



Trick of the Mind

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Trick of the Mind (Phillip Bethancourt and Jack Gibbons Mysteries)

Trick of the Mind Details

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From Reader Review Trick of the Mind for online ebook

Ellen Dark says

An interesting tale about two friends, one a policeman, the other a rich young man. The policeman is found shot and bleeding on a wet London night. The rich friend is partying in Paris when he receives the news about his friend, and immediately heads home. The policeman comes to, but has no memory of what happened much of that day. His friend and colleagues begin to investigate. An enjoyable story.

Diane says

I really loved this one! I hope she writes lots more in the series, because I'm starting her fourth one today. I have no problem recommending these to anyone. There is no bad language really, I don't get them all figured out, but I get a few things figured out so I don't feel dumb and it doesn't seem implausible. The characters are really likeable. Great book!

Richard says

A enjoyable book by, for me at least, a new author. As the story is set in London, and I am familiar with much of that city, I am able to visualize where the parts of the story take place. For me, that makes the story much more interesting.

Emma (Miss Print) says

Trick of the Mind (2008) is Cassandra Chan's third book in her Gibbons and Bethancourt mystery series (preceded by their debut in *The Young Widow* (2005), and *Village Affairs* (2006)). This book starts with the unthinkable. Detective Sergeant Jack Gibbons has been shot twice. Worse, no one knows why, least of all Jack who has no memory of the preceding events or the shooting itself.

With mere fragments, Gibbons' best friend Philip Bethancourt and Chief Inspector Carmichael try to put together the events that led to this brutal attack. As the investigation leads to a seemingly unrelated jewel robbery and a dodgy London neighborhood, Bethancourt begins to wonder if any of the pieces will fall into place without Gibbons' own memories to connect things.

Initially I was profoundly worried when I heard that Gibbons began this book by being shot. Was he being killed off? Would he go through the book in a coma? Would he be okay? (Gibbons is, incidentally, my favorite of the duo.) Upon actually reading the book, I was deeply relieved to have to these questions answered to my liking. Although Gibbons is necessarily on the sidelines for much of the action and investigation, he did play a key role.

In fact, both Bethancourt and Carmichael spend a significant amount of time bemoaning Gibbons absence and the lack of his excellent investigative skills. After Bethancourt often taking the lead in the first two novels, it was nice to see Gibbons' role (and importance) acknowledged by the other characters.

Although the case here is as intricate as in her earlier books, Chan spends a fair bit of time on characters here. Much of the novel offers a study of the friendship between her two protagonists--one that neither man is ashamed to admit is a close bond. Written in third person, this book also follows a lot of the characters around in the narrative. Almost anyone who has a piece of information about the shooting also gets a piece of the narrative. The structure is complex and fragmented, but works well with the general chaos of the first pages and the gaps in Gibbons' own memory.

The design of this book is also different from earlier volumes in the series. The chapters here are shorter and always named (although not in a table of contents). The general span of the book also seems to take place over a shorter amount of time though that, to be fair, might be because of the urgency lent to the shooting case. These changes seem deliberate on Chan's part although I am still not sure to what end.

Dianna Rubidge says

This is my kind of book - well written, extremely engaging characters, what I call personal crime in that it is not serial murders.

Yune says

I'm realizing how awful I am at leaving reviews for subsequent books in series. I may backtrack and review the second book, *Village Affairs*, at some point, but suffice it to say that this one cemented me as a fan of the series, because it begins not with the typical murder-happening-yonder setup, but rather with Gibbons -- the stalwart police detective who is one of the series' co-stars -- in the hospital, having been shot under circumstances no one quite seems to know.

Bethancourt, true to his nature, is partying in Paris when he finds this out, and also true to his nature, he drives straight to Calais to take the ferry and return to London. I felt every tense mile of that drive, and at the same time sort of adored Bethancourt for being such a devoted friend, despite his many differences from (not with) Gibbons. It's this core relationship between the two that really makes the series work for me.

Gibbons is unconscious for some time, and when he awakens, he doesn't remember what happened. Nor can anyone figure out why he was in the neighborhood where he got shot -- it doesn't relate to his current case, which is no longer in the Homicide division anyway, but rather Arts Theft. As he does his best to recreate his steps and recover his memory, Bethancourt provides the footwork in the investigation.

This was a near-perfect mix of character study and mystery for me. A lot of people rally together to pin down Gibbons's shooter, including his old boss and even his parents, and it worked to humanize the situation, even while I was inwardly howling for any good lead into the case -- and getting intrigued despite myself by the parallel art theft case that Gibbons actually was working on, and which Bethancourt wanders into (as is his wont).

I started obsessively tracking down the back issues of *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* that contained earlier stories of these two after finishing this book. If you liked *The Young Widow* (the first book), I think this one will more than deliver. Probably not the best starting point, though.

