



One Corpse Too Many

Ellis Peters

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In the summer of 1138, war between King Stephen and the Empress Maud takes Brother Cadfael from the quiet world of his garden into a battlefield of passions, deceptions, and death. Not far from the safety of the abbey walls, Shrewsbury Castle falls, leaving its ninety-four defenders loyal to the empress to hang as traitors. With a heavy heart, Brother Cadfael agrees to bury the dead, only to make a grisly discovery: one extra victim that has been strangled, not hanged.

One Corpse Too Many Details

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Author : Ellis Peters

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From Reader Review One Corpse Too Many for online ebook

CatBookMom says

Excellent story, great narration. It doesn't get ~~much~~ better than this. Cadfael meets Beringar; Beringar meets Aline; Shrewsbury survives siege and would-be King Stephen.

I always think this is the better first-read of the Cadfael books, more so than *A Morbid Taste for Bones*.

Chrissie says

This was wonderful. I was thinking all through it that I would be giving it four stars because I really have to save the very best books for five star class winners, but then came the end which I adored. So yep, another five star book. This is as good as *The Leper of Saint Giles*, and that I gave five stars. With that one I was shocked that I could love a book of a mystery series. It astounded me. Now I am beginning to expect Ellis Peters to perform as one of the best of the best, and she pulled it off again.

Here is why I love the books of this series and Ellis Peters:

All the books are about medieval life in Shrewsbury, England. This place really exists. It is not imaginary! I love these books because you feel that you are in that village and you are there at the beginning of the 12th Century. Everything fits. Peters never throws in a detail that is out of time or out of place. There is no modern day slang. Curse words are not thrown around. The dialogs use the words of those times and people, but it is never hard to understand. It all just feels g-e-n-u-i-n-e. Clothing, food, customs, religious beliefs, historical facts, medical practices – they are all here but written in such a fashion that they never, ever become dry, taught or boring. You see the people, you smell the herbs, you too are there at compline.....You are part of that duel, rooting for your hero.

There is humor. Not sad humor, not sardonic humor, but sweet humor. You will chuckle as you watch how two men try to outwit each other. You love them both so this is pure enjoyment. No nasty rivalry.

Sure there are villains, but there are central characters that you love. They are kind and forgiving. They have humility.

If there is a battle it is not gruesomely depicted. There is no glorification in that which is gruesome. If a villain has to be punished surprisingly enough that punishment does not have to be imposed upon by a human. Nature sees that those who have done wrong are punished. So has it been in every one of the books I have read by Peters. I adore this trademark of her writing.

Although these books are centered on life in a Benedictine abbey, where of course religious beliefs are of central focus, never are we lectured about how we must behave or what we must believe. No religion is shoved down your throat. We can all agree about the religious ideas promulgated in the story. Morality, good behavior, kindness, compassion and understanding are qualities we all recognize and aspire to.

One word about why I loved this particular book so much. I love the friendship that you see growing between Hugh Beringar and Cadfael. I loved that King Stephen was NOT drawn as a terrible villain and that the monks stay outside the strife between the two rivaling sides, Empress Maude and King Stephen. I liked

how real people are interwoven with characters invented by the author. What impressed me about this particular book was also that this is a love story, and I don't like love stories, but this was so dam cute to watch. In fact there are two love stories; both were marvelously depicted. I was giggling at the end.

The audiobook narration by Johanna Ward (alias Kate Reading) was just perfect. One must have an English accent when reading this book. How has she so well learned to mimic these villagers of the 1130s?! Monks and King Stephen and beggars and knights, all of them are done to a tee.

I read this with Gundula as a buddy ready. We had so much fun discussing historical details and what we enjoyed. Here is a link to that discussion: <http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/1...>

Carol ?? says

[two romantic couples (hide spoiler)]

Susanna - Censored by GoodReads says

I've read this before but have no memory of the plot, so I thought I'd read it again.

Later: This is, in a way, a medieval "spy vs. spy" story, and to my mind the best in the Brother Cadfael series.

