

SUSANNA
GREGORY
DEATH OF
A SCHOLAR



THE TWENTIETH CHRONICLE OF
MATTHEW BARTHOLOMEW

Death of a Scholar

Susanna Gregory

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The twentieth chronicle in the Matthew Bartholomew series.

In the summer of 1358 the physician Matthew Bartholomew returns to Cambridge to learn that his beloved sister is in mourning after the unexpected death of her husband, Oswald Stanmore. Aware that his son has no interest in the cloth trade that made his fortune and reputation, Oswald has left the business to his widow, but a spate of burglaries in the town distracts Matthew from supporting Edith in her grief and attempting to keep the peace between her and her wayward son.

As well as the theft of irreplaceable items from Michaelhouse, which threatens its very survival, a new foundation, Winwick Hall, is causing consternation amongst Matthew's colleagues. The founder is an impatient man determined that his name will grace the University's most prestigious college. He has used his wealth to rush the construction of the hall, and his appointed Fellows have infiltrated the charitable Guild founded by Stanmore, in order to gain the support of Cambridge's most influential citizens on Winwick's behalf.

A perfect storm between the older establishments and the brash newcomers is brewing when the murder of a leading member of the Guild is soon followed by the death of one of Winwick's senior Fellows. Assisting Brother Michael in investigating these fatalities leads Matthew into a web of suspicion, where conspiracy theories are rife but facts are scarce and where the pressure from the problems of his college and his family sets him on a path that could endanger his own future...

'A first-rate treat for mystery lovers' (*Historical Novels Review*)

'Susanna Gregory has an extraordinary ability to conjure up a strong sense of time and place' (*Choice*)

Death of a Scholar Details

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From Reader Review Death of a Scholar for online ebook

Susan says

August 1358, Matthew and Michael have returned to Cambridge only to find that Oswald Stanmore has died. That a new college - Winwick Hall - is being built, and then the first body is found. A very enjoyable series, with likable characters and a good mystery

P.D.R. Lindsay says

I have previously enjoyed stories about Matthew Bartholomew and Cambridge but found this one tedious. As a Mediaeval mystery it's fine, although I do dislike the 'Back then it was all so dirty and nasty' attitude which so many writers have. Nothing wrong with the writing, or the setting, just all that constant bickering amongst the professors and scholars got on my nerves. The plot, the new brash college foundation, the in fights and the thefts and murders, just didn't hold together enough for me.

This series of hist-mysts is rightly popular and Matthew Bartholomew is a likeable character. The fact that this novel did not 'fire' for me does not mean that it won't be enjoyed by the many fans and readers who like a well written historical mystery.

Pat Kidd says

20 is one of the best of Ms Gregory's latest group.

Melinda says

Poor Matthew. Good riddance Juillietta. Love Brother Michael.

Rachel says

OK so starting off with book 20 in a series is not the way to do it. The book was a gift and therefor that decision was out of my hands.

That said some amazing historical facts about the early days of the Universities and the political fighting within the different schools was fascinating. An interesting main protagonist with plenty of good and bad qualities and I have to say a cast of thousands.... or so it seemed to the uninitiated reader The hardest thing was trying to keep track of the multitude of characters and their relationships to one another.

If you like historical whodunit's with lots of detail then give this one a tray (or better yet start with book 1 in the series!)

Diana Herrera says

Another addition to a great series. Can be read on its own but much better if you start the series from Book #1 and read them in order. They are easy to follow and I can never put them down. The characters are like old friends now. You would think with 20 books the series would be running out of steam, but not so. I'm hoping there will be a book 21 sometime in the not-so-distant future.

Margaret Galbraith says

Not one of the best I've read but then perhaps I should have started at the beginning of the series and it might have made more sense!

Shirley Schwartz says

This is the 20th book in the Matthew Bartholomew series, and it's another good one. I truly enjoy this series. It's always exciting and the plot moves along very quickly in all the books. Ms. Gregory uses actual historical people in the books, and her attention to historical detail helps make the books seem real and relevant. My favourite thing about the series though is the two main protagonists. I love Matthew Bartholomew and Brother Michael. They are one of the best crime fighting duos out there, regardless of the time frame. This series is set in 14 century Cambridge, England, and Ms. Gregory makes that era come alive in her books. I highly recommend this series to anyone who loves historical mysteries. But be aware, there is no shortage of murder and mayhem in these books! But all the destruction and murder is sprinkled in and around sly and tricky humour. This book could be read as a stand-alone, but it is more fun if you start at the beginning and work your way through.

