



## A Cold Case in Amsterdam Central

*Anja de Jager*

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## **A Cold Case in Amsterdam Central** Anja de Jager

Detective Lotte Meerman is convinced the death of Frank Stapel, a painter and decorator, isn't an accident after she and his widow Tessa find a skeleton in a sports bag in his left luggage locker at Amsterdam Central train station.

The remains date from the Second World War and Lotte's colleagues consider it of minor importance . . . until forensic tests show that amongst the bones is the arm bone of a crime boss who recently went missing.

## **A Cold Case in Amsterdam Central Details**

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Author : Anja de Jager

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## From Reader Review A Cold Case in Amsterdam Central for online ebook

### Ian Brydon says

I am always on the lookout for new crime writers, and the prospect of a series featuring an engaging protagonist and an intriguing setting seemed enticing. Anja de Jager certainly delivers with regard to the setting. Her novels are set in Amsterdam, and she captures the atmosphere marvellously. She also clearly knows how to weave a gripping story.

The novel opens with two detectives attending the scene of death of a painter and decorator who has fallen seven floors from a building that he and his team were working on. No-one else was around at the time, and it is unclear either why he was on the seventh floor, or how he came to fall. In the initial absence of any evidence to the contrary, the first detective attending the scene is inclined to write it off as a simple workplace accident. His colleague, Detective Lotte Meerman, who has only recently returned to duty after having been shot, and then subjected to an internal investigation, is less convinced.

Among the dead man's effects is a key to a left luggage locker at Amsterdam Centraal railway station. When this locker is opened by his widow, she finds that it contains a human skeleton. Subsequent forensic investigation shows that the skull dates back to the Second World War. Some of the bones are less old, however, and it becomes apparent that, rather than being one intact skeleton, there are bones from two different bodies.

Detective Meerman is persistent in the face of opposition from her colleagues, and at best ambivalence from her line manager. She is, however, convinced that there is something deeply wrong here, and that the painter's death is not the unfortunate accident that everyone else assumes.

The plot is well constructed and original, and Detective Meerman is a generally empathetic character. Unfortunately, like most fictional detectives these days, she is liberally strewn with 'ussies', both medical, emotional and psychological. While that may, no doubt, contribute to overall verisimilitude, in this case I found that the backstory predominated to such an extent that they detracted significantly from my enjoyment of the novel.

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### Doreen Richards says

Very interesting. Has a different flow than British procedurals. And of course the Amsterdam setting and the experiences during the war were vastly different.

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### Katheryn Thompson says

Detective Lotte Meerman is back at work, and while she has recovered well from being shot, the scar and the memories have far from faded, and despite the fact that she has been cleared by Internal Investigations, she is acutely aware that she can't afford to make any mistakes on this case. But that's easier said than done. The

death of Frank Stapel, a painter and decorator, appears to be an accident, but then Lotte and Frank's widow, Tessa, find a skeleton in a luggage locker Frank rented in Amsterdam Central train station, and Lotte is convinced that the two incidents are connected. Her colleagues, a competent Detective who holds a grudge against Lotte after her handling of her previous case, and a younger, female officer who specifically asked to work with Lotte, whom she idolises, in the hope of learning from her, reluctantly investigate until forensic tests discover the arm bone of a major criminal, who recently went missing, alongside a skeleton from the Second World War. And as if Lotte needed anything more to deal with, one of the men involved in the case is an old friend from Lotte's, perhaps best forgotten, past.

I flew through this one, reading it in just three nights. I really liked Lotte's character and the way she was portrayed, and her interactions with some other excellent characters. The mystery itself was complex enough to keep me hooked throughout, but far from convoluted. The only thing I would say, is that there were some details of Lotte's past which weren't quite explained fully, presumably details from the first book in the series (which I haven't read). While this book can definitely be enjoyed on its own, I would advise reading the first book in the series first in order to get a better sense of Lotte's background, as there are still several details I'm unclear on, having finished this book. Otherwise, I found *A Cold Case in Amsterdam Central* to be a highly enjoyable read, with some interesting twists on a solid genre.

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### **Ciaran Monaghan says**

I hadn't read the original book before this but it is quite well explained at the start. In the first book, Lotte gets in to a relationship with the eventual murderer and is shot at the climax. So, at the start of this one, she comes back to work and needs to prove herself again to her colleagues. There is a body who seems to have died accidentally until some bones are found in his left luggage locker at Amsterdam Central, which complicates the situation. What follows is a pretty average police procedural. One thing that did annoy me, apparently for the second book in the series, is that Lotte ended up sleeping with one of the suspects again. In this one, he wasn't guilty at the end but was arrested and suspected for a short time. It is not an unusual trope to have the detective get emotionally involved with a suspect but not in every book. I won't bother reading another one of these.

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### **Mark Baines says**

A well woven tale, with a decent few twists and turns, and a credible background as well as evidential trail. Might have benefited from reading the first book introducing Lotte for a fuller background and scene setting. Read this in two sittings so it is engaging enough.

