



Bright Young Dead

Jessica Fellowes

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Meet the Bright Young Things, the rabbleroising hedonists of the 1920s whose treasure hunts were a media obsession. One such game takes place at the 18th birthday party of Pamela Mitford, but ends in tragedy as cruel, charismatic Adrian Curtis is pushed to his death from the church neighbouring the Mitford home.

The police quickly identify the killer as a maid, Dulcie. But Louisa Cannon, chaperone to the Mitford girls and a former criminal herself, believes Dulcie to be innocent, and sets out to clear the girl's name ... all while the real killer may only be steps away

Bright Young Dead Details

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From Reader Review Bright Young Dead for online ebook

Lel Budge says

This is the second novel in The Mitford Murders series by Jessica Fellowes.

This is set in the 1920s and captures the period with dancing and Jazz clubs, flapper girls and the young aristocrats having fun.

These young people were a media sensation at the time with famous treasure hunts, showing off their excesses.

Louisa Cannon works for the Mitford family in Oxfordshire and is often a chaperone to the Mitford girls. Louisa finds herself in the exciting gaudy world of Nancy and Pamela Mitford and on the young Pamela's 18th birthday party there is a treasure hunt that ends with the death of Adrian Curtis.

The housemaid, Dulcie, is arrested for Adrian's murder and is imprisoned awaiting trial. Louisa is certain Dulcie did not murder him and is determined to find out the truth.

Jessica Fellowes has written a thrilling historical mystery that bristles with descriptions of the era and society at that time.

This is a bubbly, fizzing, sparkling champagne of a read with believable characters charlston-ing out of the 1920s. Historical fiction with crime, murder and mystery thrown in.

I would like to thank the Author/the Publishers/NetGalley for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for a fair and honest review

La Biblioteca di Eliza says

<https://www.labibliotecadieliza.com/2...>

Facciamo conoscenza con un'altra delle mitiche sorelle Mitford. Jessica Fellowes è stata di parola e, in questo secondo romanzo della serie dedicata a loro e alla protagonista Louisa Cannon, ci presenta Pamela. Facciamo un salto di 5 anni rispetto a L'assassinio di Florence Nightingale Shore. Pamela festeggia i 18 anni con una festa praticamente organizzata dalla sorella maggiore Nancy. Durante una caccia al tesoro, però, avviene l'imprevedibile nella dimora di famiglia, Ashtall Manor: Adrian Curtis, ambito scapolo, viene trovato morto ai piedi del campanile della chiesa. Accanto a lui la cameriera Dulcie che viene subito accusata e rinviata a giudizio. Eppure troppe cose non quadrano a Louisa, cameriera delle Mitford.

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Jessica Fellowes ci riporta nelle atmosfere degli anni'20 e questa volta carica la dose, portando in scena il vero mondo degli anni ruggenti. I nightclub, il jazz, i vestiti che si accorciano e sono più provocanti, il

proibito. Se nel primo libro ci aveva dato un assaggio di tutto ciò, in questo secondo Delitto l'atmosfera ci catapultava in una Londra più oscura e fumosa e in una Ashtall Manor percorsa dal brivido dell'omicidio. Al centro di tutto ciò l'assassinio di quello che era considerato un buon partito, Adrian Curtis, bello e convenientemente ricco. La sua morte sconvolge questo gruppetto di amici che gira intorno alla più grande delle sorelle Mitford, Nancy, la scrittrice di famiglia. Ma fa capolino sulla scena anche Pamela, la sorella "campestre", più amante della vita all'aria aperta e ai cavalli che alla mondanità. Dosando realtà e finzione, l'autrice ci propone questa volta un omicidio inventato ma un'ambientazione quanto mai reale, soprattutto per le atmosfere londinesi. Nella storia, infatti, hanno un ruolo fondamentale i criminali, sparsi un po' ovunque nel racconto. In particolare le bande delle Quaranta Ladroni, capeggiate da Alice Diamond, e gli Elephant and Castle. La criminalità infesta la Londra di inizio '900 e tra furti e contrabbando proliferava arricchendosi. Ecco, la Fellowes prende tutto ciò e se ne serve per dare un contorno a questo omicidio dell'alta società.

