



A Case of Conspiracy in Clerkenwell

Clara Benson

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The ladies of Clerkenwell Central Hall are none too pleased at having their Temperance meetings disrupted by the rowdy Communists next door, but for Miss Olive Stapleton in particular, the uneasy coexistence proves fatal when she is found stabbed through the heart with a paper-knife. Enter Freddy Pilkington-Soames, who's been recruited by British Intelligence to investigate a suspected Communist plot to stir up a general strike. Freddy thinks there's more to Miss Stapleton's death than meets the eye, but as he delves more deeply into the mystery it only becomes more puzzling. What is the connection between the murder and the coded newspaper advertisements? Is a Welsh firebrand politician really as harmless as he seems? And what does the beautiful wife of an Austrian revolutionary philosopher want from him? It all points to one thing: danger ahead. But time is running out, and Freddy must act fast to stop the conspirators, or risk becoming the unwitting pawn in a deadly game that threatens to bring the country to its knees.

A Case of Conspiracy in Clerkenwell Details

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From Reader Review A Case of Conspiracy in Clerkenwell for online ebook

Patricia says

A light read but fun. I need light reads now and then.

Heatherinblack says

good for freddy!

Freddy was marvelous in this book. The mystery was clever and even included political intrigue! Freddy's efforts were reasonable and not too far fetched. He is a bit of a dandy, but a clever one

Michael says

Not as much fun as Book One

There was a lot to like about this book. I thought, however, it was a bit confusing. Too many characters had similar names, and as a strong supporter of labor unions, I found that the anti labor rhetoric hard to take, not knowing what the characters really felt. Now on to book three.

Michelle Abraham Ne Hartshorn says

Great

I love the author as she manages very well to capture and transport you back to the 1930's. Always an enjoyable read and can't wait to read the next one.

Marjorie says

If you like British Cozy mysteries, you may find these are very entertaining. I am planning on reading all of them just for fun!

hollace turnage says

Must read

C Benson describes wonderful characters that are not clones. Each one is well defined with temperament, language, etc. Can't wait to read her next offering.

Shelby says

Another winner

A very enjoyable read. Interesting characters and plot. Freddy has developed over the past several books into an interesting young man. Can't wait for the next book.

Sarah Schattman says

Always a pleasure

Freddy combines his reportorial skills and unrelenting charm to foil a communist plot and discover the murderer of a temperance volunteer.

Elmira says

This book was greyer, less vivid, than Benson's usual style.

Sharon says

Temperance & Communism

Asked by the Gov't, Freddie goes undercover to suss out the goings on of the Communist Rally meetings that meet in the town hall on the same night as the Temperance group. When one of the Temperance woman is found dead after a meeting, he tries to solve the crime as well as foil the plot of the more radical communist members. Took me a while to get into this particular book. I am a big Clara Benson fan, but this book seemed to move too slow for me.

Elisa says

Freddy is as entertaining as ever, even if he always seems to get banged up in the process of solving crimes.

JK says

Another riveting story, what

I love the Clara Benson books. They are so easy to read and entertaining. Angela was great and now Freddy is fully establishing himself as a favorite.

This adventure sees trouble with the communists and the temperance groups, and Freddy in the middle of it all.

Loved it???

Andrea says

Enjoyable light read, though I guessed the killer (which is rare for me). I think Freddy could do with a sidekick to bounce off, but I'm not overly keen on his fixation with Iris.

Robin says

A Case of Conspiracy in Clerkenwell is the 3rd book in the Freddy Pilkington-Soames series by Clara Benson. The story is set in the late 1920s or early 1930s in London. Freddy is a sort of ne'er do well, upper-class Englishman, who tries to work as a newspaper reporter. He was first introduced to readers in Benson's Angela Marchmont series.

Clerkenwell Central Hall is the meeting place of two disparate organizations on the same evening - the Young Women's Abstinence Association and the East London Communist Alliance. Freddy has been asked by Henry Jameson, of British Intelligence (who we previously met in an Angela Marchmont book,) to help watch Freddy's friend, St. John Bagshawe. St. John is a member of the Communists and has started a Communist newspaper. Freddy attends a meeting of the Communists and runs into his friend, Mildred Starkweather, who is a member of the Temperance organization. Mildred introduces him to some of the other members, including Miss Stapleton, who is the very militant leader of the Temperance group. The morning after the meeting, Miss Stapleton is found murdered in the meeting hall. Freddy is determined to find Miss Stapleton's murderer and to foil an unknown threat from the Communist organization leaders.

Benson has tried to write her books in the style of a Golden Age novel, and I believe she succeeds admirably. She doesn't feel the need to point out things that someone who was writing in that period would point out, but that many historical novel writers feel compelled to mention. For instance, she doesn't mention types of clothing or hats or cars or those types of things that are found so often in the descriptions of many historical books, but that a writer in that age might not necessarily mention. The story moves along very well; there is not a lot of extra detail to detract from the main plot. She gives enough clues that one might figure out the solution to the mystery, but they are not obvious clues. As in many Golden Age mysteries, the author does not spend much time fleshing out the major characters, but we get to know them well enough to be interested. The primary purpose of books like this is the fun of "whodunit" not getting into the characters' heads.

Freddy reminds me a little of Dorothy Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey or Margery Allingham's Albert Campion, except that Freddy is perhaps not quite as intelligent - or perhaps he hides his intelligence a little better. He seems to bumble along, sometimes getting into trouble, but then is somehow intelligent enough to get himself and others out of a bad situation. I enjoy Freddy - I enjoyed his character in the Angela Marchmont series, and I'm glad he has his own series now. He is fun to read about and I find myself rooting for him.

The one thing that bothered me a little about the plot was how willing the Intelligence service was to trust Freddy, and how much information was shared with him. That seemed a little unbelievable to me, but perhaps since it is still years before WWII, security was not as tight as it was later to become. It was mentioned that Intelligence also had a person on the inside of the Communist organization, and I was a bit amazed by how much information they still needed Freddy to get. However, closer to the end of the book, this point was wrapped up to my satisfaction.

Although this is part of a series, it could easily be enjoyed as a stand-alone.

If you enjoy mysteries in the style of the Golden Age, I think you will enjoy this book.

Scot says

Third in this Freddy series. I kept feeling I had read this book or seen a film a lot like it before, odd bits of literary deja vu. However, the setting is unusual enough and the date of publication new enough that an earlier encounter was highly unlikely. In any case, I enjoyed reading it enough to keep going. Freddy is asked to infiltrate a weekly meeting of Communists as he is a reporter and can say he is just researching a story. The Communists share the building where they meet once a week in the major hall with the women's temperance group, who meet in the minor hall at the same time-- so interminglings are inevitable, and Freddy has friends and acquaintances in both groups.

Freddy's breezy, privileged, and indulged style offers an amusing way to assess both communist and temperance philosophies, and his wit and general good nature toward all make me like him and find the book entertaining. At times this author has characters repeat plot points we already know in dialogue that slows the book down. At other times, her vocabulary charms me, using a little known or archaic term correctly and helping me better understand slang and social behaviors of varied social classes of the UK in the 1930s.
