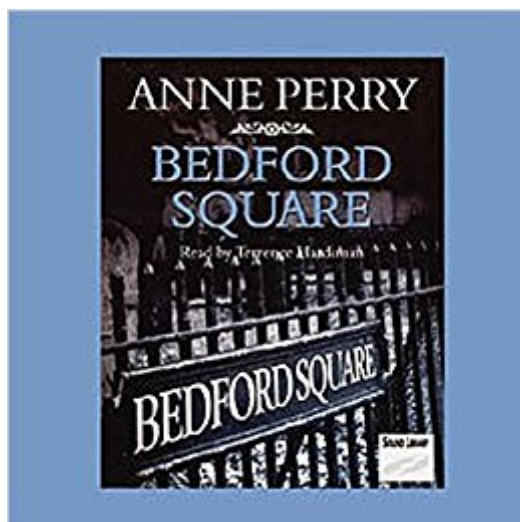


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Bedford Square (Chivers Sound Library American Collections (Audio))



Synopsis

The freshly dead body sprawled on the Bedford Square doorstep of General Brandon Balantyne is an affront to every respectable sensibility. The general denies all knowledge of the shabbily dressed victim who has so rudely come to death outside his home, but Superintendent Thomas Pitt cannot believe him--for in the dead man's pocket, Pitt finds a rare snuffbox that recently graced the general's study. The superintendent must tread lightly, however, lest his investigation trigger a tragedy of immense proportions, ensnaring honorable men like flies in a web. Pitt's clever wife, Charlotte, becomes his full partner in probing this masterpiece of evil, spawned by an amorality greater than they can imagine.

Book Information

Series: Chivers Sound Library American Collections (Audio)

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Customer Reviews

Even if you prefer the tougher, edgier William Monk books by Anne Perry, such as *A Breach of Promise*, there's no denying the wealth of detail and the powerful emotions at work in her longer series of Victorian murder mysteries featuring Thomas and Charlotte Pitt. The Pitt books effectively merge Henry James with Raymond Chandler: by having a middleclass policeman married to a socialite, Perry can probe both worlds, as she does in *Bedford Square*, a story of high-level blackmail and murder. A famous historical scandal called the *Tranby Croft* affair (a gambling case involving the Prince of Wales) is very much in the news when the body of a working-class man is found early one morning on the posh doorstep of General Brandon Balantyne. No one in the house claims to know the murdered man, but he has a valuable piece of jewelry belonging to the

Balantynes in his pocket. Thomas Pitt and his outspoken aide, Sergeant Tellman, must tread lightly, but Charlotte--and especially her sharp relative Lady Vespasia Cumming-Gould--aren't restrained by such social niceties. Gracie, the Pitts' smart and rough-tongued maid, is also a valued asset to the investigation, which proceeds in a satisfying, if not particularly surprising, manner to a highly dramatic conclusion. Other recent books in the Pitt series include *Brunswick Gardens*, *Ashworth Hall*, and *Pentecost Alley*. --Dick Adler --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

History, social commentary and suspense blend artfully in this 19th installment (after *Brunswick Gardens*, 1998) in Perry's popular series featuring London Police Superintendent Thomas Pitt and his adventurous wife, Charlotte. The mystery arises when a body is found outside the home of respectable General Brandon Balantyne (who appeared in two earlier Pitt novels). Pitt and Sergeant Tellman, whose class prejudices are challenged during the investigation, are mystified by the body's identity and the motive for the murder. Their diggings lead them to a parallel case, when Pitt discovers that six honorable men, including Balantyne and Assistant Police Commissioner Cornwallis, are being blackmailed. Perry uses the historical Tranby Croft gambling scandal involving the Prince of Wales as backdrop, highlighting how even the imputation of wrongdoing can tarnish someone's good name. To find the blackmailer, Pitt seeks a common bond among the accused. The careful reader may spy that link before Pitt does, but will nonetheless be swept along by the narrative's rush and engaged by its attention to period detail. Aiding Pitt is a cast of smart, well-drawn female characters: Charlotte, whose social connections afford her access to society's upper crust; Gracie, the Pitts' uneducated but no-nonsense maid; and Lady Vespasia Cumming-Gould, Charlotte's worldly-wise relation, who dominates the narrative once she joins the investigation. Pitt solves the case based on a clever red herring, uncovering the murderer in a quick, horrifying finale. Yet again, Perry delivers an astute and gripping examination of life behind Victorian England's virtuous facade. Mystery Guild main selection; author tour. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Anne Perry writes very well. Her mystery books are set in late 19th century England, mostly London. They provide a rich portrait of that time from a modern perspective. They tend to expose mores and hypocrisies that may seem worse in our eyes than they did back then, although it's hard to accept that some things were ever tolerated by a "civilized" society. Of course we can also see parallels to today - such as people in power who refuse to accept newer scientific or medical techniques because they upset the status quo, threaten the powerful, or contradict religious beliefs. The heroes