Filo di unione con il romanzo precedente, oltre alle Mitford Sister, è anche Louisa che, da ragazzina povera di Londra, dedita a furti e furtucelli, riesce ad uscire dal giro pericoloso e a trovare un lavoro onesto a servizio proprio di Nancy e Pamela. Louisa non ci sta davanti alla condanna di Dulcie, sebbene tutto farebbe pensare alla sua colpevolezza. A lei non tornano molti aspetti di quella faticosa sera e quindi si incaponisce per cercare la verità. Ma non è solo il senso di giustizia a muoverla, c'è di più. Louisa vede in Dulcie e in Alice Diamond tutto quello che lei ha rischiato di essere, una ladra, una bugiarda, persino una prostituta. In un misto di sollievo e angoscia non riesce ad abbandonare la giovane serva al suo destino, alla galera o peggio alla forca. In tutto il romanzo ho fatto ben attenzione alle parole e all'atteggiamento di Louisa e ho visto in lei la linea del cambiamento. La società che ci viene proposta è una società in bilico, non più vittoriana ma neanche moderna. Se da un parte, infatti, Louisa è ancora costretta a fare da chaperon alle sue due protette, dall'altra aleggia già il futuro con le donne poliziotto, quelle che vivono da sole, ereditano, quelle che possono avere una vita che non ruoti intorno solo ad un uomo.

Da questi aspetti mi viene da ricordare proprio il "mito" delle sorelle Mitford, vissute in anni in cui essere donna era ancora una limitazione ma anche capaci di essere un primo barlume di modernità, soprattutto con le loro vite avventurose, stravaganti e piccanti, che hanno allietato i rotocalchi inglesi. Pamela, visto che la incontriamo qui per la prima volta, sarà tra le sorelle quella più calma e ritirata, eppure si sposerà e divorzierà dopo 15 anni di matrimonio per andare a convivere con una donna per il resto della sua vita.

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Come per il primo romanzo mi è piaciuta molto l'ambientazione ma soprattutto, in questo caso, l'indagine per scoprire l'assassino. Un giallo di stampo classico, inglese, alla Agatha Christie, che ti porta a sospettare di tutti a turno per poi essere sbugiardata sul più bello. Questa volta, però, abbiamo davanti, ad indagare, una Louisa meno sicura di se, come se il suo passato non volesse del tutto lasciare la presa. Tentenna a volte, teme di scivolare di nuovo in quello che è stata. A renderla più solida è Guy, poliziotto che si riscatta agli occhi della famiglia e dei colleghi. Ho sempre pensato che fosse lui il vero personaggio chiave inventato dalla Fellowes. Certo, Nancy e sorelle ci spalancano le porte sulla bella società inglese dell'epoca, rendono più frizzante e mondano il racconto, ma è Guy a dare solidità al giallo, a renderlo una vera indagine di polizia e a dare al lettore quella sicurezza che a volte sente il bisogno di avere.

Io amo questo genere di libri e amo la scrittura di Jessica Fellowes. L'analisi storica che c'è dietro al racconto non può non colpire il lettore, soprattutto perché ci propone aspetti meno noti della società inglese, integrandoli in maniera eccellente alla sua invenzione.

Ora non resta che scoprire con quale Mitford faremo la conoscenza nel prossimo libro.

Janet Brown says

I enjoyed the first in this series, *The Mitford Murders*, far more than I expected. If you're expecting an impeccably accurate account of either the Mitford family or of life generally at the turn of the 1920s, you'll be disappointed. But I went into it expecting it to be silly and inaccurate, and instead found it a greatly entertaining page-turner (but also, yes, inaccurate and somewhat silly, if with a properly tense and surprising dénouement). Because of this, I had high hopes for *Bright Young Dead* and was looking forward to returning to the characters - nursery maid Louisa Cannon, London policeman Guy Sullivan and, of course, the fictionalised versions of the Mitford family members. The reader is plunged immediately into the action (which may be disorienting to anyone attempting to read *Bright Young Dead* as a standalone), with Guy on the trail of a gang of shoplifters and Louisa chaperoning Pamela Mitford to a party where they meet the fashionable London set of bright young things, with whom Nancy Mitford has fallen in, and from whom the novel gets its name.

