



Well-Schooled in Murder

Elizabeth George

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When thirteen-year-old Matthew Whately goes missing from Bredgar Chambers, a prestigious public school in the heart of West Sussex, aristocratic Inspector Thomas Lynley receives a call for help from the lad's housemaster, who also happens to be an old school chum. Thus, the inspector, his partner, Detective Sergeant Barbara Havers, and forensic scientist Simon Allcourt-St. James find themselves once again outside their jurisdiction and deeply involved in the search for a child--and then, tragically, for a child killer. Questioning prefects, teachers, and pupils closest to the dead boy, Lynley and Havers sense that something extraordinarily evil is going on behind Bredgar Chambers's cloistered walls. But as they begin to unlock the secrets of this closed society, the investigation into Matthew's death leads them perilously close to their own emotional wounds--and blinds them to the signs of another murder in the making....

From the Paperback edition.

Well-Schooled in Murder Details

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Author : Elizabeth George

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From Reader Review Well-Schooled in Murder for online ebook

Lobstergirl says

Well and densely plotted, but the cameos of the lower classes, as usual, grate. And how believable is it that (non-fundamentalist) marriages come to the brink of destruction because someone fails to disclose a teenage abortion they had? Really, in 1991? Elizabeth George can't seem to resist these anachronisms, and Deborah and Simon St. James never add anything interesting to the plots.

Suzanne says

Lynley and Havers investigate the disappearance of a schoolboy from an independent school and find there are more leads and details than necessary to solve the crime. As I have come to expect, author Elizabeth George uses her characters well, injecting comedic humor as needed to lighten the mood as the two detectives become ever more embroiled in the darker aspects of this crime. While I was able to guess the perpetrator before the 'big reveal' that did not detract from my enjoyment of the story. I find George's mysteries to be engaging and well-written and have a few more to read from the library.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

FIVE YEARS LATER...

I know it seems like I did not really like the series, as I waited 5 years to continue with the third book, but it is more of a "too many book, not enough time" syndrome. I FINALLY got to book three this month when a friend and I did a buddy read. As soon as I started the book I was hooked, again!

WELL-SCHOOLED IN MURDER

(Inspector Lynley: #3)

Written by Elizabeth George

1989, 432 Pages

Bantam Books

Genre: mystery, british, suspense, police

4 1/2

Thirteen year old, Matthew Whately is missing from his prestige school, Bredgar Chambers. When his parents are contacted they realize that Matthew didn't go away for the weekend with his schoolmate. He has been missing since Friday. Before the case can heat up his naked tortured body is found by Deborah St James, longtime friend of Lynley. Lynley and Havers were on the missing person case due to Lynley's school "friendship" with Bredgar Chamber's housemaster. From the beginning nothing in this case makes sense and the secrets within the school and community is ironclad. Lynley must use his own experiences to navigate between students and faculty.

While this book takes place in the late 1980s, it doesn't feel overly dated...the lack of technology in everyday life helps to make the suspense even greater. I also liked that this book was balanced quite well with the case and the personal issues of the main characters. Deb, who not only finds the body, is trying to heal after her miscarriage but instead it brings up guilt and secrets between her and Simon. After spending most of the day trying to solve this case, Havers comes home to a new crisis. Her mother's forgetfulness is getting worse and it is now affecting the care of her father. How can she take care of her personal and professional life at once? Lynley is heartbroken over Helen's refusal and quick departure. He needs this case to keep his loneliness and sadness at bay. As Lynley, Havers and Simon try to solve this case we also get a glimpse of their own humanness. This book had me grasping at suspects even when I wasn't completely sure of their motive. I did guess a bit of the conclusion but not for the right reasons - so I am not sure that counts, lol.

I really recommend this mystery series to anyone that loves good suspense and characterization.

k (My Novelesque Life)

Aleshanee says

4.5 Sterne für einen äußerst spannenden Fall!

Und schon bin ich beim vierten Band angelangt. Nachdem mir die Reihe vor 20 Jahren schon so gut gefallen hatte bin ich jetzt begeistert, wie sehr es mich immer noch fesseln kann. Zum Glück kann ich mich an die Details nicht mehr erinnern und gehe somit ganz ohne Vorwissen auf Mörderjagd!

