk hat, white evening scarf—and he is quite, quite dead, as a result of his thoroughly cut throat. Why should anyone kill Sir Lockwood Hamilton, the kindest of family men?*

Increasingly turned off by Perry's books. I put this on to perform a scale of extreme ironing that only comes from five weeks summer bumming. I preferred the monotomy of smoothing combined with the smell of starch on crisp linen to this bloated snoozefest. Expect the rest from this author to hit the OTBRIWPB shelf sooner rather than later.

NEXT

- 3* Paragon Walk (Charlotte & Thomas Pitt, #3)
- 3* Death in the Devil's Acre (Charlotte & Thomas Pitt #7)
- CR Bethlehem Road (Charlotte & Thomas Pitt, #10)

- 3* The Face of a Stranger (William Monk, #1)
- 3* A Dangerous Mourning (William Monk #2)
- 2* A Sudden, Fearful Death (William Monk, #4)

3* The Shifting Tide (William Monk, #14)

4* Dark Assassin (William Monk, #15)

4* Execution Dock (William Monk, #16)

3* A Christmas Guest (Christmas Stories, #3)

3* A Christmas Beginning (Christmas Stories, #5)

Kathy Davie says

Tenth in the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt mystery series set in the late 19th century in London revolving around Thomas' career as a policeman and the help provided him by Charlotte.

The Story

Some madman, or woman, is murdering Members of Parliament only moments after they leave a late sitting in Parliament and no one has seen a thing. Thomas and his superior, Micah Drummond [at last! A good boss for Thomas!!], are completely baffled. It takes a great deal of tedious footwork and questioning. Always taking a different angle, a different approach before the key clue is discovered.

My Take

A horrifying look at the lack of women's rights in the late 19th century in England. I really don't care what excuses the Establishment came up with as to why women couldn't think for themselves. When Florence Ivory unleashes her tirade at Charlotte...I just wanted to cry. It's all well and good to make laws forcing women to be beholden to their husbands or fathers for every single object, thought, or happiness. It's quite another to expect that every one of those husbands or fathers would be concerned with actually considering their true welfare. Too many people, men or women, are tempted by absolute power.

I couldn't help but wonder at the women who so vociferously protested that women were not competent at holding opinions how they dared, or even could, come up with an opinion. Since they were not competent enough to do so...

It took a while to figure out the identity of the culprit but I never would have guessed at such a second-hand distance! I just love Perry's C&T Pitt series, she has such an excellent eye for the time period. And makes me so grateful to be living in today's world!

The Cover

The cover is certainly symbolic with its top hat on its side, the ends of a white silk scarf spilling from it topped with a primrose on a railing at Westminster Bridge. The title itself is a clue.

Scot says

Tenth in the series of Victorian mysteries featuring the investigative strategies and life experiences of Inspector Thomas Pitt and his forthright wife Charlotte. This one explored the suffragette question as it affected various levels of London society in 1888. We get some long speeches on both sides of the issue which didn't tell me anything about the Cult of Domesticity as it was practiced in this society that I didn't

already know; still, the revelation of just how few basic rights women legally had, and the controlling power their fathers and husbands could wield over them—for both good or bad—is important historical information that many readers who don't know about this should learn..

I particularly liked the villain's modus operandi in this one: a serial killer is picking off Members of Parliament crossing Westminster Bridge over the Thames late at night, after a late sitting of Parliament has adjourned. As they hurry briskly home through the damp and fog, to their comfortable homes on the south side of the river, someone is catching politicians of this august body alone, slitting their throats, and then using their white silk scarves to tie their dead bodies, like overdressed scarecrows, to lampposts scattered along the famous crossway. Who is to blame? Is it the diabolical work of anarchists, an embittered suffragette, or a lunatic—or might it be some personal vendetta? Thomas must investigate, and Great-aunt Vespasia gets Charlotte involved, probing the mystery from another direction, and unbeknownst to Thomas. In this installment, we also come to better know and appreciate Thomas's new supervisor, Micah Drummond.