I think I'd start a reader new to the Cadfael series here, actually.

Mike says

The Cadfael series has two strong positives and one serious negative. I find the setting (a monastery in medieval England) very intriguing. I also enjoy Peters's plot lines, which are intricately developed. On the other hand, her character development is hasty and too-easy. She would rather just posit character elements (writing something along the line of "and just then the two recognized they were in love", or "Cadfael summed him up as too good a person to be involved in the crime") in an effort to get to the story she wants to tell rather than developing the characters to get the story there. As a result she has a tendency to come across as artificial and flippant...at least in the first two installments of this series.

Stacie Haden says

3.5 stars. I'm still not 100% sold on this series. I'll have to read another. :)

Kiwi Begs2Differ \n says

I wasn't impressed by the first book of the successful series by Ellis Peters, but in this second book, brother Cadfael grew on me. This time I listened to the audio version narrated by Stephen Thorne, who I credit from my better experience. The ending was too sweet for my taste but I'll certainly look for the next (audio)book.

Petra says

1138 England. King Stephen is in conflict with Empress Maude for the throne. During the siege of Shrewsbury, executions are ordered and Father Cadfael finds one body too many in with the dead....murder! I like the medieval setting and the descriptions of the customs, lifestyles and places. Father Cadfael is a wonderful character. Solving mysteries using only clues and logic without the help of fingerprints or forensics is interesting.

I enjoy this series so far and plan on continuing in future.

Jon says

3.5 stars

Jeff says

One Corpse Too Many is the second Brother Cadful book I've read. The Brother Cadful series has a lot going for it: a unique "investigator", the medieval time setting, a close attention to period detail. The minuses include: cardboard characters, stale dialogue, and a somewhat stilted writing style. That said, I'd recommend the book for mystery/historical fiction lovers, who want something different.

Tara says

Despite the unusual setting of this series (a 12th century monastery in rural England), the pacing, suspense and character building are as good as any modern mystery. Peters is also excellent at creating strong, intelligent women who manage not to feel out of place in the period. Danger, intrigue and young love are all a part of the formula that make for a winning story.

LJ says

First Sentence: Brother Cadfael was working in the small kitchen garden by the abbot's fishponds when the boy was first brought to him.

There is civil war in England as King Stephen and Empress Maud fight for the throne. A young man, who is not, has been brought to the abbey and placed in Cadfael's care. Shrewsbury Castle falls to the forces of Stephen leaving 94 men to the hangman. Brother Cadfael, having been a soldier in the first crusade and seeing much worse, offers to care for and bury the dead. However, there is a 95th body and it's clear to Cadfael that it is a case of murder.

Aside from the portent at the beginning, which I always hate, I enjoyed this book. Peters creates a strong sense of time and place. She provides a clear, succinct summary of the historical events of the time. The dialogue conveys the feel of the period without slowing the pace of the book.

Her characters are very well drawn. I like the element of Cadfael's "street sense" amongst the clerical community and his ability to reason things through. I also like that her women are strong, smart characters.

I wouldn't read a lot of the Cadfael together, but they are delightful books to pick up when a reliably good read is needed.

ONE CORPSE TOO MANY (Hist. Mys-Brother Cadfael-England-1138) – VG
Peters, Ellis (aka Edith Pargeter) - 2nd in series
The Mysterious Press, 1979, US Paperback, ISBN: 0446400513

Wanda says

The trouble with me, he thought unhappily, is that I have been about the world long enough to know that God's plans for us, however infallibly good, may not take the form we expect and demand.

Brother Cadfael, that former military man in a monk's robe, knows his onions....and his murder victims and fugitives! When a murderer dumps his victim amongst the bodies of those hung for treason, Cadfael is not willing to let the perpetrator get away scot-free. Dragged away from his garden and his herbal potions, the good Brother must search for justice, but not interfere in politics.