Der Schreibstil ist mittlerweile nicht mehr ganz so "gestelzt" wie noch im ersten bzw. zweiten Teil und sehr viel flüssiger zu lesen. Von Anfang an hab ich mich sofort wieder zuhause gefühlt und bin mit Lynley und Havers den Spuren gefolgt, die die beiden Ermittler in ein angesehenes Elite Internat führen.

Von Anfang an spannend - wie immer mit mehreren Verdächtigen und verschlungenen Motiven wusste man bis zum Schluss nicht wirklich, wie alles zusammenhängt. Das kann Elizabeth George meiner Meinung nach echt gut, denn man kann miträtseln, ohne zu früh sich des Täters sicher zu sein! Vor allem auch die Zusammenhänge waren hier wieder verstörend und krass - und leider sicher auch realitätsnah - wenn auch hoffentlich heute nicht mehr so extrem. Wenn man allerdings manchmal die Presse hört, gerade in der Armee bzw. beim Bund, dann fragt man sich schon, was da so zwischen den "Neulingen" und den "Alteingesessenen" so abgeht.

An manchen Stellen war ich etwas verblüfft über die direkte Ansprache der jüngeren Schüler auf bestimmte Dinge, brutale Dinge die den Mord betreffen, was heutzutage wohl nicht mehr möglich wäre bzw. einfach nicht mehr gemacht werden kann. Soweit ich weiß muss da ja immer ein Erziehungsberechtigter dabei sein? Da hat sich in den letzten Jahren doch einiges geändert. Das aber nur so am Rande ... in manchen Situationen kann man das wahrscheinlich auch schwer einschätzen.

Passend zum Titel wurde die Ehre, die ja in diesen Kreisen sehr hoch gehoben wird, hinterfragt und gezeigt, welche Tücken dieser Spagat zwischen Wahrheit oder Loyalität beinhaltet. Da fällt die Entscheidung nicht immer leicht. Das "Petzen" wird ja allgemein eher als Tabu angesehen, zumindest kenne ich das aus der Schulzeit so - aber wie weit darf diese Loyalität reichen? Und welche Taten darf man decken, ohne sich selbst zu belasten bzw. das eigene Gewissen anderen gegenüber?

Die Ermittlungen waren jedenfalls wieder sehr spannend. Havers war dieses Mal etwas mehr im Hintergrund, genauso wie Helen, die kaum aufgetaucht ist. St. James und Deborah hatten mit einem schwerwiegenden Problem zu kämpfen, das aber auch nicht oft zur Sprache kam. Dieses Mal stand wirklich der Mord und dessen Aufklärung im Vordergrund. Dabei war ein gutes Tempo vorhanden und auch die Atmosphäre des verregneten Englands tat hier sein übriges.

Die Charaktere sind wie immer sehr deutlich gezeichnet, jeder auf seine Art speziell und mit mehr Seiten, als man zuerst annimmt.

Ein sehr guter, weiterer Band aus der Reihe, die ich jedem Krimifan empfehlen kann!

© Aleshanee
Weltenwanderer

Mary Gilligan-Nolan says

This is a series I can't believe I resisted reading for so long. My sister recommended Elizabeth George many years ago and I could not get past the first few pages. I can't understand why now, I love her and want to read everything she has written. This is a story about a murder at a posh boarding school, a thirteen year old boy is murdered and his body is dumped in a graveyard, some distance from the school. It turns out, it is Simon St. James' wife, Deborah, who finds the body, as she is there photographing the church and graveyard. Linley and Havers go to investigate and the case takes them into the heart of a seriously troubled school population, with problems also lying in the staff themselves. The head of the school is anxious that they keep it as low profile as possible, as he is trying to attract new pupils from well-to-do families and does not want a mere murder to tarnish the schools reputation. This is a story you will find harrowing, the grief is palpable from the boys parents and it is something that will almost bring even the most cynical and hardened individual to the brink of tears. I can't remember reading a book that described grief and brought it off the pages of a book like this author has. It is a real "lead you up the garden path" book also, just when you think you might know what's been going on, Ms. George takes you in another direction. I loved the fact that you really had to wait to the end to solve the mystery and it was a difficult one to guess. Havers is also having family problems again and coming to the conclusion she will no longer be able to take care of her parents on her home. Loved it, can't wait for the next one.

