



A Darker God

Barbara Cleverly

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Award-winning author Barbara Cleverly returns with this spellbinding new mystery featuring aspiring archaeologist Laetitia Talbot. In Athens in 1928, Letty begins a perilous race to unearth a plot steeped in betrayal, seething with retribution, and about to explode in a wave of lethal violence.

In the open-air theatre of the dark god Dionysos, Letty watches a performance of an ancient Greek tragedy. But the revenge that is exacted onstage, the dagger that is wielded, and the blood that flows in full view of the audience are not theatrical effects. As Letty digs for clues, she unearths disturbing secrets and dark animosities with catastrophic implications worthy of a Sophocles—but of far more recent vintage.

Now, as a killer cuts a merciless swath across a country in the throes of political instability, Letty herself steps unawares into the murderer's savage spotlight—a light so bright she may not be able to see the dark figure behind it until it's too late.

A Darker God Details

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From Reader Review A Darker God for online ebook

Rhonda says

excellent historical mystery

Barbara Cleverly is a master of setting - particularly in time. Her novels capture and make human and understandable periods of British colonial politics, social upheaval, early feminism, disenchantment with class rules, and questions of faith following WWI. The characterizations are good, though not with great depth, as the author's focus is directed more to time and place.

Lynn Calvin says

Interesting mystery set in 1920s in Greece with lots of classical references thrown in. Great illumination of issues around class and political issues for Britons of the period. Distinctly British sensibility around the storyline, but also very understanding and respectful of Greek culture and politics of the period and manages to be non-Anglocentric about it.

Somehow though, while I find the book and the characters interesting I don't care about them as much as I would like.

I'll certainly keep reading this author, but not necessarily a frequent reread.

Linda McLaughlin says

In this third outing set in 1928 Athens, Letty's mentor, Sir Andrew Merriman, is killed at the dress rehearsal of a Greek tragedy he is directing about the murder of King Agamemnon by his vengeful wife Clytemnestra. As more facts come to light, the parallels between ancient and modern become eerie. Personal vendettas and politics entwine in nefarious plots, and Letty's life is endangered. I found the political aspects interesting, as I'm not familiar with this period of Greek history. I love this series, and enjoyed this suspenseful episode, though I missed the archeological focus of the first two books. I am definitely hoping for a fourth book, with Letty off digging again!

Debbie Maskus says

This is the third in the Laetitia Talbot series about a young archaeologist set during the late 1920's. In this adventure, Letty and William Gunning are in Greece for the opening of a play directed by Letty's ex-lover, Andrew Merriman. Before the story gets underway, Andrew Merriman is murdered during dress rehearsal, and his wife, Maude falls to her death that same day. The driving force of the the story is an act named The Population exchange between Greece and Turkey of 1923, which is an actual event. Cleverly weaves historic events into the thread of the story which provide glimpses of brutal history, and all the errors made in the name of religion.

Jenna says

An enjoyable read; always good to have more of Letty and Gunning. I wished there had been more for Letty's friend (Esme?) in the opening chapter, but maybe she'll show up again. Definitely already set up for the next book, which of course, makes me look forward to that one. Enjoyed the theatrical references to the production of Greek tragedy in site.

Susan says

Laetitia Talbot and her faithful Gunning are taking a break from their archaeological dig in Athens, where they become involved in a production of the classic tragedy Agamemnon. A sudden death, and suspicion falls on a young Englishwoman whom Letty has befriended. Moreover, Letty is left a legacy with a strange past and an even stranger potential future. Danger and problems abound, as more bodies turn up, and Letty realizes the roots of the crime are in the past.

Cheryl says

Oh dear ... what a disappointing yawn. This latest installment of the usually fun & historically interesting Laetitia Talbot series just plodded and plodded and plodded along... about the only thing worthwhile for me was the information on the population exchange between Turkey and Greece which I previously knew nothing about. Now that seems like a worthwhile read!

Nancy Gallagher says

really like this series

Lisa Reads & Reviews says

Light read. Light on suspense. Light on history. Light on archeology. The Laetitia Talbot protagonist was a fun feminist character with a mix of old-world decorum and progressive thought.

