



The Plain Old Man

Charlotte MacLeod

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Sarah investigates the death of con artist Charlie Daventer on his bathroom floor, when his title role acting replacement, old cousin Fred, insists murder was the cause. Her Aunt Emma's theater troupe is doing The Sorcerer, with Emma as Lady Sangazure. Husband Max away in Finland, Sarah sorts clues herself.

The Plain Old Man Details

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Author : Charlotte MacLeod

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From Reader Review The Plain Old Man for online ebook

Joan says

I did enjoy this one a great deal. I think it was the combination of a good story along with Sarah's backstory, good characterization, and good ethics. Actually, the weakest part was the pro thieves. That almost seemed shoved in to make the mystery a mystery since it is part of a mystery series. However, the dirty old man got his rightful comeuppance; the bratty kids were actually incompetently trying to help their mother, who the dirty old man had been ignoring; and all loose ends were nicely tied up. If I were to keep any of the series, it would be this one. But as long as I'm pitching the rest, I will pitch this as well.

Robyn says

Early Bird Book Deal | One of the better installments in the series, though I missed Max | Not sure why MacLeod wrote so many series with partner leads, if she found it so difficult to split the narrative between them. It seems she generally focuses each book on one half of the couple, either removing the other entirely or leaving them mostly out of the action. That said, this was a better version of Sarah than the last time she took centerstage, and a much better selection of Kellings. Reasonable mystery. One of the plot synopses here on GoodReads has an important inaccuracy, describing the victim falsely in a way that changes your expectation of the story.

Susan says

I enjoyed this book a lot, partly because I love Gilbert & Sullivan. Sarah's Aunt Emma is putting on The Sorcerer as her swan song, and since Max is in Europe, Sarah is staying with her to help. When a valuable painting of Emma's disappears and an old friend is murdered, Sarah has to do the detecting without the help of Max. As usual, there are several plot threads: the operetta; the dysfunctional family, all of whom are in the show (father is chasing a young woman in the caste, to the dismay of his daughter); ransom notes apparently related to the theft of the painting; and accidents that are plaguing the production. The one-night-only show is very successful, Sarah figures out who is stealing the painting and also finds it, and Max comes home at the last minute. There are also more than a few hints that Sarah may be pregnant. A fun read.

Jenny Schwartz says

Delightful. I love Gilbert and Sullivan.

Heather says

Fun cozy series

Moira Shepard says

I enjoyed this one, because we spent a fair amount of time with one of Sarah's more human, and humane, family members. Really enjoyed Emma Kelling - great character - and her wonderful household, including Mr. and Mrs. Heatherstone. Fun story, good twist ... enjoyed this much more than than Kelling & Bittersohn #4.

Cindy says

I'm listening to *The Plain Old Man* by Charlotte MacLeod. I really liked her when I was younger, but now, and especially on audio, I find her writing annoying. I like the plot on this one - Sarah's aunt is putting on an amateur production of Gilbert and Sullivan when a painting is stolen and a cast member murdered - but enough with the interior monologue! Do something already! If it was a written book, I could skip forward, but with it being a tape, I don't know if I'm missing anything important. All this review of everything that has already happened and speculation on what might happen next - get on with it! I already read that part. Why are you telling me again? Very annoying. Why do authors do that? Do they think we can't remember from one chapter to the next? It's not like the book is that long.

Enough grumbling. I don't think I'll get any more audiobooks by her, though. Just not worth it.

Ed says

#6 in the Sarah Kelling and Max Bittersohn mystery series. Finalist 1986 Anthony Award for Best Mystery.

Producing a Gilbert & Sullivan opera requires a special kind of madness, and the Kelling family is large and peculiar enough to undertake an entire company by themselves. For years now, Sarah Kelling's Aunt Emma has supervised these annual productions--from *The Pirates of Penzance* to *The Mikado* --and this year she has invited her cast of relatives to rehearse *The Sorcerer* in her stately mansion. The show is nearly ready when a team of burglars drugs the cast and crew to make off with a priceless portrait. Theft or no theft, Aunt Emma insists the show must go on. Even when one of the cast dies suddenly, she finds a replacement and continues rehearsal. But when Sarah begins to suspect the actor was murdered, it becomes clear that dear Aunt Emma may be in danger of taking her final bow.

FangirlNation says

Sarah Kelling Bittersohn has been enlisted by her Aunt Emma to paint the backdrops for her Pirates of Pleasance group's performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Sorcerer* in *The Plain Old Man*, the sixth book in Charlotte MacLeod's Sarah Kelling/ Max Bittersohn series.

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Maria says

While Sarah didn't get much play in the previous book in this series, Max gets little here, I guess to make up for it. While Max is out of the country, Sarah stays with her cousin Emma. Emma is mentioned in previous books, but this is the first time the reader really gets to meet her, and what a wonderful character she is. The mystery was easily solved before the unveiling, but the mini-romance more than offsets it. I adore these books. No one is too old to find happiness with someone else.

Nancy says

Excellent series. This one was great fun. I knocked one star off of this one because Max is out of the country, leaving Sarah to solve the mystery herself.

Susan says

Widowed Emma Kelling is the heart of the little theater group that's presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta "The Sorcerer." Naturally, when she wants an aide, she calls her niece, Sarah Bittersohn, whose husband is in Europe chasing a lost Picasso. When Emma's valuable Romney is stolen, apparently being held for ransom, Sarah's chores are doubled. Emma's old beau, cast in the small part of the Notary, dies mysteriously, and his replacement, Cousin Fred, thinks his old pal was murdered. Max arrives home just in time to find Sarah and the local police have caught the miscreants.

S Dizzy says

Quirky and entertaining

Kyrie says

One of the cleverer mysteries in this series . Sarah is off helping one of her favorite Kellings put on a Gilbert and Sullivan show, while Max is in Europe. A painting disappears, and Sarah tries to find it and solve the murder of one of the innumerable Kellings, while the show of course must go on. I disagree with some people's determination not to bring in the police right away, but hey, it's fiction, and this series always reminds me of my first full time boss, and her friends.

This fulfills the 2018 Popsugar challenge of a book involving a heist.

(view spoiler)

Susan in NC says

5/2018 - Still a fun, light-hearted read, even if I could do without all the Gilbert and Sullivan references. Aunt Emma is a delight, if a bit single-mindedly fixated on her amateur theatrics even in the face of a major art theft and a murder, Uncle Frederick is a charmer and Aunt Mabel is a hilarious old bat!

2016 - I enjoyed this light-hearted, clever mystery much more upon re-reading this time, my third (or fourth!), hence I bumped the rating up from 3 stars to 4. It's always interesting to reread old favorites after several years to see how our feelings change; I've always enjoyed MacLeod's literate, sparkling dialogue and quirky characters, but sometimes tired of her "telling, not showing" style where characters go on and on with their internal monologue and analysis of the mystery and potential suspects and motives.

This time I've been enjoying the Kelling and Bittersohn mysteries as much as the very first time I read them, maaaaannny years ago! As an added bonus, we finally meet the dreadful Cousin Mabel Kelling, who turns out to be every bit the nasty old battle ax she was built up to be in previous books. Delightful!