IslandRiverScribe says

Elizabeth George may write this book, but the first five sentences of J. D. Robb's "Reunion in Death" describe the alpha and the omega of this work more succinctly than anything I can manufacture:

"Murder was work. Death was a serious chore for the killer, the victim, for the survivors. And for those who stood for the dead. Some went about the job devotedly, others carelessly. And for some, murder was a labor of love."

And as you read this book, it all comes down to how one defines murder and how one defines love.

As this third novel in the Inspector Lynley series opens, two months have passed since the disastrous events at the conclusion of the previous novel. Thomas Lynley is working every case available to him at Scotland

Yard, trying to survive Lady Helen's self-imposed exile in Greece. As the author writes on page 8: "For the past two months Lynley had been burning the candle not only at both ends but right through the middle."

On one Sunday evening, Barbara Havers has just about convinced Lynley to leave the Yard when they are visited by John Corntel, one of Lynley's old classmates from Eton. Corntel is there to ask for Lynley's help in the case of a child just discovered missing from the Bredgar Chambers school where Corntel is a faculty member and housemaster. Even though missing persons' cases are out of his jurisdiction and the Yard's help has not been officially requested, Lynley agrees to check it out, just as a favor to "the old school tie."

Unknown to Lynley, Havers and Corntel, the missing child has just been found – naked, tortured and very dead. And, it seems, Lynley's best friend's wife, Deborah St. James, has found the body while on a photographic shoot in a famous church's graveyard. And thus begins a most convoluted and emotionally draining murder mystery, because Matthew Whateley is not the first person to die at this school nor is he the last. Matthew Whateley is simply the only person who is murdered.

There are actually five sub-plots weaving throughout and sharing the billing with the murder investigation. First, there is Lynley's tenuous relationship with Lady Helen. Secondly are Havers' problems with her ailing father and mentally ill mother. Third is Deborah St. James' estrangement from Simon following her fourth miscarriage. Fourth is the devastation and disintegration of the lives of Matthew Whateley's parents. And lastly is Lynley's struggle with his personal ethics versus his professional responsibilities.

Before the identity of the murderer is revealed, Elizabeth George takes us on a pointed exploration into both the written and unwritten codes of behavior that exist in many boarding schools. She tracks the effects of these codes on not only the current students and staff but on the adults who have graduated from these types of schools, particularly Lynley and Corntel. We get a hard look into bullying in a situation where a parent is not readily available, and into racial bias and class bias by both students and staff. We get just as hard a look into pedophilia, pregnancy, abortion and unrequited love.

But regardless of which plot line the author is exploring, the murder itself or the subplots, we are taken down the pathways of guilt, earned or unearned, as well as remorse, genuine or totally lacking. These elements of guilt, remorse and honor take Lynley and the reader through multiple dead ends, blind alleys and twists. Before the final pages, these elements are part and parcel of the destruction of at least a dozen people, not counting the murderer and the murdered. But these same elements become the beginning threads of redemption for at least three others.

This book covers only four days in the lives of many people. It begins with death and it ends with death. There are no smiles in this book; there is no laughter. There is no happy ending even though the murderer is identified. But there is hope. In the last pages, there is hope.

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

This is the third book in the Inspector Lynley Series.

I read this book as a buddy read with a GR friend and it was a lot of fun.

Lynley is asked to investigate a missing child at a private school, and he and Havers are thrust into a world of lies, intrigue, and twisted passions, thinly veiled in upper-class civility.

Detective Inspector Thomas Lynley & Detective Sergeant Barbara Havers investigate the murder of a schoolboy tortured and dumped in a churchyard. The boy's housemaster was a schoolmate of Lynley's at Eton - but does the old school tie make him innocent?

Everyone has a secret, and Lynley is charged with unraveling the web of lies that threatens to destroy more than one life. The resolution is full of twists, turns, and surprises.

The author does a great job painting a picture with her prose and I appreciate her vocabulary. Unlike the previous book, I felt all the characters added something to the story.