I so enjoy the time period and setting of this particular series! I also appreciate the non-gory nature of the mysteries and the slower pacing more suited to the historical period depicted. Sure, there are pressures to solve the murder, but Cadfael has the time and thinking space in his garden to put the facts together and come up with a logical argument. He has both his military experience and his monastic learning to draw on, a formidable combination.

But it is Cadfael's common sense and knowledge of human behaviour that makes him a good detective—and his willingness to admit that sometimes his monastic duties will need to be set aside if justice is to be done. A good man to have on your side!

Ellie says

Wonderful series: and full of lots of interesting tidbits of information for anyone (like me) entranced by medievality (I know that's not a word--well, it is now, I guess). I read the series with a close friend and we had a great time with it. Reading alone/together is a great way for busy adults to spend time together! I'll admit she enjoyed the prose more than I did; I had a little trouble with flow (or lack thereof) but I adored Brother Cadfael, the monks, the garden, and the murders.

Strongly recommend for mystery, medieval, and/or monk (small not capital m) lovers.

Megan Larson says

Reading this book was my rebellious way of escaping from my middle ages "reading list" without wholly leaving the middle ages, and I am heartily glad for it. It really was excellent--the only complaint I had was that it was a little hard to get into, because it was so historically dense and unassuming in tone--it didn't exactly start with a "bang"--and the font was miniscule! Perhaps I was expecting this book to be as undemanding to read as many mystery novels are--even by great authors like Agatha Christie and Elizabeth Peters. It wasn't, but the complexities it contained were rich and rewarding historically, emotionally, and even spiritually. As far as the "whodunnit" aspect, it was well crafted and well resolved, and Ms. Peters even made room for some very sweet romance. Her characters were real, which is hard to do with overlapping genres like period fiction plus mystery plus romance, and I am as eager to get to know Brother Cadfael and Hugh Beringar better as I am to see Prior Robert and that brown-noser Brother Jerome be humbled a few times over.

I am so glad I was advised to begin at the beginning of this series (although the library didn't have book one), since I was prepared to pick up book 20, which had the highest rating. What a tragedy that would have been, because I assuredly would have realized I ought to have read the whole series, and I would have spoiled the ending for myself. Looking forward to more from Ellis Peters, here are two favorite quotes from this book:

"It takes half a lifetime to reach the spot where eternity is always visible, and the crude injustice of the hour shrivels out of sight."

"God disposes all. From the highest to the lowest extreme of a man's scope, wherever justice and retribution can reach him, so can grace."

Cecily Felber says

This second Brother Cadfael story is set against the backdrop of the siege of Shrewsbury Castle in 1138 during a nineteen-year conflict between two royal cousins, Stephen and Maud, for the throne of England. Cadfael tries to do the right thing amid the conflicting loyalties of the time--and find out who used the executions ordered by the King as cover for their crime. This story also introduces the enduring character of Hugh Beringar, who will enable Cadfael's participation in many future investigations.

Brother Cadfael (pronounced Cad-file) has definitely entered the ranks of great fiction detectives alongside Sherlock Holmes and Lord Peter Wimsey. But these stories are more than just murder mysteries in medieval drag. Ellis Peters actually lived in Shrewsbury, England, where Cadfael's monastery of St. Peter and Paul can still be visited. Her knowledge of the land and people and history permeates her work and gives her the incredible gift of transporting her reader into the past. You really do feel as though you are in that long-lost

world lit only by fire, where it's quiet and green and life moves at a pace most people can be happy in.

Cadfael is a suitably complex man. He's from Wales, but now living in England (though Wales is not very far away). He was once a soldier, but now he's a monk. He's lived a full life, now he wants to be quiet. But he also has a strong sense of right and justice and refuses to compromise on these things, even when it means getting himself in trouble. He's also picked up a lot of knowledge, especially of herbology and medicine and (somehow for the time) logical analysis that stands him in good stead as a solver of mysteries.

A more than worthy follow up to *A Morbid Taste for Bones*!