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### **El says**

This was book 2 in the series but the relevance to the book 1 plot was clearly explained. Once again, we have a detective who needs to behave impeccably at work (because of the book 1 plot aftermath) but still decides to go it alone, get involved with persons of interest in a case and generally act like the typical maverick cop. I found the protagonist, Lotte, unconvincing at times and struggled to believe that she was a top-notch police officer. If I'd been her boss she'd have been on a Final Warning. The other characters, too, came across as diluted as did the plot as there was no feeling of suspense or tension for me and the storyline was lacklustre.

This was an easy read but not a book I'd recommend. On the plus side, I did learn a lot about Amsterdam and how WWII affected its citizens both of which were interesting.

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### **Jonathan says**

4.5/5 Stars

Anja de Jager is an undiscovered gem. Her characterisation is fantastic, creating very memorable and realistic characters, even if they only appear in one or two scenes. She also effortlessly evokes an image of Amsterdam and gives us a clear image of the setting, something some of the best authors struggle to do. At first I was worried because there weren't many suspects so it limited the options of who was responsible for what. I read a lot of murder mysteries and often manage to figure out the killer and thought at the start I had figured it out. I'm glad to say I was completely off target and was pleasantly surprised by all the revelations in the conclusion of the novel. I also really appreciated the introduction of Francine's grandfather because even after years of learning about WWII, I never had known the repercussions it had on the children of Dutch Nazis. That was eye-opening for me, and definitely something that made this book stand out from the other murder mysteries I have read.

My one problem with this book was that the reveal of the killer seemed very anti-climactic. However, this ended up not even being the big reveal of the novel, and there was still a nice twist to it that make it easy to forgive this. I also wish that some of the characters from the previous book such as Lotte's father, Hans, and Stefanie could have made an appearance because I remember loving them in the first book. However, the new characters introduced were still very compelling and interesting in their own ways so this was not an actual problem, just something I personally would have loved to see.

I will definitely be recommending this series to as many people as possible, because Anja de Jager's captivating writing style and clever story telling make all of these reads effortless. I am eagerly awaiting the release of the next Lotte Meerman novel and cannot wait to see what else de Jager has in store for us.

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### **Gaille says**

I cannot believe other reviews. Thank god I did not pay for it. It is just not up to the level of most books I have read. Lame.

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### **Janine says**

This novel is very easy to read and the storyline is excellent and there were little bits added in. Reading from the perspective of the character is always good for me. There is one bit I was confused with, there was a bit in the novel where Tony and his dad were arguing, how did Lotte get injured? there was no mention of this.

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### **Lauren English says**

This book took me ages to get thru. I will admit for the most part the last third of it was quite interesting but the story consistently referred back to a previous case and a previous story only illuminating tiny slivers of what had come before. I found that very irritating and would advise people to read the books predecessor before embarking on this one.

Other than that is was a fairly easy to read whodunnit. Nothing outstanding and I probably wouldn't go seeking out books by this particular author in the future.

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### **Robd says**

A man falls to his death on a building site and his widow finds out that he had stored a skeleton in the left luggage lockers at Amsterdam Central. However it transpires that not all the skeleton is from the same person.

This is the second cold case novel featuring Detective Lotte Meerman. Here she endeavours to discover the origins of the skeletons and, battling against her colleagues, has to prove that the worker's fall was not just an accident. The investigation unearths a dark and sinister past linking old war crimes to more recent events.

Another enjoyable crime novel set against the streets and canals of Amsterdam. I'm getting to know and like Lotte. Oh, and she rescues a cat.

Rob D

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### **Liz C says**

Good read set in Amsterdam. I like cop novels set in different places, Donna Leon and Barbara Nadel are really good at it and this caught my eye in a charity shop. The basic story revives round a supposed accident and two skeletons found in a bag in central stations locker room. The characters are good and the story is quite fast paced and I would certainly read more by the author.

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### **Sara Aye Moung says**

It's always a pleasure to discover a new and enjoyable author . I loved this. Good plot, interesting and believable characters. I will look out for more in this series

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### **Lysergius says**

A crime novel somewhat out of the ordinary. Set in Amsterdam, everyone's favourite city, the protagonist is a middle aged detective, whose conscience appears burdened with secrets and their consequences which are revealed as the novel progresses.

The writer is Dutch but writes in English which gives the writing a stark clarity which is refreshing. There is a lack of the sort of cliches one finds in English crime writing. Another plus. Looking forward to the next Lotte Meerman novel.

Tot ziens!

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### **Nicole says**

An alright book overall. Nice to read something taking place in the Netherlands, but overall I found a lot of the characters reactions to things and interactions with each other rather unrealistic. And for all we're told that Thomas doesn't like Lotte, and they don't get along, I didn't see that. He comes across as a decent person, and was probably my favourite character, actually. But then again, I didn't read the first book in the series, so maybe I'm missing important things there...

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