



Murder in the Museum

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When a human skeleton is unearthed, Carole and Jude must risk tarnishing the sterling reputation of a beloved author to learn whether his sword was mightier than his pen.

Murder in the Museum Details

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Author : Simon Brett

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From Reader Review Murder in the Museum for online ebook

Rebecca says

Carol Seddon is a new trustee for Brackets, former home of somewhat second-string 20th century author Esmond Chadleigh, most famous for the lament he wrote about his brother's death in WWI and his own happy family life. Then a body at least 50 years buried shows up in the former kitchen gardens, touching off a series of incidents all connected to the truth about the Chadleighs, and those who depend on the Chadleighs' reputation.

I liked the setup of this mystery (well, it's a British country house, so of course I liked it), and I liked the connection between past and present, and the role that research plays in solving it (I am a librarian, after all). However, I knew whose the body was pretty much as soon as it was discovered, and I figured out the mystery of the death pretty early on, too. I also knew exactly what would happen when Carol discovered a certain part of the house, and I was right. I like a bit more surprise in my mysteries. I also don't really like the author's overt cynicism about people, institutions, government, etc. Some of it is fine and well-deserved, but I want to like at least some of the characters, or why bother reading the book? Carol is prickly and irritating a lot of the time, and I don't really enjoy spending time with her.

Marie says

3.5 stars.

It's not a spoiler to say that I really enjoyed the cold case + modern murder. It was creatively done and it worked for the story. I also enjoyed learning more about Jude. However, the ongoing ridiculousness of Jude or Carole being kidnapped at the end of every book before the murderer is revealed is just too much. I've come to expect it as formulaic and it isn't a formula that works for me. I'm not saying that these novels need to me 100% realistic, but come on! Still, going on to book #5 to see if any improvement and change can be had.

Liz V. says

This is the fourth in a series in which amateur sleuths Carole and Jude seek to unravel the mysteries of a skeleton buried in the kitchen garden of a museum, formerly the home of a popular 1930s author, and the murder of one of the museum's leading proponents.

Carole, a retired civil servant, has been co-opted to the museum's board of trustees, in view of her Home Office experience. Instead, Carole finds the usual bureaucratic infighting compounded by the lack of funds. Boredom threatens enough to think of resigning, until the bodies turn up.

Meanwhile, Jude is distracted by the reappearance of a former colleague, whose presence is an irritation to Carole, until his academic expertise proves helpful.

Overall, an enjoyable book, but I felt disadvantaged in not having read the previous three, so backtracking.

Nit: reference is made, on p. 216, to returning home, but the reference to putting down the phone on p. 215 suggests Carole is home, rather than using her mobile at her previous location, the pub (p. 200).

Tom Jenckes says

Simon Brett really tickles my funny bone. I love hearing him narrate his own mysteries. He has the characters of Carol and Jude down to a T. He pits their views against each other. In spite of their differences they make a formidable sleuthing team. Well done!

Donnell says

This was truly a "cozy" mystery--so interesting that a genre of MURDER mysteries, where people actually die, should be considered cozy. Yet this book was a cozy read that made one feel--where ever one was reading the book-- like one was curled up by a fire in the library of an old half-timbered English estate with the rain pattering against the leaded diamond shaped panes of the windows.

Drawn to this book for a variety of reasons:

1. A main character--and the villain to some--was a person wanting to write the biography of a mid-twentieth century author of poetry and stories, who had been known in his time but was now mostly out of print. Having written a biography of a similar type author, myself--and never have expecting to find such a character starring in a book--this was the first thing that drew me to this novel.
2. The story involves a house museum for an author--places I love to visit. But also, it deals with the behind the scenes frustrations of the running of such a place with board members technically important but, particularly in the mind of the executive director, really only a rubber stamp. Also, the too frequent problem of the volunteer who was important in the past but does not know how to let go and let everyone move beyond them.
3. We learn the proper way to have Tea: Everything brought in the room on a TRAY and then served on to little side tables.

I also like that there were several mysteries here: a. Who did it? b. Who were the intended victims? and c. Were there secrets the family was trying to hide and, if so, what were they?

However, the secrets hidden by the family--while okay--could have been juicier. Can't help but point out that the biographies of two 20th century British writers--Vera Brittain and E.M. Delafield--contained similar "secrets" which, in the case of Vera was a bit juicier and in both cases actually happened.

Elizabeth says

I think I'm done with this series. The main characters just seem to get more and more embittered and stubborn and dysfunctional, enough to spoil the pleasure of the mystery. I wonder if the author has ever

actually had a close friendship with a woman.....

F says

The downside of this book was all the typical BORING boardroom meeting rhetoric (disagreements / powerplay among members, fundraising, sponsors, etc.) that the main storyline revolves around. How can any of these dynamics create an enjoyable page-turner? There were also major editing oversights in the book. A board of trustees manages Bracketts, the Elizabethan house of a celebrated writer, Esmond Chadleigh. Throughout the book, Felix is Esmond's father, except in Chapter 13 where Gerard is Esmond's father. Throughout the book, Belinda is Esmond's daughter, except in Chapter 34 where Belinda is Esmond's sister. On the positive side of this book, the author Simon Brett did a great job portraying the characterization differences between the strait-laced Carole and her laid-back, serene next-door neighbor, Jude.

Samantha says

An easy listen, but the weak plot developments in this series, in general, are beginning to annoy. I'll probably listen to the ones available from the library - good for listening while housecleaning - but don't think I'll be paying for any after that.