But it's not long before tragedy strikes. At Pamela's 18th birthday party in Gloucestershire, one of the bright young things is found murdered while a maid - Dulcie, a friend of Louisa's - stands over his body.

Unfortunately, I didn't enjoy *Bright Young Dead* anywhere near as much as the first in the series. I found it much harder to connect with the characters and, although important to the plot, found the sections in London following Guy's investigations especially dull. A 2.5 for me, rounded up to 3 stars because, as in the first book, the murder mystery element remained strong and genuinely intriguing.

Lindsey says

I almost tossed this one aside after the first 40 pages. I just had a really hard time getting into this with all the characters thrown into the story at once - it was a jumble for a little bit until I could sort them out. I felt similes were overused to illustrate the scene or emotions - it got so that they were distracting from the story since I was noticing them so much. As for the actual story, prior to reading this book, I had no idea the Mitfords were a real family (as were Alice Diamond and her 40 Thieves gang). However, I have no interest in reading more about them since I got the impression they were conceited and flaky - not exactly characters to warm up to. Also, what was the purpose of Mary Moon? - to show that female police officers existed in the 1920s? She just fades away into the background to be conveniently forgotten when it's time to solve the murder.

Brenda says

It was 1925 when Pamela Mitford had her 18th birthday party, with the ending culminating in a treasure hunt, organized by Adrian Curtis. Arrogant, a young man who used sarcasm as a cruel weapon, his sister Charlotte was the only person who admired him. Others thought he was handsome; were drawn to him - but they didn't like him. It was when, in the early hours of the morning, after the adults had retired to bed and Louisa Cannon, chaperone and maid to Pamela and her sisters, let Dulcie, maid and chaperone to Charlotte, into the house, that disaster and tragedy struck, and lives would be forever changed.

Guy Sullivan and Mary Moon, both police officers in London, were undercover and determined to arrest at

least some of the local gang of women who thieved and robbed the local stores. But it was their ringleader, Alice Diamond whom the police really wanted. Would she outwit the police? She wasn't called the Queen for nothing...

Bright Young Dead is the second in the Mitford Murders series (and based on fact) by Jessica Fellowes and I thoroughly enjoyed it! With the discos and dance halls; young men and women determined to grow up fast and live life to the fullest; the servants who took the blame but wanted a better life – *Bright Young Dead* was full of activity, action and criminals. Historical mystery at its best! Highly recommended.

With thanks to Hachette AU for my ARC to read in exchange for an honest review.

Jo-anne Atkinson says

Louisa Cannon is now firmly ensconced with the Mitfords as maid to the girls. However when she takes pity on a fellow maid Louisa opens the door to tragedy at the Mitford country house. Louisa believes her friend to be innocent but connections with a ruthless gang based in South London mean Louisa and the Mitfords may well be exposed to danger.

There is a line of fact in this story in that there were some notorious gangs in operation in South London in the 1920s including the Forty Thieves and the Elephants. That part of the plot is interesting, as is the idea of the disjointed policing of the time and the casual sexism towards female police officers. However the links to the Mitfords are more tenuous in this book than in the first novel (*The Mitford Murders*) and are almost incidental to the plot. Therefore I will be interested in seeing if Fellowes continues to use this family as a hook for readers or believes that Louisa Cannon has developed enough as a character to be allowed to stand alone if there are future volumes.

Paromjit says

This is the second in The Mitford Murders series by Jessica Fellowes, but I found it worked perfectly fine as a standalone. Set in the 1920s, it captures the era with the heady dance clubs, flapper girls, jazz and the hedonistic behaviour of the young society aristocrats, out to have a good time, experimenting with drugs, determined to break out of the staid social circles and rules of their parents generation. They are the 'Bright Young Things', making a huge splash in the media with their famous treasure hunts, showcasing the latest fashions, burning bright, moving way beyond the expectation that the only desirable press coverage they should aspire to are the births, marriages and death columns.

