



A Word After Dying

Ann Granger

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Inspector Alan Markby and his long-time friend Meredith Mitchell have taken a cottage in the country for a much needed holiday. But so sooner are they relaxing with a neighbor over a glass of blackberry wine, when Markby is being badgered for an "off the record" opinion about a somewhat suspicious accidental death.

Retired journalist Wynne Carter has been satisfying her professional curiosity by investigating a former villager: Olivia Smeaton, a reserved old lady with a racy past whose life -- and recent fatal fall -- leave a lot of questions unanswered. Determinedly off duty, Markby grumbles that the woman's death was probably caused by a loose slipper sole. Still, Meredith's interest is piqued by suggestive acts of vandalism that have been striking the village, including the malicious poisoning of the victim's much-loved pony. And, when another body is found, even Markby must admit that there is foul play afoot. with the villagers becoming increasingly unfriendly, and the mysterious violence continuing, Meredith and Markby begin to fear that Olivia's death may have been just the first of many, unless the two of them can make sense of the scandalous secrets so carefully hidden by the inhabitants of the seemingly peaceful Cotswold village.

A Word After Dying Details

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Author : Ann Granger

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gkbowood says

Not my favorite title in the series. You see where it was headed which is not the usual Mitchell and Markby way!

Simon Mcleish says

Originally published on my blog here in June 1998.

One of the Mitchell and Markby series of crime novels. In A Word After Dying, the romance between Alan Markby and Meredith Mitchell has finally reached the point where they feel comfortable going on holiday together. They go to stay in a cottage belonging to Alan's sister and her family; needless to say, they begin to get involved in the death of an old woman in the small village.

The old woman, Olivia Smeaton, seems to have died perfectly naturally from a fall, but Wynne Carter, a retired investigative reporter who lives next to the cottage, has a feeling that something was wrong. As Meredith begins to investigate and pressurise a reluctant Alan into joining in, they quickly discover that the village is not the tranquil place it appears to be. Meredith begins to investigate a local coven, and soon a murder takes place.

If you enjoy the gentle tone of this series, they are all winners; this has one of the harder puzzles to solve (I didn't work it out). The books are all fairly similar, which is a criticism of most series, particularly in the detection genre.

Carmen says

They go to a small village as a weekend retreat. It ends up being anything but a calm weekend. Markby and Mitchell find out about another murder and a strange village happening. alan wanted to buy the house, but they decide the village has just too much happening for them

Valerie says

Alan Markby and Meredith Mitchell - wonderful!!

Cirrus Minor says

Leider ist dieser Teil der Reihe wieder ziemlich schwach. Eine Auflösung ergibt sich schon fast aus dem Titel und die übrigen Vorkommnisse sowie das Verhalten der Dörfler (besonders die - fehlende - Reaktion

der Protagonisten darauf) sind für mich schwer nachvollziehbar.

Damaskcat says

I really enjoyed this tenth mystery in the Mitchell and Markby series. It sees Meredith and Alan on holiday in a Cotswold cottage belonging to Alan's sister, Laura and her husband in the village of Parsloe St John. Their neighbour - Wynne Carter, a former journalist - is hospitable and talkative and the whole village seems welcoming. But Wynne is convinced that the recent death of recluse, Olivia Smeaton, is suspicious and wants Alan and Meredith to investigate it.

Witchcraft, standing stones, some eccentric characters and some very odd episodes of vandalism precede the discovery of a gruesome murder and the police are called in. Alan, Wynne and Meredith must keep their own investigations low key to avoid getting in the way.

The book is well written and I loved the small village background. I didn't work out who the murderer was so it was quite a shock to find out. I had worked out what the background was to Olivia's decision to shut herself away in her home and see as few people as possible but it didn't spoil my enjoyment of the story.

This is a series which really needs to be read in order of publication if the relationship between Meredith and Alan is to make sense. I am reading the series back to back and I am finding I am still enjoying it - which is always a good test of a series. If you like your crime novels written in a low key style with plenty of amusing moments and not too much graphic violence then this may be the series for you.

Tylar Jordan says

Great Mystery and the twist at the End was so unexpected!

Debbie says

I like Ann Grainger's writing.

She writes quick to read mystery stories about tiny little English villages with all kinds of quirky characters living in them.

Interesting topics in this book were witchcraft and child neglect.

Cassandra Yue says

This is the first time I'm reading a book by Ann Granger. It's okay, but rather draggy at times. I'm more interested in the relationship between Markby and Mitchell than knowing who the killer is! Is the book not exciting enough? Or perhaps it just means I'm in the mood for a love story.

Julie Malcolm says

An enjoyable who dunnit

JenniferB says

A good example, funny at times, Mitchell & Markby on holiday in the Cotswolds. Good info on the relationship.

Gary Van Cott says

I don't think this is one of the author's better efforts. The plot was relatively predictable and there isn't any development of the main characters (rather an issue for me as it happens at a glacial pace through the series).

Terri says

I'm frustrated. I really liked this book--interesting English country setting, with village intrigue and standing stones, detective character and girlfriend on vacation, lots of twists and turns. However, this book is number 10 in a series I don't seem to have access to, darn it!

Sheila says

When I'm in need of a comforting, predictably good murder mystery I always try to find a Mitchell and Markby to contrast against the more gruesome terrors of, say, a Karin Slaughter. Here there is no terror, although there is a little gruesomeness, and the English village setting is very cosy. As usual, all is resolved quietly and satisfactorily. I do worry sometimes that non-English readers might get a strange opinion of what goes on in English villages, though . . .

Alice Brewer says

#52books2018 number 1: A Word After Dying by Ann Granger. Love Meredith and Markby but this isn't the best. Could've done with a bit more character development. No surprises. Faint praise!
