



Death on the Canal

Anja de Jager

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Where do your priorities lie?

In her latest case, Dutch detective Lotte Meerman finds herself faced with a moral dilemma - does she investigate the murder of a suspected drug dealer ... or does she stay silent to ensure that another man, responsible for the drug-related deaths of six tourists in Amsterdam, is successfully convicted?

Drinking outside a canalside bar on a perfect summer's evening, Lotte is witness to the fatal stabbing of Piotr Mazur, a Polish security guard working in one of the city's department stores. And as Lotte starts to investigate Mazur's death she keeps finding facts that potentially link him to the case of the dead tourists - but soon realises that the head of the team investigating their murders is trying to bury the information just as quickly as she unearths it.

Lotte saw the victim in the bar moments before he was killed, and he was with a woman who passed him a photo of a child. She is now convinced that his death wasn't a revenge-killing over drugs after all... but she has to think carefully about what to do for the best, especially as key evidence in Mazur's murder comes from someone she knows she cannot trust.

Death on the Canal Details

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Author : Anja de Jager

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From Reader Review *Death on the Canal* for online ebook

Jennifer S. Alderson says

My review of *Death on the Canal* was first published on TripFiction's website. My thanks to them for sending me a hardback copy to review!!!

<https://www.tripfiction.com/detective...>

Today I'm traveling by book to my adopted hometown of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. *Death on the Canal* is the third book in a series of crime fiction novels following Dutch detective Lotte Meerman on her investigations.

What appears to be the straight forward stabbing of a drug dealer quickly becomes a more complex case involving suspects withholding information, a missing child, dead junkies, misguided avengers, and lots of red herrings. Each piece of new evidence shifts the focus of Lotte's investigation onto another suspect.

The story's pace is relatively slow as we follow along on the murder investigation and learn about the difficulties police encounter when tracking down suspects, clues and potential connections. Towards the end, I wasn't sure if the author was adding in so many dead-ends and false clues to try and hold the reader's attention, or to illustrate how convoluted a case can be for a real police detective.

Though this is a murder mystery, the focus of the story is on the interpersonal relationships within the police department and Lotte's private life. She's pretty messed up thanks to the death of her child, failed marriage, drinking problems, and current man trouble.

The first seventy pages are primarily backstory, which was sometimes difficult to follow because I haven't yet read the first two novels in the series. This does seem to be a series better read in order. Still, I was able to understand most of the connections between the characters and storylines.

The text is peppered with glimpses of Amsterdam, as well as Dutch politics and society. Since moving to this city – a popular setting for crime fiction writers – I've become quite critical of the descriptions of it. This novel was clearly written by someone who has biked and walked the city streets – even those neighborhoods outside of the tourist-filled center – which greatly enhanced my reading pleasure.

There are references to Dutch politicians such as the ultra-conservative Geert Wilders, the abundance of rainbow flags in August for Pride Month, government-approved euthanasia, and current immigration policies. I particularly enjoyed her account of the annual Gay Pride Canal Parade. Even Baantjer, a well-known series of crime fiction novels which were made into a popular television series, is mentioned. I found this interesting because these books were written by a retired Dutch detective who used actual cases as the basis for his fiction, as Anja de Jager uses her father's old case files as the basis for her crime fiction. (And her father, according to her biography, is a retired Dutch police detective.)

To me, the most interesting aspect of this novel was the author's use of a recent rash of drug overdoses as the basis for Lotte's investigation. As she explains in the acknowledgements, in 2014 and 2015 white heroin was being sold as cocaine and a number of tourists died. The Dutch government's response was to place large

signs all over the city warning tourists about this fake coke and urging them to get their drugs tested (for free) before snorting. As an American, this was completely surreal to see these signs everywhere. It was fascinating to see this actual case fictionalized and re-live this strange time.

Considering all the media attention and hype this book and series had received, I had high expectations. Don't get me wrong; it's well written. However, perhaps because I kept waiting for a gripping plot twist, I felt a bit let down after finishing reading it.