Richard Derus says

Rating: 3.75* of five

The Book Report: Inspector Thomas Lynley is called to a snobby uppercrust English school by his Old Etonian pal, now a schoolmaster in the place, to investigate the disappearance of scholarship boy Matthew Whately. All too soon comes the moment when the disappearance becomes a murder investigation thanks to the discovery of little Mattie's body in the churchyard containing Thomas Gray's tomb, by none other than Lynley's formerly beloved Deborah who is now wife to Lynley's crippled pal Simon Allcourt-St. James. Lynley and Havers spend a great deal of time chasing their own tails, interviewing people they don't suspect of the crime, and mucking about in the lives of the Great and the Good until they look like the Gross and the Godawful. Much awfulness is revealed in Lynley's life, the lives of the masters and staff of the school, and the parents of the various boys. Worst of all is the vile, vile motive for the murder of the poor child: When it was revealed, I had to put the book down and cry.

In the end, of course, the proper person is brought to justice. But the wrack and ruin of all the lives that touch this murder investigation is the truly chilling part of this story. Everyone, literally everyone, in the purview of the investigation is changed by it, not always for the better. No matter how awful the fate of that first murder victim, at least he will never have to live out the rest of his life broken, exposed, pitilessly scrutinized by uncaring and unsympathetic strangers.

Odd to envy a murdered person; I suspect several of these characters end up doing so.

My Review: Time for a rant: Pedophilia is very, very awful. My mother was one, so I know firsthand. And let me tell you something...the *vast* majority of pedophiles are heterosexual men. The idea that gay guys are pedophilic is a grave misconception. A vanishingly small percentage of the men who end up in law enforcement's tender ministrations for child sex crimes are NOT straight married men. So when George uses homosexual pedophilia in her plot, it grates like a woodrasp on my already frayed nerves. /rant

Okay. Well, a lot happens in this book, and not a single bit of it is unmitigatedly good. Surprise, right? George is so well known for her sunny, cheery, cozy books! But this is unusually grim. Havers and Lynley suffer some nasty personal blows. They come face-to-face with unsettling truths about themselves, less so about each other, but absolutely every single twist and turn in this plot is believable because George makes sure it's grounded in what the characters think and feel. It's a very, very well-crafted book. It's unsettling, as a murder mystery should be if it pretends to accuracy. It's hard at times to read, but in the end, the reader emerges with a profound belief that nothing on this EARTH could make committing a crime worth the risk...therefore it promotes the health of the commonweal. Long may Lynley and Havers investigate!

Peggy says

My motivation for reading mystery novels is to escape into plot and spend time with gifted detectives who are too perfect to be true. That's part of it. But I also seek the satisfaction of seeing justice done and in this novel a horrendous plot point is introduced as a red herring. It is unsettling, but Lynley simply shoves it under a rug. This element either shouldn't have been introduced at all--my preference, since it is profoundly awful--or it should become a subplot in which justice is successfully pursued. As it is this plot element breaks the rules of the genre, at least as far as I'm concerned. So, though I enjoyed speed reading through this fast-paced novel, *Lynley #3*, I couldn't shake my disgust and disappointment about this one thing, which I won't identify, in order to prevent spoilers from creeping into my review.

In George's books the murders are ugly and this one is particularly so, in which a young boy's naked body is discovered in an English cemetery. Havers and Lynley interview witnesses, become surprised at the twists and turns that are revealed, and both of them, as well as Lynley's friend St. James, go through difficult times in their personal lives.

The plot on the whole is as entertaining as everything else George writes. But I took away stars because I'm upset about the red herring.

aPriL does feral sometimes says

Oh my. I'm still catching my breath. I think I stopped breathing about 7 times in the days it took me to finish 'Well-schooled in Murder'. That's about how often I thought the killer was going to be unmasked, only to discover, along with Detective Inspector Thomas Lynley and Detective Sergeant Barbara Havers of New Scotland Yard CID, that we all were wrong again. Oh, the crimes and criminals and secrets were being exposed as fast and furious as a hail storm - but not the murderer of a 13-year-old student, Matthew Whately, attending Bredgar Chambers, a financially tottering and doddering independent English school teaching 'B' list aristocrat children, mostly boys from 13 to 18.

The school had been established several centuries ago. The customs and mores being instilled and enforced onto the students grew out of the Middle Ages, particularly those of maintaining upper-class solidarity against the unwashed masses. Poor Matt, in every sense of the word, was a scholarship student, his father being a stonemason and his mother a barmaid, which the school reluctantly has begun to accept. However, the student body is still quite white and aristocrat in accent and studies. Matt and a few of the other lower-class boys definitely were not having an easy time of it. Matt also did not accept the unwritten codes, foremost being loyal to your mates first, then the school. He believed in living in a moral and just universe for all, and helping the innocent and bullied.