Ron says

First story in the Main Sequence of Cadfael stories. Suggest you read "A Morbid Taste for Bones" or "A Rare Benedictine" first, but you'll not be disappointed if you start here.

History, in the personage of King Stephen of England comes crashing into twelfth century Shrewsbury and Brother Cadfael's life will never be the same. But wait, there's one too many bodies. How do we know and what does it mean? And is Hugh Beringer a friend or foe? Got to read it to find out. Enjoy.

(Third Reading: 2016)

“No one can do more than choose his own road according to his conscience, and bear the consequences of his choice.”

The more I read science fiction, the more I appreciate well-written historical fiction. The Cadfael mysteries are historical fiction at its best.

“In all my life and all my fighting I've fought for only one king.”

One Corpse introduces us to the historical setting and culture more than *A Mordid Taste for Bones*. It also introduces Hugh Berengar and other characters who will add depth and complications to Brother Cadfael's retirement from the world and its troubles. Somehow, the troubles keep finding him. That's half the fun.

“All the things of the wild have their proper uses, only misuse makes them evil.”

A word about religion: it is difficult to portray what people, especially monastics, felt or thought a thousand years ago. Their inner life was animated by a different world view and set of assumptions from moderns, even modern Christians. While having no apparent Christian perspective, Edith Pargeter knew Wales and medieval history. The reader benefits from her other time, almost-other-world perspective.

“God will require an accounting.”

Cadfael series: excellent historical fiction. Ellis Peters draws the reader into the twelfth century with modern story telling but holds us there with a richness of detail which evokes a time and place which seems almost mythic. Though the foreground of each chronicle is a murder mystery, behind it a nation and a culture are woven in a wondrous tapestry.

Laura says

It's so refreshing to read a mystery series with no gore or bad language that is mixed with a cast of characters I'd like to know in real life. They're wise, honorable people. The central character is a monk, but don't let that put you off. He becomes a real person with flaws, not some pie-in-the-sky paragon of perfection. This book gives a black-and-white movie feeling, for which I'm very grateful. It's a good, comfort read. If you're afraid the historical aspect and time period will go right over your head, don't be. Ellis Peters is gifted, so you don't have to be. Just relax and enjoy learning about Empress Maud and King Stephen. It's ok. There's no final exam at the end, and even if there was, you could probably pass it. So, no worries.

The setting really does come alive on the page, and you'll feel safe and secure in that world with Brother Cadfael as your guide. I've enjoyed meeting every character in this series so far. This one shines in all categories: plot, characters, setting, and good writing. I wouldn't say any of them are taking the lead, leaving others behind. I feel this series can be compared to the The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series. Both have good writing featuring warm, wise characters, and a setting with which you may be unfamiliar. There is humor, and you'll learn something along the way. You may not know what to expect, but you'll be glad you took the time to find out.

I'm looking forward to the third book in this series! I never thought I'd say that about any book written in the medieval time period. Thanks to Chrissie and Gundula for the nudges, and for convincing me to give these books a try.

Luann says

If I didn't know after reading the first Brother Cadfael, A Morbid Taste for Bones, that I wanted to read ALL of the Brother Cadfael books, I definitely know it now after reading book two! Brother Cadfael is such a smart, interesting, capable, and overall cool character! He is exactly what I look for in a mystery protagonist. And, as in book one, I loved the cast of characters surrounding Brother Cadfael as well.

Ellis Peters does a wonderful job of building the medieval world her characters live in without slowing down the story with too many details. The mystery itself was good, although the solution wasn't a huge surprise. Mostly I just enjoyed spending time with these characters. I look forward to reading book three, Monk's Hood, sometime in the near future!

One thing that did bug me a little is that the cover picture of the edition I read doesn't match the details in the story. But overall that is a minor thing and doesn't keep me from wanting to read more in the series.

Ace says

A good old fashioned murder mystery. A marked improvement on Cadfael #1 in my opinion, but the ingredients were the same - good plot, several suspects and of course a love brewing in the background.