William says

I'm not a fan of this series, but I told myself I would read the entire series. My complaints with this book is the same as with all of the prior books - the plotline is too long and drawn out, there are too many characters and ALL of the characters (other than Matthew Bartholomew) are evil, mean, avaricious, etc. If there is a character who treats Matthew nicely, you can be pretty sure that he/she will die in the book or be written out of the story line. Three more books to go...

Mary says

I'm not entirely certain why I keep buying this series. So many of the recurring characters are ridiculous and/or unpleasant that it's difficult to care much what happens to them.

Carol says

Susanna Gregory has now completed 20 books in her Matthew Bartholomew series, and with each one she gives more insight into the workings of the academic world of Cambridge and its environs. This story which revolves around the establishing of a new Hall and its competition with the scholars of Michaelhouse, is a really good read. Our favorites are there, like Clippesby and his animals, and of course Brother Michael, Edith, Suttone and the others. I thoroughly enjoy this series and have even gotten used to the fact that Matthew is like so many men, a romantic who will not find a true love.

Stephen Waddell says

Latest Bartholomew up to Gregory's convoluted best

Followers of Susanna Gregory's medieval series will not be disappointed in her latest installment, peopled as it is with riotous characters, an involved plot and enough corpses to satisfy the armchair ghoul in all of us. Once again we can enjoy a cozy evening (or two) with the most eccentric bunch of medieval scholars ever to grace a page, and gasp at Gregory's ability to keep so many balls in the air until the smashing and completely satisfying end.

If you haven't tried this series then you are missing some of the finest characters, compelling plots and excellent scholarship available in a mystery novel today.

Georgia Lengyel says

a cavalcade of "baddies".

Suzan says

I love Susanna Gregory's Cambridge series for its evocative descriptions of the town and the era. Her plots are always extraordinarily convoluted, and this book is no exception. This is something I like; your mileage may vary. Matt is, of course, way too modern in his views of medicine, but as a contrast to the other medicos he makes the probable reality of much medieval medicine vivid. Yes, the main series characters have a certain stockness about them--to some extent they are patterns, not characters. But it's rather like running into old friends who don't disappoint your memories of them. I've read a lot of actual history about this period, and with Gregory's work in the background, her vividness makes it feel real. In this case, the town/gown conflicts of a medieval university town come into focus as well as some of the then-current theological disputes.

Rebekah May says

This is probably more of a 2.5 star rating but I'll round it up for that last chapter. Death of a Scholar is the 20th book in the Matthew Bartholomew series, which is a historical crime series set in medieval Cambridge. I picked this up on a whim, after finding it super cheap in a bargain book shop, and this is the only book I've read in the series, I haven't read any of the 19 books that take place before this one. Because of this there were (a surprisingly large amount of) obscure references to things that had happened in previous books, which did take me out of the novel a little, but overall the book stands well by itself. I will say, though, that one of my biggest problems with this was that I didn't feel like I got a feel of 14th century Cambridge at all. There was no world building. I'm guessing this is because there are 19 books, most of which I'm guessing are set in the same place, before this one. So I am letting Susanna Gregory off the hook for that qualm.

World building aside, I really enjoyed Gregory's writing. Her characters were very entertaining for the most part, especially Michael, and I appreciated her using real people from the universities and court at that time to build the characters she used in her novel. The only character I had any sort of problem with was Matthew Bartholomew. At times he was such an idiot. He was extremely biased towards characters who had very obviously something wrong and I got more and more annoyed as he did it over and over and over again. Other characters did the same thing, but not to anywhere near the same extent as Bartholomew did. I just don't understand how he could be *that* blind to what was going on right under his nose. I'm hoping he isn't like that in the other books. Other than him I really enjoyed the characters Gregory created.

Like I said at the beginning of this review, I'm bumping this up to a three because that last chapter was fantastic. I loved the climax of the novel, though I can't really say that the rest of it felt like it was leading up to anything in particular. Finding out the solution of the mystery was worth finishing this novel for, but I did almost give up halfway through. While the pacing of this novel was ok, there was an awful lot of talking and not a lot of things happening. The vast majority of the novel seemed to be Michael and Bartholomew talking about the crime, though towards the last third of the book things started to get more interesting. Before that there was so much dialogue and nothing was going anywhere, characters were repeating each other's accusations and others were denying said accusations. I started to get bored very quickly. This edition is 450 pages long, but it definitely could have been shorter.

Saying that, I enjoyed this enough to want to start from the beginning. I'm interested to see how she builds up medieval Cambridge from the beginning and how these characters started out. I'm not sure I'll be dedicating my time to this whole series, but I'll definitely be checking out book one.