Louisa Cannon works in the Mitford household at Asthall Manor in Oxfordshire, often serving as a chaperone to the Mitford girls. Louisa finds herself caught in the exciting and exhilarating world of Nancy and Pamela Mitford, but is well aware of the unwritten rules that govern the deep social divide between her, effectively a servant, and the gilded world of the aristocracy. On the young Pamela's 18th birthday party, the fast crowd that Nancy runs with have organised a secretive late night treasure hunt which results in the death of the louche, unlikeable and sarcastic Adrian Curtis. The maid, Dulcie, with whom Louisa feels a strong kinship with and does a favour for, is arrested for his murder and imprisoned pending her trial. Louisa is convinced that Dulcie is not guilty and is determined to get to the truth of the matter. Sergeant Guy Sullivan and Constable Mary Moon in London are looking to further their careers by arresting the notorious Mrs

Alice Diamond and her 40 thieves, a female crime syndicate, and those who facilitate their criminal activities by fencing their stolen goods.

Connections between Louisa's furtive investigations and Sullivan's efforts to nail Alice Diamond and her cohorts soon emerge bringing desperate danger to both of them. Fellowes has written a gripping historical mystery that comes alive with the descriptions of the period and captures the social norms of that time, such as social class and women's positions. To be honest, it took me a while to get into this novel and I even thought that it was not for me, but once I was hooked, it became an absolute thrill ride of a book. It is a fabulously light and entertaining read with real characters from the 1920s such as Alice Diamond and, of course, the Mitfords. Great read that I recommend to others who enjoy their historical fiction with a strong dash of crime and murder. Many thanks to Little, Brown for an ARC.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Little, Brown Book Group UK for an advance copy of *Bright Young Dead*, the second novel to feature Louisa Cannon, nursery maid to the Mitford family.

It is 1925 and the second eldest Mitford sister, Pamela, is preparing for her 18th birthday party at the family home. Her elder sister, Nancy, has invited some of her friends to join them, the so called Bright Young Things whose hedonistic lifestyle appals their elders. To make events more interesting they have arranged a treasure hunt but things go awry when one of their number is found murdered during the hunt. The local police are quick to arrest servant, Dulcie Long, but Louisa isn't so sure and sets out to prove her innocence.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Bright Young Dead* which is a fascinating mixture of mystery and historical detail. It is an interesting conceit to mix historical figures into a fictional murder but it works, adding a certain authenticity to the mix. The novel is told from Louisa Cannon's point of view which I think is a good move as it allows the author to explore both sides of the social divide and put the era into a wider context. The setting plays a large part in the novel but the murder investigation is equally compelling. I didn't have a clue about the perpetrator or the motive so followed the author's direction which led up and down blind alleys and into some unusual doglegs, always absorbing and never dull.

The characterisation is equally interesting. I haven't read the first novel in the series yet so I had to gather from this one that Louisa has a bit of a shady past but seems very much on the straight and narrow now. She is frustrated, however, by the confines of her current existence. She is a servant so mostly invisible to the greater world and unable to spread her wings. In sharp contrast the upper class Mitfords have little to do but enjoy themselves. With no real knowledge of the era it is difficult to judge if it really was so or if the author is labouring the point through the prism of modern sensibilities, which it sometimes feels like.

Bright Young Dead is a good read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

MetLineReader says

An enjoyable read, weaving in the lives of the Mitfords and their eldest daughter Nancy's social set, and that of Louisa, their maid (and her policeman friend Guy). I have always loved the Mitfords, particularly since I

read Nancy's *The Pursuit of Love*, so this series really appealed to me. It's also written by Jessica Fellowes who has written several books about *Downton Abbey* too.

Whilst this is the 2nd in the series, it can easily be read standalone although I think some of the colour and backstory do help make this book more rounded. I really enjoyed this tale with its multiple threads, with Louisa at the centre of the action. However, as Louisa's story is covered in #1, if #2 is read standalone, the characters might be a little flat and the story a little less engaging.

4* A good old fashioned mystery, with lots of interest.

Fiona says

A very good whodunnit. Jessica Fellowes has created a murder mystery centring on the Mitford family and their home, and some of Nancy's friends who are mixed up in London's 1920s drug scene, illegal drinking clubs and prostitution. Alice Diamond, 'Queen of the Forty Thieves', seems an unlikely character but she was a real person who ran a gang of female shoplifters. The murder itself is fictitious but many of the characters and the historical detail are not.

