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Lesley Cookman

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The eleventh book in the Libby Sarjeant series of British murder mysteries which features a retired actress as the female sleuth and are based in the picturesque village of Steeple Martin.

Libby Sarjeant is invited to look into the provenance of a jewelled Anglo-Saxon reliquary which has appeared on a website. The nuns at St Eldreda's Abbey are curious, as it apparently contains a relic of St Eldreda herself. Libby's friend Peter obtains permission to mount a play based on St Eldreda's story in the ruins of the original monastery called, naturally, Murder In The Monastery. And then, inevitably, a real body is discovered, and Libby and her friend Fran find out that this is not the first.

Murder in the Monastery Details

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From Reader Review Murder in the Monastery for online ebook

Betsy says

This has to be one of the most convoluted, complicated mysteries that I have ever read. Part of the problem was that it was the first book in the series for me so I was unfamiliar with the the myriad amount of characters which populate these books. Just trying to keep them straight is a full-time job, and then to follow the family tree of the story line as well is an impossibility.

Basically, I did not like Libby either which does not help. The story just tried to do too much and it became tedious after awhile. Reading another in the series is questionable.

Ruth says

c2012: FWFTB: reliquary, nuns, body, Abbey, ruins. The trouble with a cozy mystery is that so much relies on knowing all the characters. Jumping into the 11th in a series is not a good way to start. I am sure that these would become a favourite had I been lucky enough to start at the beginning. So, unable to recommend to the normal crew at this time but maybe if I get to start at the beginning. *"I knew I'd get you weaving fantastical theories. Unfortunately, we can't prove any of them, so we have to plod on with boring police work until we can uncover the truth."*

TAMMY CUEVAS says

The sisters of St. Eldreda's Abbey have an ancient relic, the finger of St. Eldreda. The reliquary in question has changed hands (no pun intended) several times, and in mysterious ways, over the centuries. The sisters would like to know more concerning the history and ownership of the reliquary, so they turn to retired actress Libby Sarjeant for help. When Libby's friend Peter writes a play to be presented at the Abbey entitled Murder in the Monastery, one of the actors is found murdered near the reliquary. Libby, her friend Fran, and the rest of her usual cast of characters are on the case.

This is the eleventh (!) book in the series, and as this is the first I've read, I felt a bit behind throughout the book. I enjoyed it, as it is a good, cozy British mystery at its best. The group of friends who gather at the pub, the Chief Inspector who shares just enough information with Libby, and the quaint little village itself are all mainstays of this genre, and Ms. Cookman does it well.

4 stars

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the publisher through the Cozy Mystery

book review bloggers program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Damaskcat says

Libby Sarjeant is asked to look into the provenance of a reliquary containing the finger of St Eldreda which has appeared for sale on a web site. The nuns of St Eldreda are curious about it and want to know whether it is genuine. Libby's friend, Peter is intrigued by the story of the monastery and gets permission from the nuns to write a play and stage it in the ruins of the monastery which is in the grounds of the convent. Naturally enough a dead body is discovered and it seems as though the title of the play - Murder in the Monastery - has tempted fate.

Then Libby and her psychic friend Fran Wolfe become involved in the investigation of the crime which gradually seems to collect more and more strands to it as they ask more questions. Their friend DCI Ian Connell - is once again grateful for and at the same time irritated by their input. I enjoyed this entertaining and well written mystery. There is an interesting historical background to the story and I felt the characters really came alive on the page.

This is a well written book with an intriguing mystery featuring the usual series characters which have really grown on me as I've read this series I feel as though I have got to know this group of friends and their usual locations - The Manor, The Pink Geranium, and the Oast Theatre. If you want and mystery series which you can really get involved in then try this one.

Nancy Brown says

Always 5 Star Fun with Libby Sarjeant

Libby and her psychic friend Fran are again part of a murder mystery. Researching and Searching for the killer. Detective and friend Ian tells her enough to keep her nosy. Who will find the culprit, Libby or the police?

Valerie Campbell Ackroyd says

Predictable

First, I confess I should really not have read this book out of order. Being the 11th in the series, there was little explanation of who the characters were and what their relationship to each other was. As there are several of them, I found it confusing and frustrating. Not the author's fault, mine.

I did like some of the premise of the book--religious mystery and family history. However, about halfway through the book, as more ancestors kept being added, I got confused about that. Which added to my confusion about the main characters so I began to feel like I was slogging through the book.

Finally, though, I was disappointed that the murderer was exactly who I had thought it was one third of the way through the book. I felt that if Libby and her crew had been involved in 10 other mysteries/murders, they should have seen it too.

That said, I will read #1 in the series sometime down the line so maybe I can at least remove the confusion over the characters in this series.

Rosalee says

A quaint, British cozy, the story is set in the village of Steeple Martin, complete with characters who are both likeable and quirky. Libby is the clear lead, but it's really a group endeavor. The key players in the Oast House Theatre are close knit and more than tolerated by Detective Chief Inspector Ian Connell, even when potentially interfering with a murder investigation.

What starts out as a basic search for the history and ownership of the relic of St. Eldreda leads to Libby's friend Peter writing a play to be performed at the Abbey. The actors and actresses involved in the Oast House Theatre (presumably present in previous stories) all take part, but it looks like at some point in the history of the relic, a murder was committed. The reliquary is lent to the Abbey to try to find information on this generation past murder. The play goes on and is quite successful. Unfortunately, there is yet another murder after the last performance. Libby can't help but feel responsible since it was her search for the provenance that got everything started. She also has a penchant for getting involved in mysteries, despite sometimes half-hearted warnings from the Chief Inspector and friend.