Can't you already guess in a school for adolescent boys being dragged into the 20th century (the novel was printed in 1990) that little decent intelligent artistic Matt is not going to see his graduation? However, this is an entitled *community* of blackguards and repressed sexuality, long used to presenting a surface conformity and centuries-old, publicly enforced strict rules and rituals, while indulging in wild drunken or obscenely punitive parties behind closed doors and in dark hallways, with nothing ever ever to be exposed outside of the group.

Lynley finds himself more than understanding the school rituals and secret codes, having gone to school at Eton. He gets drawn into the atmosphere easily, and if it wasn't for Havers reminding him there is a murderer and possible pedophile, either student or teacher, loose and dangerous, it would be difficult for Lynley to remember aristocratic traditions do not necessarily create good people.

When Lynley and Havers can keep their attention focused on the case, they slowly crack through the walls teachers and students have built around crimes, large and small, too numerous to mention. The school is a hothouse of terrible secrets and failures of duty, mostly from repressed emotional distresses and disturbing relationships.

Unfortunately for both detectives, their relatives and friends are imploding and as a result, a distraction. Lynley's relationship with Helen is a non-starter, which has Lynley broken-hearted and feeling jilted, while Helen has run away to Europe on an extended vacation. (view spoiler)So Lynley is mourning the loss of her presence. Haver's demented mother is losing ground understanding her surroundings, while her father is finding his health deteriorating very fast. Havers finds the struggle hiding her parents from her fellow cops while the two need her more and more because of their disabilities overwhelming. She already has imposed on herself a mountain of emotional stress from trying to earn promotions in a profession where women rarely are more than secretaries and her employer the Yard being riddled with class prejudice against her because of her accent alone, much less her sex.

If all of that wasn't enough in ratcheting up excitement in this thrilling mystery, the author catches us up with the seemingly doomed relationship of Lynley's best friend, handicapped forensic scientist Simon Allcourt-St. James and Lynley's former lover, Deborah, now married to St. James. (view spoiler)Simon is WAY older than her, and he can't get it up - his leg, I mean (got you, didn't I?). Simon's leg is messed up because Lynley drove drunk and smashed up his car and Simon's leg.

OMG!!!!!!!!!!

There be torture of tots, murders of minors, fearsome funerals and bad teachers. Excessive emoting, grueling gruesomeness and dramatic despair fill these pages, but despite the doom and drama, I could not put the book down! Not only was this a thrill ride and exciting, but it is intricate and tricky, with suspects and clues revolving as confusedly about as an automated stage set of scenery.

This is a 'fun' series to read, people! Don't judge me.....

Where I grew up, the State of Washington, the first European settlement was established in 1833 in mud, rain, forests, rivers, lakes, mountains and wildlife. Washington state voted to become part of the United States in 1889. Its first non-Indian settlers were prostitutes, mail-order wives, farmers, fishermen, fur trappers, loggers, miners, missionaries and hermits.

The small town of Seattle was established in 1853. (*I was born there about a hundred years later!*) Seattle now is a medium-sized city. Territorial University, now the University of Washington, was opened in 1861. (*I was in the third grade 100 years later!*) The single available class originally was for elementary students and the teachers were missionaries. The first real school building only for young Seattle kids opened in 1870 (*I was a junior in high school 100 years later!*) It had two classrooms, not counting the attic, which opened later.

I started kindergarten in 1958, 88 years after the very first school in Seattle had opened. EIGHTY-EIGHT years! Compare that with the history of the establishment of schools in England, and their traditional pomp,

glory and ceremonies stretching back centuries! Centuries!!!

To say that when books describe the ancient schools, and everything else, of Europe boggles my mind is an understatement. (The utterly foreign sense of millennia of traditions in Europe in general fascinates me.) 'Well-schooled Murder' isn't the first book about all of the strong 'secret club' emotional mysticism that seems to surround certain hoary institutions, but it definitely gives a good feel of it. In my opinion, it seems to me the author is saying that at least some of the schools need modernization, and a good cleaning, literally. As a female, I couldn't agree more on both ideas.