Fellowes has clearly done her research as 1920s London is vividly brought to life. She is, of course, well connected herself. Her uncle wrote *Downton Abbey* and she has written spin off books from the series. I requested this book because I used to be a real Mitford nerd and thought I'd enjoy reading about them. I did but I didn't expect to enjoy it as much as I did.

With thanks to Little, Brown Book Group UK and NetGalley for a review copy.

Sam says

Jessica Fellowes ventures below stairs to solve a country house murder in *Bright Young Dead*.

As in 2017's *The Mitford Murders*, the main protagonist is Louisa Cannon. She is nurserymaid, chaperone and amateur sleuth. Fellowes has done her homework in evoking the period well. The Mitford sisters are captured before their notoriety, wanting to break free from the strictures of *Farve* and *Muv*. At every opportunity there is a trip up to London for a party or shopping trip.

The murder this time takes place at the family seat during a birthday party. The obvious suspect is a maid, *Dulcie*. It is a case of *there, but for the grace of God, go I*. Louisa has come from the same background and could easily have made the same choices. She resolves to solve the crime, with the occasional help of the sisters.

The action jumps between country and town. The *Bright Young Things* are not all they seem, at least two of them being on the wrong side of the law. Also in London is a notorious gang of female thieves, called the *Forty*. The criminality of both converges on a club called the *43*.

Aside from the murder, the main focus of the book is the disadvantages of women. Men can go as they please, while ladies need a chaperone. Louisa longs to be more than a maid. *Mary*, a new police constable, has to put herself in harms way to prove herself.

In further books, it would be nice to see the personalities of the Mitford sisters coming to the fore, as they could be any large family at the moment.

Vicki says

"Bright Young Dead" by Jessica Fellowes, Minotaur Books, 400 pages, Oct. 30, 2018.

It is 1925 and Pamela Mitford is about to turn 18. Her older sister, Nancy, convinces their parents to hold a costume party for the birthday.

Nancy and her friends are known as the Bright Young Things. They organize a treasure hunt for late night after the party. Louise Cannon, who works for the Mitfords and at times serves as Pamela's chaperone, becomes friends with Dulcie Long, a maid in another household. She agrees to help Dulcie meet privately with Adrian Curtis, the son of Dulcie's employer.

Curtis is murdered during the treasure hunt and the police arrest Dulcie. Louise wants to prove Dulcie's innocence.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Guy Sullivan and Constable Mary Moon in London are looking to further their careers by arresting the notorious Alice Diamond and her female crime gang. Dulcie used to be in that gang.

This is the second in The Mitford Murders series, but can be read as a standalone. It is a light, cozy mystery. Fellowes is good at depicting the tensions between the upper classes and their servants.

In accordance with FTC guidelines, the advance reader's edition of this book was provided by the publisher as a printed copy in exchange for an honest review.

Bianca Visagie says

Read the full review at www.yourwordsmynk.com

This book is filled with the glitz and glamour of the 1920s, completely pulling you in and making you forget that you live in 2018. The book has a subtle way of teaching you the decorum of the time, and soon you find yourself transported to a completely different time – yet you still feel right at home. The writing was effortless, even though the pace was a little slow for my liking.

The plot also could have been a little tighter, with fewer characters to keep track of. I felt like we didn't get to know all of the characters enough for us to really care (or guess) who the murderer is. Fewer characters with richer backstories would have been better. It was a fun read and I'm definitely going to buy the first book, as I haven't read it before.

Rita says

IL DANNO E LA BEFFA: STORIA DI UNA LETTRICE DISTRATTA

Pare che i *sequel* non facciano che deludermi in questo periodo. Non solo ho fatto una gran fatica a destreggiarmi tra i vari personaggi sospettati, ma l'unico che più mi era rimasto impresso si è rivelato essere l'assassino!

Detto ciò, non credo di poter attribuire la colpa all'autrice, che si è data comunque un bel daffare nel seminare indizi e tranelli per celare l'identità del colpevole e rendere il caso più complesso di quanto in realtà fosse. Ma la scarsa attenzione al rapporto fra Louisa e Guy, che mi avevano fatto innamorare nel primo romanzo, questo sì che posso imputarglielo!

Ginger says

Loved it
