



Anne Perry Presents Malice Domestic

Anne Perry (Contributor) , Edward Marston (Contributor) , Lindsey Davis (Contributor) , Marjorie Eccles (Contributor) , Anthea Fraser (Contributor) , Kerry Greenwood (Contributor) , Susan Moody (Contributor) , Betty Nathan (Contributor) , more... Peter Robinson (Contributor) , David Williams (Contributor) , Peter Lovesey (Contributor) , Catherine Aird (Contributor) , Jon L. Breen (Contributor) , Simon Brett (Contributor) , Jan Burke (Contributor) , Dorothy Cannell (Contributor) , Sarah Caudwell (Contributor) , Kate Charles (Contributor) ...less

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Collects seventeen traditional mysteries by such contemporary writers as Marjorie Eccles, Jan Burke, Anthea Fraser, and Edward Marston.

Contents:

- * A Dance with Life, Death... and Laughter by Anne Perry
- * The Corbett Correspondence by Edward Marston & Peter Lovesey
- * Like to Die by Catherine Aird
- * Immortality [Sebastian Grady] by Jon L. Breen
- * Ways to Kill a Cat by Simon Brett
- * Mea Culpa by Jan Burke
- * The Gentleman's Gentleman by Dorothy Cannell
- * Malice Among Friends by Sarah Caudwell
- * True Confessions by Kate Charles
- * Abstain from Beans by Lindsey Davis
- * Time's Wingèd Chariot by Marjorie Eccles
- * Alternative Reality by Anthea Fraser
- * Come Sable Night by Kerry Greenwood
- * Murder Mid-Atlantic by Edward Marston
- * City Boy by Susan Moody
- * One in Every Family by Betty Nathan
- * The Two Ladies of Rose Cottage by Peter Robinson
- * Sweet Fruition by David Williams

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From Reader Review Anne Perry Presents *Malice Domestic* for online ebook

Kate says

"Esteemed mystery writer Anne Perry, author of twenty-five novels and two acclaimed detective series, heads up a delectable cast of contemporary writers, the very best from both sides of the Atlantic. In the tradition of Britain's honored crime writer Agatha Christie, *Malice Domestic 6* jumps the pond between Britain and American to deliver 100 percent pure suspense in all its spine-tingling glory."

~~back cover

Acceptable, but not outstanding.

Susan says

A collection of seventeen mystery stories written in the well loved traditional fashion by some of the most popular contemporary authors. Pour yourself a cup of tea and cozy up to the fire, well at least pretend to. Each story is enjoyable, though some more than others. The stories are short but not lacking in story, quite entertaining.

Jamie says

Ugh, I keep getting it into my head to review these compilations. It's like long term memory loss; after a long break I think it's a good idea again, and the next thing I know I'm banging my head into the keyboard cursing about how I'm too stubborn to quit something once I've started it.

The Corbett Correspondence by Edward Marston & Peter Lovesey is our opener this time. In its back and forth pattern unfolds the story of an unpublished manuscript written by an author whose ability to get published at all boggles the mind. It's silly and while the plotline isn't interesting it was certainly amusing, and it was sweet to see the two spies get closer through their correspondence.

The resident least likely to die ends up being the only one who does in Catherine Aird's *Like to Die*. A nursing home is hit with food poisoning and the doctors hurry to tend to those throwing up, not realizing that one of the ones who seem unharmed is simply unable to purge the poison. The plan depends entirely on a cook's helper's ineptitude, but the killer might have gotten away with it if the victim hadn't *somehow* been the only person in the residence or on staff unable to throw up. It's telling that the killer had no qualms about accidentally killing other people, but would have been counting on it to muddy the waters.

A pair of film studio employees reminisce over lunch of an attempt to grant *Immortality* to a Broadway star that ended up causing a murder. Jon L. Breen's story was interesting but the mystery didn't have a chance to linger before being cleared up.

My second favorite in this collection was *Ways to Kill a Cat* by Simon Brett. Seraphina Fellowes is a cozy fiction writer whose stories star her husband's cat, Mr. Whiffles. But she's not pleased with the way her

career is taking a backseat to the cat's, and decides it's time to put herself back in the spotlight. The story is separated into 10 'chapters' of Seraphina's murder attempts, and uses my favorite trope of the ineffectual villain.

A young boy is crippled in an auto accident and his mother, left without a husband and with a son who has distanced himself from her, remarries a man who abuses them both. The boy and his stepfather make weekly visits to church, and there the boy discovers a way to be rid of the stepfather before he commits the murder the child knows is coming. *Mea Culpa* by Jan Burke is truly a fantastic story of forgiveness of the self, and of taking care of the people around you when they need it even if they don't think they do. The mother doesn't believe her son's warnings, but he's determined to protect her and be the hero they both need. Plus, it has one of the most perfectly landed one-liners I've read in a while. I won't spoil it, but if you read this story you'll know which I'm talking about. I think this may be my second favorite in the book. A great comeuppance tale.