Anne says

What happens when DS Jack Gibbons is transferred from Homicide to Arts-Theft? He gets shot in the stomach while investigating the theft of a very valuable jewel collection. What no one at Scotland Yard or Gibbons's best friend, Bethancourt, knows is whether the shooting was related to the theft and unfortunately Gibbons can't remember what he was doing the day he was shot.

For the most part, this was a very interesting read and I greatly enjoyed the way Bethancourt solved the case in the end. It also served as a reminder that we mustn't forget old people after they've moved into retirement or nursing homes.

Gibbons's whining about being stuck in bed and his parents while in hospital seemed a bit much at times, but was perhaps understandable. However, I did miss having him involved in the investigation and driving around with Bethancourt.

One of the great things in this novel was that it cemented the relationship between Gibbons and Bethancourt as a true friendship and that each of them truly cares about the other, and not just as a bit of excitement for Bethancourt. I hope the author further explores this relationship in future novels.

Robin Evans says

I picked this up because I am a sucker for an english mystery. But I really didn't like the writing style. Very dry, almost entirely conversation with little descriptive language. It seemed like a chore to finish at the end.

Julie says

some of it i figured out right away, but it didn't matter. she's a good writer and you enjoy just spending time with gibbons and bethancourt. and there were still enough parts that i didn't know that i still wanted to get to the end and put all the threads together.

Angela says

Trick of the Mind, the third book of Cassandra Chan's Bethancourt-Gibbons series of mysteries, was actually the first one I bought thanks to finding a hardcover copy at a local used bookstore--but I didn't want to read it till I swung back and covered the first two. I'm glad I did that, because as of the this installment, the series starts feeling to me like it's really gotten its feet under it. Jack Gibbons has been shot in the line of duty, much to the alarm of his good friend Bethancourt as well as Bethancourt's girlfriend Marla. But to Phillip's further alarm, Jack can't remember who shot him. And so it's up to Phillip to track down the details of his last case.

I am of course a documented sucker for amnesia plots, and even though poor Gibbons loses only a couple of days out of his memory, they are nonetheless critical. And it's a perfect crisis to let not only Phillip and Marla but several other significant characters as well--like Jack's boss and Jack's parents--show their true mettle. I particularly liked that Marla, despite her previous acrimony about Phillip's engaging himself with

police work, nonetheless gives him quite a bit of support as he hastens off to his wounded friend's side. There's quite a bit of mileage from the point of view Jack's boss Carmichael and Carmichael's wife Dotty as well, and between them and a few other characters, the reader is given quite a decent picture of all of Jack's colleagues working feverishly to figure out who shot him and why.

Bethancourt is no Peter Wimsey, and yet he does carry on Wimsey's tradition of the nobleman investigator very well. The personal stakes of his friend's being threatened give this particular investigation a keener edge for him, much to the story's overall benefit. I quite enjoyed every bit of it. Four stars.

Joanna says

Such a good story. This is only the 2nd of the series I have read-the one I did read actually this one.

The story is told in a very logical and delightful manner. I'll definitely find the rest of the series and read those as well.

Susan says

Phillip Bethancourt's best friend Jack Gibbons lies in the hospital, severely injured in a shooting. But no-one knows what Jack was doing in a dubious London neighborhood. He had just heard from a fellow-policeman about a murder committed several weeks ago not far from where he was shot on a rainy November night, but Jack has been working on a jewel theft for the art squad, and wouldn't have been out there investigating on his own. Or might he have had personal business in the area? Phillip and the police co-operate to see if they can find out who had Jack in gunsights.

Mascanlon says

A new series for me. This is the third volume, part crime story, part buddy story in the classic tradition with a modern voice of its own. A very clever plot as the best friend, Bethancourt tries to figure out how Scotland Yard detective, Jack Gibbons was seriously shot as Gibbons lays in the hospital frustrated by the memory loss.

Grey853 says

I'm really enjoying this detective series set in England. The two protagonist Bethancourt and Gibbons work well together to solve crimes, Gibbons as the police officer, Bethancourt as the wealthy amateur detective.

In this one Gibbons has been injured and so most of the novel is spent retracing his steps on the day of the shooting. He's got no memory, so he struggles to recall the events and recover from a serious abdominal wound.

Meanwhile, it's Bethancourt who does most of the footwork. It's draggy in parts, but it's worth staying with it because of the relationship between these two and all the details of the case.

Xandora says

Big fan of this series - started with the first one (The Young Widow) which was more than interesting enough to get me started on the second (Village Affairs) which made me really keen to start this one. This one is probably even better. Love the main characters, the twists and turns and also the absence of obscene language - it is great to have a modern day murder mystery without all the continuous swearing and explicit violence descriptions. Personally I hope Cassandra Chan writes a lot more books in the series.