I remember, as a child, Seattle seemed to consist of a lot of taverns and square tall cement and dirt-encrusted brick 2- and 6-story buildings with rotting wooden and brick ones mixed in, and grassy empty lots, brick and wood churches and a new spotless 6-lane freeway that had maybe ten cars using it on Sundays, with double that on weekdays. In my teen years, Seattle got its first skyscrapers of shiny glass and mirrored materials (some of which caused many many car wrecks on the now bumper-to-bumper traffic on the previous 6-car lane converted into narrow 8-lane freeway).

In my lifetime, change has been swift and constant. Nothing of my old neighborhood exists, since all of the buildings and even the streets have been redone. So the stories about the European Old World that authors write about in books have a fascination for me which lingers long after I put the book down. I realize that Europe mostly been rebuilt as well (hello, two major world wars, plus countless other little and medium wars) - still, when it has preserved old buildings and city centers, America can't compete. Our first recorded settlement was in 1565, depending on context. To say these settlements consisted of mostly mud and three buildings is more accurate. A civilized grandeur has never really been present in my country, IMHO. However, we certainly have accomplished other forms of grandiosity! ;)

<http://geography.about.com/od/uniteds...>

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Au...

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A076391...>

Barb says

A solid good mystery by Elizabeth George. I believe the last one I read was #13 in the Lynley/Havers/St.James series, and luckily for me, although the protagonists have lives outside of the investigation which continue to evolve book to book, this mystery can be read alone. I will continue to read the series as I come across the books. The plot involved the search for a 13 yr. old boy missing from a prestigious school in West Sussex, and those responsible for his disappearance. Many characters are culpable for something or other making it difficult to find the true villain in the boy's "mistreatment." Lots of interesting personalities, moral dilemmas and twists and turns.

Julie says

Well Schooled in Murder is a 1991 publication, written by Elizabeth George and published by Bantam.

Inspector Lynley and detective Barbara Havers, and forensic scientist, Simon Allcourt St. James, investigate the death of a 13 year old boy at the prestigious Bredgar Chambers school.

The death of Matthew Whateley hits everyone hard.

The school wants to uphold it's reputation, so the truth is hard to uncover. Not all the students are honorable, nor are the teachers and administrators.

Little Matthew seemed to be know a little more than he should and it may have gotten him killed.

The truth comes at a very high price indeed when another tragedy occurs.

In the background of this sensitive story is the anguish the parents go through and the personal lives of those involved in the investigation.

Elizabeth George is one of the best British Mystery authors out there. Overall this one get an A+

Lori says

No one can do a twisty turny mystery like Elizabeth George. I am so incredibly happy that I decided to reread these books and go through the entire series, its like getting a present every time I open one of her books.

Smitha says

Book 3 of Inspector Lynley series.

A repeat read, this time in audio.

I am addicted to this Elizabeth George police procedural series, which focuses on the murder committed as well as the private life of the investigators, which I wanted to follow for long (and which somewhat seems akin to a soap opera)

This time Lynley's childhood friend, John Hart wants him to go looking for a boy missing from the prestigious boarding school in which he is an English teacher, plus a house master. John has some culpability as he didn't take care of his duties that week.

Lynley reluctantly agreeable and by the time they reach the school they find that the 13 year old boy, Mathew Wakely is dead.

The whole school and its inmates are in scrutiny and dirty secrets tumble our with alarming frequency. No one is spared including pupils, teachers, headmaster, other workers and even board of governors members. Finally the matter is solved. Astonishing facts about Matthew's parentage and the way he got enrolled in this prestigious school pop out.

There was exposure to bullying, child pornography and many unsavory things which usually remain hidden behind massive doors of great institutions.

This left me with a scary feel and I am thankful that Indian parents are not that keen on boarding schools.

Kate Nothem says

Elizabeth George delivers a good mystery once again! I love how each of the books has built on the central characters, in this one I felt especially close to BOTH Sergeant Havers and Lynley as they were dealing with equally distressing events in their personal lives. I learned a lot more about Deborah and St. James and also sympathized with them. As for the mystery, it was a great 'whodunit'. I thought for sure I knew who the

murderer would be and I was thrilled to be wrong! The twists that came about in the plot were definitely surprising and that is always welcomed in a mystery novel.