All in all, *Death on the Canal* is a good detective novel firmly set in contemporary Amsterdam.

Steve Streeter says

This series gets better and better- the character of Lotte is now fully established and credible..an intricate plot with twists and turns with a strong sense of Amsterdam as the key character

Cynthia May says

If you have been to Amsterdam you will recognise the city, its canals, bikeways and history. The story seems almost secondary to this evocative setting.

Lotte has been damaged by her last case and her love-interest is equally scarred by her involvement as a police officer, in violence. Nonetheless she pursues what is declared a "closed case", determined to locate a lost child and the child's mother.

The story is careful and detailed, satisfying as it links the various unanswered threads.

What stays with the reader, however, is not Lotte, but Amsterdam, the real protagonist

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Little, Brown Book Group UK for an advance copy of *Death on the Canal*, the third novel to feature Detective Lotte Meerman of the Amsterdam police.

Lotte is out for a drink when a man is stabbed near the pub. Unable to save him she is determined to solve his murder but what she discovers is a web of intrigue and secrets.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Death on the Canal* which is a complicated tale of secrets and lies where nobody tells the truth. It is told in the first person by Lotte with a linear timeline which makes it refreshingly easy to read as the reader doesn't have to keep shifting perspective. It also means that they can concentrate on what they're being told and that does require concentration as nothing is as it seems. It is amazing the way the author skilfully changes the reader's perceptions of the characters and their motivations as the novel progresses - I'm not sure if I've read anything like it before and it had me engrossed from start to finish. Even the opening paragraphs are a bit of misdirection where I expected one thing and it's another. It's cleverly and imaginatively done.

With a first person narrative the novel revolves around Lotte. In her forties she is a smart, dogged investigator but she struggles emotionally, in fact that is probably being kind as she is positively scary in her

love life. In mitigation she is still dealing with the aftermath of shooting a suspect three months ago. I really liked the sensitive and realistic way the author manages this.

Death on the Canal is a good read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

Lizzie Hayes says

‘Death on the Canal’ by Anja De Jager

Published by Constable, 2 November 2017. ISBN: 978-1-4721-2625-2 (HB)

Death on the Canal is the third book in the series featuring Lotte Meerman, a detective with the Amsterdam police. When we first met her in Death in Amsterdam she was traumatised by her previous investigation, which had resulted in her receiving a mixture of plaudits and notoriety.

Written in the first person, we find Lotte on a summer evening sitting outside a cafe bar on the edge of the canal with heart thumping waiting to meet her former partner Mark Visser. Conversation is stilted and before they can get onto more comfortable ground Lotte hears someone shouting for help and rushing to the sound finds a man stabbed.

The dead man is identified as Piotr Mazur, a Polish security guard at one of the city’s department stores. He had earlier been sitting with a woman outside the bar not far from Lotte, but the woman is nowhere to be seen.

As Lotte investigates the death facts emerge that point to him being a small-time drug dealer, but Lotte after several interviews with his colleagues is unconvinced. Could his death tie in with the drug-related deaths of six tourists in Amsterdam? Or could someone be setting Mazur up to take the fall? And where is the woman who handed Mazur what to Lotte looked like a photo, then disappeared?

Lotte Meerman remains a tortured soul, following her actions to save the life of her friend and colleague. If she is able to move on, maybe her personal life could improve, or maybe not.

As in the previous two books Anja De Jager spins a complicated web of lies and misdirection that kept me turning pages.

Atmospheric and a compelling, this entry in the series is highly recommended.

Reviewer: Lizzie Sirett

Robd says

The latest novel in the Lotte Meerman Mystery series involves a canal side murder in which Lotte, out on a date, desperately tries to save the victims’s life. The convoluted and complex story of intertwined

relationships, drug dealing and deceit is another great tale set in the city of Amsterdam. I'm really liking the main characters in this series and look forward to the next volume. An enjoyable crime thriller.

Rob D

Janine says

Love this series, once I start these books, you need to read until the end.