A gentleman's fiancée dumps him for a man she'd only met that morning, and her jilted love and his valet set out to win her back. I tried reading P.G. Wodehouse before but while the plots were amusing and his Jeeves character not terribly annoying, Bertie, Jeeves' master, was intolerable. I simply couldn't put up with him and ended up not finishing the book. A similar set-up is used in *The Gentleman's Gentleman* by Dorothy Cannell, but to much better use. Woodcock is still a wonderful 'Jeeves', but his master is a great deal more enjoyable than Bertie was. Better than Jeeves, in fact. Woodcock solves the problem, but not by near future vision/telepathy as Wodehouse's character was prone to do. The writing was well done and the characters were enjoyable (except the histrionic fiancé, Foof), so all in all it's one of the better stories in the book (Especially if you can avoid the Wodehouse comparison which I've just now made impossible. Sorry.).

There is some healthy *Malice Among Friends* in Sarah Caudwell's story about a woman who viciously turns on her best friend to further a man's chances at winning an editorship over the poor maligned victim. Thank goodness, a *short*, short story. I'm writing these blurbs out of order and this was one of the last, so it's pretty refreshing to get to something only a couple of pages long. The story was well written and the twist at the end isn't as predictable as this twist often is.

True Confessions by Kate Charles is an absolutely marvelous story about a woman rejoining the church and accidentally causing a murder. Brilliant, *brilliant*, with a marvelous twist ending you'd never see coming. A great example of a cause and effect plot. Far and away tied with *City Boy* for my favorite in the collection.

Abstain from Beans (by Lindsey Davis) has an interesting setting: 6th century BC in Croton, which was a Greek outpost on the toe of present day Italy. As soon as I learned where the story took place I'm pleased to say that the title immediately gave away who would be involved in this murder mystery. It's a ridiculous bit of trivia to know, but outside his theorem Pythagoras is known for enforcing vegetarianism on his students and followers, with an added restriction against eating beans. Aside from that, it tells the tale of a riot that ends in the dead body of the famous mathematician. There doesn't seem to be much of a mystery here, but in the end there's still a puzzle solved and suspicions that can't be proven. The story is cute and makes use of the cult mentality of the followers, but it wasn't very memorable.

A retired couple in *Time's Wingéd Chariot* by Marjorie Eccles suddenly find themselves at odds now that they under each other's feet. Eunice is able to ignore most of her husband's attempts at twisting the knife, but his latest plans for her garden turn out to be a complete frontal assault. The villain is obviously the husband in this story, but the author gets credit for a twist ending that I never saw coming which added a healthy dose of humor to this murder story.

A woman escapes her marital problems by making trips to a neighboring town and creating a whole to life for herself in *Alternative Reality* by Anthea Fraser. But when she tries to solve her problems in reality, her second life follows her home. A good, well-written story that's easy to follow. To be fair, the murderer might be able to get off on an insanity plea with a good lawyer. It would make the only 'murderer is insane' ending I've seen that actually has a chance at making sense.

For any fans of *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* we have a short story featuring the titular detective herself: *Come Sable Night* by Kerry Greenwood. I hadn't even realized the show was based on books, but since I can't get the show on Netflix here I may as well pick up a new series to read. A womanizer has publicly dumped his fiancée for her younger sister, and shortly thereafter ends up dead from anaphylactic shock. Miss Fisher suspects it's all just a little too tidy a coincidence. Well, the investigation seems to go nowhere for a while, but when the solution is finally worked out we get a lovely little surprise at the end. Very nice, not very memorable, but Miss Fisher's bossiness is amusing enough that I still plan to try out the series.

There is a *Murder Mid-Atlantic* in Edward Marston's story of a theft and murder and limited suspects. Wonderful writing; truly a delight! You can tell right off the bat that you're going to be entertained in this one. The victim of a theft goes on and on in a wonderful back and forth scene with the pursuer about her missing elephant feet, only to conclude four pages later with 'by the way, I lost the feet but gained a dead body. I'd also like to report a murder'. The solution was unexpected and everything ended happily.

Eve's cousin Ned shows up out of the blue after decades apart and invites himself to move into her little country house. He is intent on taking over her life and preventing her from getting a spare moment to herself, always hanging over her, always taking advantage of her hospitality, and dismissing her demands to leave as nothing more than crankiness she'll get over after a cup of tea and a good night's sleep. When confronted with a *City Boy* (by Susan Moody) taking away the personal freedoms she'd gained after the death of her equally dismissive husband, what's a country girl to do? A brilliant story and another one of the best. You can totally feel Eve's frustrations building up over the weeks she's trapped in her little house with Ned, and the heady satisfaction of the conclusion.

There's One in Every Family (by Betty Nathan), but two is pushing things a touch too far. When Aunt Emily invites herself over for the winter holidays, her demanding nature makes the season a headache for her relatives, and Tom in particular is dismayed at the intrusion. He'd brought his fiancée, Jan, for Christmas and didn't want this to be their first meeting. But to everyone's surprise and delight, Jan seems unshakable and quite able to turn Emily's head the way Jan wants it to. You'll really feel for the poor family members who have to put up with Aunt Emily, but the conclusion should have looked deeply suspicious to the paramedics. Also, I have this mental image now of Jan as Natalie Dormer with her sneaky crooked smile.

