



## Dear Old Dead

*Jane Haddam*

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A tale of malicious mayhem--and a most heartwarming Father's Day present--from Jane Haddam's acclaimed series of holiday mysteries. Rumors of a change in Charles van Straadt's will only widen the circle of suspects who would have liked to see the media mogul six feet under. Now former FBI agent Gregor Demarkian is tangled in a messy investigation.

## Dear Old Dead Details

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Author : Jane Haddam

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## From Reader Review Dear Old Dead for online ebook

### Nicholas Whyte says

<https://nwhyte.livejournal.com/2924147.html>

This is a murder mystery set in a New York private charitable hospital, set in the present day, ie 1994 (Trump Tower is referenced on the second page). The hospital's founder is gay; his sponsors are a combination of a dynastic millionaire and the Catholic Church. The Church calls in Haddam's detective, Gregor Demarkian, to investigate the millionaire's murder. It's pretty clear that the murderer must be one of a very few characters, and I found it a bit implausible that neither the police nor Demarkian approached it in that way, instead waiting for the clues to line up and point in the right direction; and I wasn't totally convinced about the motivation of the murderer, though the means of the crime were resolved rather satisfactorily. However, I really enjoyed the portrayal of the hospital as a social space, the complex interaction between Michael Pride and the Church, and Demarkian's exploration of parts of New York that I myself rarely get to see.

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### Kyrie says

The parts about a doctor giving up a lucrative practice to open a clinic in Harlem were interesting. Waiting for Gregor Demarkian to explain who dunnit took forever. The ending was worthwhile.

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### Ricki says

Another great Gregor Demarkian book! Who killed media mogul Charles van Straadt...and why did they choose to do it during an all out gang war in Harlem? Only a great mind like Gregor could figure this one out....loved this book!

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### Linda says

Not a cozy mystery, but I stayed with it and this was a good story with very interesting characters.

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### Joyce Lagow says

#10 in the Gregor Demarkian series.[return][return]Dr. Michael Pride runs a health clinic in Harlem, NY, where he is almost literally up to his elbows in blood treating members of two rival gangs who are settling their territorial dispute with assault rifles. Obivoulsy, this is not a good time for Charles van Straadt, newspaper mogul and main supporter of the Sojourner Truth Health Clinic, to arrive for a conference. All four of Straadt's grandchildren are at the clinic; he requires that they put in a two-year stint volunteering if they wish to be included as his heirs. As Michael returns to his office after hours in surgery, he finds van Straadt already there--in the last throes of dying from strychnine poisoning. [return][return]Suspicion falls on

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Michael as the only apparent one who had the access to strychnine. But not only does Michael have no motive, but the police are also hampered by Michael's reputation as something of a secular saint, given the work he does for free for the poor of Harlem.[return][return]Desperate for reasons of his own to have the situation resolved, the Cardinal Archbishop of New York puts in a call to the Cardinal Archbishop of Colchester who in turn calls his old friend, Fr. Tibor Kasparian of Holy Trinity Armenian Christian Church on Philadelphia's Cavanaugh Street. And that is why Gregor Demarkian finds himself packing his bags for a visit to New York to assist in what way he can in solving the murder. Initially, he is baffled; there are plenty of suspects but it seems impossible for anyone but Michael to have murdered van Straadt. But after another murder and an attempted murder, Demarkian manages to put it all together and suss out the murderer.[return][return]Since this takes place in New York, there is no real contribution by the Cavanaugh St. gang except for brief appearances by Bennis Hannaford at the beginning and the end. Which is too bad, because this plot is a little thin and could have used the zaniness of the Armenian-American community to spice up the story. [return][return]The writing itself also seems a little thin. Haddam makes effective use of long stretches of short declarative sentences that often add to the intended humor of a particular scene. But there are times in this book where that literary device seems strained.[return][return]Haddam usually has some sort of social agenda in her books; in Dear Old Dead, it is really Harlem itself and the conditions in which everyone--gang members, working poor, destitute, homeless, prostitutes--must survive. The fact that the clinic performs abortions is part of that picture; one character, who day after day protests with a sign, converts at the end, although we are not really told exactly how this happened. As mentioned, the plot is thin. Still, there is a fairly decent if naturally superficial look at Harlem as a place where wars break out regularly and cab drivers are afraid to go. [return][return]A little light even for a light-weight series, this is still a good read.

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## Helen says

Demarkian in NYC with strychnine

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## Marti says

This is one of those books that I thought would get better, but didn't. Even after the famed Gregor Demarkian showed up at the hospital to solve the murder of multimillionaire Charles van Straadt. None of his potential heirs seem like decent people, as compared to the doctor there who flaunts his homosexuality by going to sex shows while he is suffering from advanced AIDS. If a reader can't feel sympathy for characters, it is hard to enjoy the book.

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## Teresa says

I've been reading some of the earlier Jane Haddam books that I missed. I have enjoyed them all.

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## Glen U says

This Gregor Demarkian offering is very good. Haddam consistently writes well paced and entertaining books in this series. Although her link to the featured holiday, Father's Day, in this piece is tenuous, the plotline is

well thought out and interesting. As in all her books, her referencing to the Catholic Church is a bit heavy, it is not overbearing and contributes well to the story.

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### **Pat says**

Dr. Michael Pride, gay, runs a health center in Harlem.  
A financial backer is killed. Gregor Demarkian, retired FBI, called in by Diocese to solve murder.  
Pretty good.

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### **Bookish says**

Haddam cements her place on one of my all time favorite writers of the cozy.

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### **Alaina Patterson says**

*The dead guy Gregor is called in to investigate is Charles ... Something. Look, today's laziness will know no bounds. The book is too far out of my reach, so Charles Something is all you're getting.*

For the full review - including a love song of sorts to Bennis Hannaford, and a plea for her to do more in the next book - follow the link to [That's What She Read](#).

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