Jan C says

#4 in Simon Brett's Feathering series. Here, Jude takes in a former lover and Carol is a trustee on a board for a museum. The board meetings are eye-opening. Having never been on a board I've no idea if they are all run rough-shod over by one dominant personality or another.

This is a museum dedicated to the memory of a great poet, or maybe not so great.

And a body (more like a skeleton) appears with a hole in the head. There is an American academic working on a biography of the poet, which they are sure is going to be a hatchet job. Then one of the domineering folks gets shot. And Carol finds the priest-hole fascinating.

It was an interesting story with a few semi-surprises.

Gerry says

Bracketts, an Elizabethan house, is to be turned into a museum celebrating the life and work of a local poet, Esmond Chadleigh. But there is tension on the Board of Trustees that Carole Seddon, an amateur sleuth, joins as it plans the way forward.

Then a skeleton is discovered in the kitchen garden and Carole enlists the help of friend, and also amateur sleuth, Jude Nicol, to try to discover what has happened.

Before they get very far into their investigation one of the former members of the Board, who still had a big say in what was happening, is murdered. And, as is often the case, there are a number of suspects, all with good reasons for committing the crime.

Why has it happened? And are the two incidents connected? Or is there some hidden secret about the house and the family? Carole and Jude carry out their intrepid investigations and eventually uncover surprising facts about the Chadleigh family ... but not before they have gone through plenty of trauma and Carole very nearly becomes a victim herself.

The usual exciting Fethering magic, but, a word of warning, keep away from the place!

Shannon says

Ho-hum. No murder (unless you count the unearthing of a decades old skeleton,) until three-quarters of the way through the book. While waiting for something dramatic to happen, the reader can always speculate who the murder victim will be. There are several choices, as the story relies heavily on stock mystery characters, straight out of central casting. And, I must say, that when the murderer is finally revealed, although it is indeed a surprise, it is neither believable nor satisfying. Given the author's preoccupation with illness and imminent death, perhaps there was something tragic going on in his own life during the time he wrote this. The natural death was far more poignant and real compared to the contrived fictional one.

I usually prefer the "Fethering" series over some of Simon Brett's other series because they usually have more substance. However, this time around, both protagonists, Carole and Jude, are at odds with each other and with the reader. The witticisms are strained and thin, the plot is barely there and the landscape is filled with too many potentially thought-provoking and very serious situations to be comfortable, which is the whole point of a "cozy" mystery!

Karla Huebner says

Somewhat of a present-day cozy. My attitude toward it zigzagged a bit. At times it seemed intelligent, with some clever dialog, but for the most part it was rather slow-moving and implausible (particularly as regards motivation for murder). I think what I liked best was the fact that the two protagonists were single women in their fifties and both represented as still attractive in an everyday, believable way; and I also liked the sensitive treatment of Jude taking in her dying lover of past years, whose propensity to have numerous girlfriends no longer bothers her.

Marfita says

I always enjoyed the Charles Paris stories and thought I'd try this from the Fethering series. I will probably read more of these, simply because they're easy and I only yelled at the book once: when the heroine finds the secret priest hole and ventures down it without a "lifeline" (someone who knows where she is, a weapon, a functioning cell phone, enough food for a week - that sort of thing) and then, when not just one but *two* suspects show up, are annoyed to find her, and have with them someone else they really don't like and send *her* down into the hole and then ask the heroine to toss up her car keys so they "can move her car" which is in the way AND SHE DOES. Okay, maybe that was just one big looooong yell.

Here's what would happen if *I* were going looking for a secret priest hole: I'd *take a disinterested party with me*, when I found the hole, I'd look at it from a distance and then I would *leave* and report my findings to the local constabulary. Before going down into such a space, I would have: a flashlight with fresh batteries, stout shoes, a quick alternate escape plan (featuring the disinterested party, I'm sure), *and my head examined*. The characters were realistic (they can get cartoony in the Cozies) and I suppose the victim was not totally over-the-top as pushy, overbearing, with a touch of sadism. But the nicest part about that was that she was not even the intended victim. Oh, that was good! You prime everyone to have a motive to kill her and then she wasn't even the target! Nicely done.

I do have a quibble with the annoying American woman. I don't mind her being annoying and pushy, we are pretty annoying and pushy - that's fair comment. But the concession to an accent was that she said "Gard" all the time. As in, "Oh, Gard!" I'm sure the Brits roll on the floor when we try to do various Blighty accents, but where do they get this impression that we say things like "Gard" and "Americur"? Get it right, it's only in words like "Warshington" and "warter" and even then it's a minority accent. We say, "Oh, gawwwd!"

I'm afraid the dread secret of the Chadleigh's wasn't much of a secret. You only have to mention WWI, a son/brother dead and the body unrecovered to think: ahhh, a deserter - but it was fun getting there.

John Frankham says

Simon Brett's whodunnits can be underrated: they are full of wry humour and knowledge of the characters and motivations of a wide range of recognisable types. Be ready to recognise yourself in someone in this book!

Sleuths Carole, the retired civil servant, and Jude, the healing practitioner, return in the fourth Fethering mystery.

Carole is a new trustee on the board looking after the house, gardens, and literary heritage of a much-loved poet. She soon becomes entangled in the cross-fire between warring factions. Should the poet's biography be written by the lazy son of the poet, or by a self-seeking American professor ready to ditch the dirt?

When a human skeleton is unearthed in the grounds, and another death follows, Carole, as a trustee, and Jude, as the lover of an interested academic, flirt with danger in investigating ...

Katya says

[the guy who murdered a woman for bossing him around isn't a danger to "good" women once he gets out of prison, because "not every woman is like that." (hide spoiler)]