The Two Ladies of Rose Cottage have lived alone and apart from the village for years without much notice, until bones are discovered in the back garden and tales spring up of a husband's brutal murder. Years later, the whole truth comes out. Peter Robinson's tale of justified murder is told using an narrator who doubles back and twists and turns but does eventually get the whole story out. Not necessarily unreliable, but certainly evasive. It's an interesting effect, even if you have to mentally backtrack and adjust what you already know to fit with what you're just learning. A strong story with a satisfying ending.

An unhappy wife is looking for her plans for the future to come to *Sweet Fruition* in spite of the plans of the men in her life, but trips over her own ambitions. David Williams paints a lovely tale of murder for monetary gain that takes a few tries to get right. It's well written, the guilty pay, and the murderer's attitude is a delight.

The verdict? It looks like Martin Greenburg, my favorite short story compiler/editor, is no longer a part of the Malice Domestic series. I couldn't find his name anywhere on this one. While a shame, it doesn't hinder a rich supply of great stories for us. The collection had a few good ones that were mostly forgettable, but which had at least one well-done element, and several that knocked it out of the park. As usual with this series, there were no disappointments.

I just realized there seems to be a noticeable rise in religion-related stories in this edition (Pythagoras's following tends to be referred to as a religion or cult), much like the higher than usual number of outdoors/backwoods stories in the 5th edition. I wonder if this is a reflection of the popular themes of that year, or on the current interests of the editor.

Steve says

Malice Domestic 6 is a good, albeit not outstanding, anthology of "cozy" mysteries. There is an introduction by the editor, Anne Perry, and seventeen short stories, all original to this book. There are also brief afterwords to each story; the one for the first story, "The Corbett Correspondence," is neither very brief nor very serious. Despite what is said on the back cover, this book does not "deliver 100 percent pure suspense in all its spine-tingling glory," nor does it attempt to.

My favorite stories are "The Two Ladies of Rose Cottage" by Peter Robinson, "Alternative Reality" by Anthea Fraser, and "True Confessions" by Kate Charles. My favorite first line, however, is from Edward Marston's "Murder Mid-Atlantic":

"I've lost my feet!" exclaimed Rhoda Hubble.

Ann says

As usual I'm not really crazy about short stories! however some of these were actually quite good and some I wish would have been extended because I felt they would have made great novels.

Patty says

Many of the books I read are from my local library. If I bought every book I read, I would have gone bankrupt years ago. Public libraries were created to provide reading material for everyone. I am so glad that I have gotten to work in a library for many years.

However, one of the places I read is on my husband's boat. I often steer the boat as he fishes, but there is time to read. After dropping one library book in the drink, I have always tried to have one of my own paperbacks available for our trips.

I picked up this collection of mystery stories because some of the authors were familiar and some were new to me. All were entertaining, so overall I am glad I read this anthology.

My only complaint is my own fault. I have found that it is better not to read a lot of short stories at one time. They blend together in my head and I am not sure what I have read. Since this was the only book available to me and I had a lot of reading time, I got tired of people dying. As I said, this was my problem, not the book's.

I will be looking for more mysteries by Kate Charles and Kerry Greenwood since I liked their stories and I had not read them before.

If you like short mysteries and want to experience a lot of different writers, this anthology and all of the series would be right up your alley.

Ann says

I really liked this collection of stories! The last one wasn't my favorite, but the rest were really good. It had interesting mystery/murder stories with different points of view. This was an eAudiobook as well, and each of the actors did a really great job with the characters. It was a good little book of short mystery stories.

Cathy says

I didn't finish it - it was a collection of short stories only one of which was written by Anne Perry. I was not impressed with them, but then again, I am not a short story reader. I like more description and character development.

Jason says

I can't believe I've never read any of the Malice Domestic series before! A great set of mystery shorts, with some wonderful gems-particularly the entries by Kerry Greenwood, Simon Brett and Peter Robinson.

Nranger7 says

Read the first three stories and thought they were kinda cheesy and predictable.

Cheryl says

This was a really fun collection of mysteies. It was a quick read. I think my favorite one was the one about the married couple who were in conflict over gardens vs trains. Or maybe the different ways to kill a cat.

Kevin Shoop says

Grade: B

I wasn't expecting much from this collection, but I was surprised at how enjoyable most of these stories were. It helped to listen to the audio book, because the narrators brought their A-game to the recording. Great choice for light reading.

Carrie says

Have never been a big fan of the short story, but these may change my mind! Enjoyed and will be on the look out for more.

Pam Bales says

Good anthology. Nice introduction to new authors.

M.E. Belle says

I'm honestly not a fan of the whole murder-mystery genre, but I picked this book up on a whim and enjoyed a small handful of the short stories. It's not my definition of a 5-star anthology, but it was worth the read and I do plan to read the rest of the Malice Domestic anthologies someday.