and heroines in Perry's books tend to have views and behaviors more typical of our current time and they stand up to the pillars of British society when needed to right a wrong. (The female heroines, for example, are usually considered daring if not radical for their time because they do things and express opinions that were considered the sole purview of men.) You can read any of them and find it enjoyable, but for the best experience, read the stories in order to see how the characters develop over time (there are two major mystery series: the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt series and the William and Hester Monk series). It's a shame that many of the books are not available in audiobook format.

Anne Perry's Charlotte and Thomas Pitt Victorian-era murder mysteries are hard to put down. Just good story-telling.

I am just loving this series (and am so glad I still have a fair few to go till the end). This book has very little "who dunnit" and a lot more "why". In fact, most of the plot follows the differing reactions of the threatened people to what has not yet happened, but might. Overall, I suggest you start at the beginning and work your way through the series. Along the way, you will develop your favourite characters (mine is - of course - Great Aunt Vespasia), and learn a lot about manners and social issues in Victorian times.

Anne Perry's books are always excellent. They have a believable ending, but it is not an easily guessed one often times. There is normally a surprising twist that keeps you wondering up to the end. Bedford Square is no exception. It not only kept you wondering how Thomas was going to figure out the puzzle, it is developing the relationship between Gracie and Tellman. I especially like the way the secondary characters are developed with each story, so you are not just focused on the main character. I recommend any of the Pitt series, most of the Monk series and all of the WWI books as good reads.

8-2-10 I discovered Anne Perry quite by mistake. I received a prize of free audiobook CDs for buying the audible mp3 player. There was not much to choose from, so I chose Anne Perry's Seven Dial and another one called midnight echoes by another writer, all of which were great. I loved the Charlotte Pitt & Thomas Pitt series, so I started buying them in sequence from beginning to the current one I am listening to. Bedford square is juxtapose with a real event in England and Anne Perry wove this event to the story which made it seem almost real. It made me research that part of England when it almost became a republic. I find Anne Perry's novel as good as Dorothy Gilman,

who wrote about a 60 year old spy. You feel like a participant when you read their stories. Highly recommended. Linda Seldow Carmel, CA

Bedford Square is an excellent entry in the series of books about William Pitt, Superintendent of the Bow Street station, and his higher-born wife Charlotte. Sergeant Tellman, his aide in investigating this case, & the Pitts' maid Gracie play major parts well. I wanted their relationship (reminiscent of the earlier one between Pitt & Miss Charlotte Ellison) to move on to the next level. Aunt Vespasia Cumming-Gould also plays a large part in spite of her age and her growing frailty. General Ballantyne and his insufferable wife Augusta are just as we remember them from two previous books. His fondness for Charlotte is touching and even sad. My only complaint would be that the other characters (aside from Commissioner Cornwallis) are not as fleshed out as they might be. I also was a step ahead of Pitt, but that was because I knew what he knew and also what Charlotte knew. The identity of the murderer does come as a surprise, and the underlying motivation reflects on one of the social ills of the time, as do all of Perry's novels, Inspector Monk's as well as the Pitts'. I found it hard to put this book down and enjoyed it very much.

I really liked this book... I've read most of Perry's but had somehow skipped this one so was glad to go back and visit these characters again. Start with her first book and you're hooked. ;)

I love all of Anne Perry's books . The plots always keep you guessing . The endings are to abrupt .she would get a five star from me except for the endings. I've invested so much of my time to the cast ,I want to know what to know what happened to them.

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