The twists and turns, the characters and setting make the story quite enjoyable. What seem like disconnected pieces come together nicely in the end. I hadn't read any of the previous in the series, but that wasn't a problem. I plan (already on the kindle) to go back and start with the first!

Barbara Bothwell says

If you haven't read any Libby Serjeant books you haven't live! These books are set in the Kent countryside - with forays to the coast for Libby to visit her psychic friend, Fran Wolfe. There are some lovely atmospheric descriptions of the county.

As well as Fran there is Libby's Partner, Ben (who tries to keep her grounded), Peter (his cousin) and Harry, the chef, (who runs The Pink Geranium) and is Peter's Partner.

In this story Libby and Fran - plus friends - help their favourite detective CDI Ian Connell to solve the riddle of a reliquary and why someone was murdered in the monastery.

As in all the Libby Serjeant books there is theatre. This time not at the Oast House Theatre but in the Monastery grounds plus preparations for a music hall at another theatre.

I found the book un-put-downable (good job I was on holiday!) so it is definitely worth 5 stars.

Waiting for more, Lesley!

Helen says

This is #11 in the series and I haven't read any of the others so it was a bit of work to keep everyone straight and their past histories clear, but MS Cookman did a pretty good job of facilitating reading for newbies without landing her fans with pages of background. The book has a map of the village (sort of) and a list of characters with a who belongs with whom indicator. I was reminded a bit of Martha Grimes and the group of loonies who meet in the pub in her Richard Jury series.

A house of Anglican Benedictine nuns has discovered a relic of their early saint being offered for sale in an auction catalogue and the Rev. Pattie Pearson, a friend of one of the sisters, comes to Libby to see if she can track down from where this relic is emerging and whether theft is involved. Libby finds the whole thing interesting and begins looking into it. She finds the Beaumont family, which claims to have owned it for centuries, but sold it some time ago. There seem to be branches of the family which feel such an object shouldn't be sold and have tried to get it back, then others have tried to profit again and much of the story is a genealogical tracking plus a murder and serious injury that takes place at the last performance of a play the local group puts on to tell the story of the relic. I'm thinking of putting a family tree in the back of the book to make following things easier (covering up things crucial to the plot).

Katy says

An enjoyable cosy read as ever, but not Cookman's best plot by any means - just average. As usual I was deeply amused by the amount of wine and gin consumed! Does Libby not realise she has a drink problem? :-)
)

Nancy says

The eleventh book in the Libby Sarjeant series of British murder mysteries which features a retired actress as the female sleuth and are based in the picturesque village of Steeple Martin.

Libby Sarjeant is invited to look into the provenance of a jewelled Anglo-Saxon reliquary which has appeared on a website. The nuns at St Eldreda's Abbey are curious, as it apparently contains a relic of St Eldreda herself. Libby's friend Peter obtains permission to mount a play based on St Eldreda's story in the ruins of the original monastery called, naturally, Murder In The Monastery. And then, inevitably, a real body is discovered, and Libby and her friend Fran find out that this is not the first.

Martha, the oblate guarding the reliquary is the murderer. She did not want it to leave the monastery

Jennifer says

Libby Serjeant series / Lesley Cookman:

Just finished reading the latest in the series, Murder in the Monastery -- very enjoyable as are the others. I find the characters interesting, quirky without being overly odd. The theatrical environment adds an interesting element.

Plots rely somewhat on coincidence but not unbelievably so. (Unlike Jane Eyre, for instance!)

Laura Poppenwimer says

This is a decent mystery, on the light side and the first book I have read by this author. An ancient relic turns up at a Monastery and a play is written about the relic. There is a death after the play of one of the actors and it is believed he was killed while trying to steal this relic. The plot goes in a number of different directions before the killer is finally revealed, that last person you would have considered a suspect.

It was a good summer read, but don't think I will search out other books by this author.

Mary Byrnes says

Great story lots of history

I think this has been my favorite so far. I did figure out who the killer was this time although not all of the why's. The references to genealogical research interested me greatly. Still love all the characters and the settings.

Timya says

Murder in the Monastery (Libby Sarjeant Murder Mysteries) by Lesley Cookman

Libby Sarjeant, retired actress and well known amateur sleuth, has been asked by the sisters of St. Eldreda's Abbey to look into the provenance of an ancient reliquary containing the relic of St. Eldreda. As the story of St. Eldreda becomes known, the other members of Libby's Oast House Theatre Company are inspired to mount a play about the saint and receive permission to perform it in the ancient ruins of the old abbey. All goes well until an oblate from the modern abbey is found unconscious and a member of the cast is found dead. Libby finds herself embroiled in a much larger mystery and with the help of her friend and 'reluctant psychic' Fran Wolfe sets out to solve the Murder in the Monastery.

This is the eleventh book in the 'Libby Sarjeant Murder Mysteries' by Lesley Cookman.

Set in the quaint village of Steeple Martin, I found Murder in the Monastery to be a proper British mystery filled with a rich cast of quirky characters and a generous sprinkling of local colloquialisms (I pause here to give thanks for the 'DEFINE' feature on my eReader). The inside workings of both the Anglican Benedictine

Abbey and the British estate system were totally foreign to me but absolutely fascinating.

Lesley Cookman has deftly woven two mysteries into one complex tapestry as she traces the long, tangled history of the Tredega Relic and the generations who have attempted to gain control over it.
