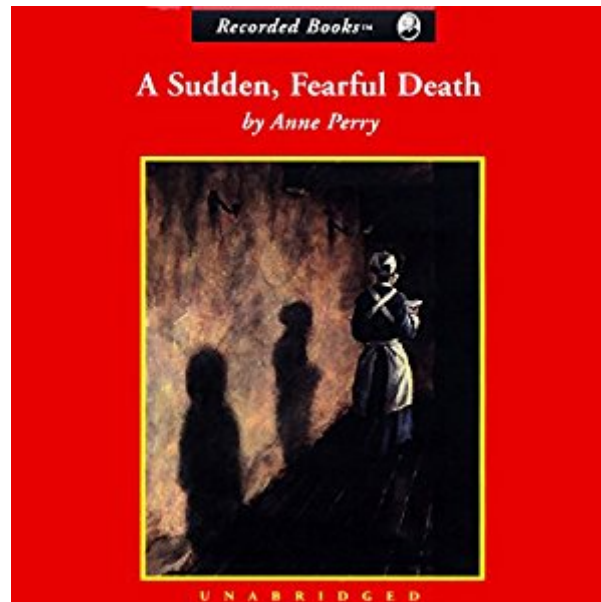


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A Sudden, Fearful Death



Synopsis

Victorian private inquiry agent William Monk is hired to investigate the brutal rape of a young London woman and the strangulation murder of Nurse Prudence Barrymore, an extraordinary woman who had served with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. (Mystery). --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 15 hours and 41 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: August 18, 2004

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0006IU6ZA

Best Sellers Rank: #163 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > British

Detectives #720 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Suspense #1148

in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > British Detectives

Customer Reviews

A Sudden, Fearful Death is the fourth mystery in the Inspector Monk series of books by Anne Perry. Better known for her Pitt series, the Inspector Monk series are slightly earlier (just after the Crimean War), grittier, and in many ways more riveting. They are longer than the average Pitt novel, and this allows the author's wonderful ability to convey period detail and characterization to shine through. In this mystery Inspector Monk is called in to investigate the murder of one of Florence Nightingale's Crimean nurses, who is working at a London hospital. Those of you who have read the previous three novels know how hard it can be for these young women to adapt to English hospitals after their stint abroad, and at first it seems that Prudence Barrymore might be a victim because of her desire to reform the medical system. As the plot unfolds, however, we realize that there is a great deal more going on at London's Royal Free hospital than meets the eye. One of Perry's greatest talents lies in character development, and she is always careful to let a different character feature prominently in each novel. This time it is Lady Callandra Daviot's turn, Inspector Monk's female patron, who emerges as a more three-dimensional character. Hester Latterly, another Nightingale

nurse, is also featured, along with the brilliant Inspector Monk and the lawyer of lawyers, Oliver Rathbone. I would particularly recommend the Monk series to fans of TV's Law and Order, since these mysteries combine excellent sleuthing with taut court-room drama. If you like historical mysteries, you will love this series. If you already like Anne Perry, I encourage you to give Inspector Monk a try!

For whatever reason, this story seemed disjointed. The first big scene took forever to tie in with the rest of the plot and I'm still not sure it was necessary. The big reveal did not necessarily need Julia and her sister Marianne. The courtroom scenes are tedious and overly drawn out. I suspect Perry wrote it this way simply to give Rathbone something to do. Unfortunately, it only served to make him less likeable since he is constantly disparaging Prudence's memory and character. Why isn't Hester testifying? She witnessed Prudence performing successful amputations and could refute some of the claims. A huge oversight by the prosecution and Monk. It was very difficult and upsetting to read pages and pages of people tearing Prudence's memory and accomplishments to shreds, simply because no one has sufficient imagination to guess at the real meaning of her letters (which I did almost immediately) until Hester manages near the end of the trial. This alone brings the rating down 1 star. How annoying that everyone assumed a sordid reason behind the letters, especially since it was so out of character for Prudence. Since I guessed the reason right away, I find it hard to believe none of the other characters did. How absurd. Not to mention, it's getting really annoying the way Monk continually ruminates on how brilliant he is. Give it a rest already! I have to say, I really like the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt series better. There is a lot of potential for the Monk books, but I think the time period makes it difficult to enjoy. While women are still relegated to a background role during Pitt's era, at least whispers of change are in the air. During the Monk books, the female characters are so restricted at times, it's difficult to enjoy the read. That said, the parts with Hester are always my favorite. Poor thing is so ahead of her time.

I like the William Monk Novels and this one was excellent. The interaction between Monk and Hester can be outrageously funny to me. Anne Perry has the ability to bring characters alive like only the best authors can. So far her books make me really wonder who "done it". Or if I have an idea who did, she is still able to keep me wondering. And I can find myself so wrong by the end of the book. She also has been able to show different sides of Victorian London, the various types of people who live there. To me this book is a very good example of a murder mystery, filled with intrigue, a cantankerous detective and nurse, a brilliant barrister, and more than one evil character.

I am a 'new' fan of the Inspector Monk series and am reading the books in order. Cannot say enough good things about this series is progressing for me. I have talked to other fan and they tell me the best is yet to come. A side benefit is my reading other materials related to the history of that time.

Monk and Hester investigate when a nurse is strangled at the local hospital. A boring read. The book rambles in places while in others fairly gallops to the next part. Perry has developed a knack for overstatement and also for writing some very clunky prose which continually slows down the characters. The murder mystery is also a mess. Hester conveniently forgets a conversation which throws a different light on the investigation and pursues a line which she must know is untrue but this discrepancy is never explained. Perhaps Perry herself forgot she'd written that section or hoped the reader wouldn't notice. I felt slightly insulted by this book. There's a hastiness to the whole thing, a good edit would have helped. Perry has nothing new to say about either her characters or the situations they find themselves in.

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