This was a book from a local library sale. I'm enjoying excursions into genres and authors that I would normally not pick up. The historical lessons were interesting, but I would have enjoyed more of them, and to a greater depth.

Janice Liedl says

Laetitia and William wind up back in Athens and embroiled in yet another murder investigation. This one strikes close to home as it revolves around her erstwhile mentor and classical archaeologist, Andrew Merriman. There's a wealth of classical and contemporary shenanigans involved in this perilous investigation with some intriguing new characters, particularly Thetis, an actress who's very sympatico with Laetitia.

Parts of the mystery that were supposed to liven then end were painfully obvious from very early on, however and, once again, I regret that the interesting archaeological prospects these books open up aren't real. I'd love to see another book in the series someday soon!

Susan McDuffie says

I enjoy the archaeological premise of this series and Laetitia Talbot is an interesting woman of this era. I confess that the different voices of the characters don't always come through in the dialogue for me; although the dialogue has a nice breezy pace all the characters tend to sound the same to me. However I'll look forward to Laetitia's next adventure--the archaeology will pull me in!

Ali says

I don't like this series nearly as well as I like Cleverly's Inspector Sandilands books, but it probably rates worse in comparison than it would if I didn't like the other series so well.

Letty Talbot has a bit of a Jessica Fletcher thing going on -- people tend to die when she's around. I tend to like mystery series with a more unexpected protagonist (i.e. not a detective, policeman, journalist, etc.) a bit less, because I find them less plausible.

On top of that, the Letty Talbot books always take much longer to get going than the Sandilands books, and this was was particularly slow for the first few chapters. It definitely picked up a bit towards the middle, but by then I was already somewhat detached from the action and I never really fell into the book very well.

Cleverly also tries to carry the plot line a bit too much from book to book in this series, and doesn't do quite well enough at reminding readers of what happened in previous books; I remembered Gunning vaguely, but I didn't completely remember his relationship to Letty until nearly halfway through the book.

An OK mystery novel, but disappointing compared to the Sandilands books (which I highly recommend).

Jennifer says

I love Cleverly's "Joe Sandilands" series, but I'm just fond of the Laetitia Talbot one, and this one is about par for the course. Cleverly uses interesting historical detail without bludgeoning the reader - this one is set in 1920s Greece, with tidbits of WWI and the Treaty of Versailles still overshadowing the players. Of course, ancient Greece also makes an appearance, and parts of *Agamemnon* are integral to the plot.

While I'm always happy to see Laetitia and Gunning, I definitely had a soft spot for Montacute and his philhellenic sidekick. The murder mystery soon unfolds another deeper plot, and the resolutions for each are smart and believable.

Jodi says

As a mystery novel, this was okay... but as historical fiction, set in Athens in 1928 - with elements of politics (the so-called "Population Exchange") in a place and time I wasn't too familiar with, this was an absorbing and educational read.

Anna Marie says

Laetitia, or Letty Talbot is in 1920's Athens, Greece helping her mentor Col. Merriman put on performances of Agamemnon. And Chief Inspector Percy Montacute is sent by his government to help as his cover. He is also expected to root out any threats against the new Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos. Who else is working undercover to prevent these same threats from being realized? And at what cross-purposes are all the actors, this book definitely feels like a play within a play. And all the political string pulling really shows the politicians' lack of concern for the little people.

There are some historic allusions to the recent past visited upon the local people, the mass evictions caused by regional lines drawn by distant and disinterested governments.

You can read this book as a stand-alone but much of the characters background isn't really explained so reading them in order would help. There seems to be some unnecessary tangents to the story, and the beginning is a little slow, it takes almost 50 pages just to get all the characters together. Merriman is killed, and the red herrings abound. Who killed him and why? And how does it relate to the threats against the Greek PM?

The play must go on, Merriman's murder is solved and the plots against the Greek PM are stopped, at least temporarily.

If you like reading light mysteries and have an interest in 1920's British or Greek history, this book's for you.
