



## The Problem at Two Tithes

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## **The Problem at Two Tithes** Clara Benson

On a reluctant visit to her painfully respectable brother and his wife, Angela Marchmont finds herself once again caught up in murder when a local farmer is shot dead, apparently at the hands of his sworn enemy. But the case is not as simple as it seems, for other motives and suspects soon come to light. With reporters hot on the scent and her friend Inspector Jameson battling a conflict of interest, Angela must use all her ingenuity to unravel the case and bring the murderer to justice—or more than one person will suffer the consequences.

## **The Problem at Two Tithes Details**

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Author : Clara Benson

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## From Reader Review The Problem at Two Tithes for online ebook

### Susan says

This is classic British crime fiction and is readable enough, but hardly in the category of Sayers or Christie. What I liked best about the story is that it revealed that life in a small village is not all that it is cracked up to be, especially for the women. Angela Marchmont has freed herself from this stultifying habitat and on a reluctant visit to her old home has promised to avoid sleuthing. However, when a neighboring farmer is blasted with a shotgun and the local police are obviously on the wrong track, she can hardly avoid the case.

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### Tracey North says

#### Country life can be murder

I've enjoyed this series from the very first. Each installment gets better. In *The Problem at Two Tithes* we get the opportunity to get to know more about Angela and her family. When an old feud results in the death of one of the participants suspicions falls on the his counterpart. But when he has a solid alibi, the next to be arrested is a member of Angela's family. Suddenly Angela is in the middle of another murder mystery that is very close to home. The usual characters are on hand as well as some new and often malicious ones who stir up plenty of trouble.

A fun and clever read that will keep you guessing until the end.

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### Pauline Ross says

Another bundle of fun in the Angela Marchmont series of murder mysteries set in the twenties. This is the seventh, and the author is absolutely on top form. After the wonderful outing in Italy in *The Imbroglia at the Villa Pozzi*, here we are back in the heart of England, at the very respectable village home of Angela's brother, Sir Humphrew Cardew and his wife Elisabeth, two of the most pompous, stuffy and dull people imaginable. They disapprove of Angela and everything about her, and although she sets out not to ruffle their feathers, naturally she can't help getting into trouble almost immediately.

The village setting, and the murder that takes place against a backdrop of the village fete, is redolent of *Midsomer Murders*, or perhaps the Miss Marple series of Agatha Christie. There are eccentric characters in abundance - an elderly lady on a bicycle, the gossipy vicar's wife and so on. Angela's aristocratic reporter pal, Freddy, turns up, as well, together with an even more outrageous reporter from a rival newspaper, who proceeds to trample all over the case, and, when facts are in short supply, makes things up. And then there's the brother's mother-in-law, who isn't quite the meek little old lady she appears to be.

The local police are augmented by Inspector Jameson, but even so, it takes Angela's determination to solve the case. However, as usual in this series, the murder takes second place to the characters and the little side-stories which are so cleverly woven into the story, such as the sister seemingly about to marry a very dull man for lack of other options, and Angela's maid trying to find out what, exactly, her mistress got up to in Italy. And the humour, of course. The Cardews are perhaps my favourites for laughs here, but with Freddy, the rival reporter, the old lady and the vicar's wife, I was entertained from beginning to end. And a charming little romance, as well. An excellent five stars.

## Marley says

I'm really loving the Angela Marchmont series. It's been a treat to watch the author's writing skills and plots evolve--not to mention character development. I liked the first installment and decided to try the second and before I knew it I was reading them all in order. This time around we get a peak at Angela's family, her compliant, stuffy Labour Party apparatchik brother Humphrey, his boring wife, an "interesting MIL, and a grand cast of truly interesting side characters. Best of all, I was fooled this time. I'm good at spotting red herrings, and figuring out the miscreant, but this one threw me right off the rails. There's also some romance for Inspector Jameson. This and Imbroglia are my favorites so far.

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## Andrea says

We learn a lot more about Angela's past as we visit her childhood home, meet her stuffy family, and tackle a murder where the obvious suspect is quickly eliminated, but no-one is very keen on bringing the murder home to the next-most obvious people.

One of the things I like about this series is the time and sympathy it gives to characters who are often considered uninteresting, such as the murdered man's wife.

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## Elisa says

Another delightful whodunit from Clara Benson. Not only do I love the mysteries, I adore the descriptions of how ladies of leisure from the beginning of the XX century lived, traveled, had tea, dressed, talked... If I ever get a TARDIS, I am traveling to hang out with Angela Marchmont, even if the body count around her is so high. Also, is it weird that I have a crush on William, her American driver? I love these books!

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## Damaskcat says

Angela Marchmont is paying a delayed visit to her brother and sister in law. Sir Humphrey Cardew is as unlike his sister as it is possible to be and several people during the course of this story remark upon the fact. Angela feels her temper is going to be sorely tried during her visit though things start to look up when a local farmer is found shot dead in the woods.

Inspector Alec Jameson is staying in the neighbourhood and agrees to help the local police. He is an old friend of Angela's as well and he finds it helpful to discuss the case with her. As tensions between the villagers quickly become clear and old feuds are revealed there are plenty of suspects but few who were in the right place at the right time. Jameson finds his impartiality compromised by personal feelings and he returns to London.

Angela has her own suspicions about who committed the crime but can't at first see how it could have been done. The whole investigation is hampered by two newspaper reporters who will use fair means or foul to get a story. This is a well written and very entertaining novel with some lively dialogue, plenty of humour and

some well drawn characters. If you enjoy Agatha Christie and other Golden Age writers then you will probably enjoy this entertaining series. The books can be read in any order.

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### **Scot says**

Seventh in the series. Angela returns to her familial home, and we see her interacting with her ever so proper brother and his haughty wife. A local farmer is murdered while the community fair was occurring, and when Inspector Jameson is called in, Angela is there to help her old friend. A subplot about his romantic interest becomes a driving force in the novel, but as he is such a nice guy and so bashful, you don't mind rooting for him while working through all the possibilities of just who is the murderer.

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### **Rosemary says**

I can't even begin to explain what a delight this series is. If you're a fan of British Golden Age mysteries, but find Miss Marple a bore, please check out these books, which were written in the 1920s and 30s but only discovered by the author's family after her death in the 1960s. The detective figure, Angela Marchmont, has recently returned to England after living in the United States for many years, sans her American husband...and what happened to him is an ongoing mystery through the series, since Angela doesn't want to talk about her marriage and how (or whether) it ended. She's got her own money, however, and is determined to be independent.

In this installment, she pays a long overdue visit to her uptight brother and his wife in rural England, where she of course stumbles across a murder during the village fete. Her brother has Ben appalled at Angela's detecting, and forbids her to get involved...until his own sister-in-law gets arrested as an accessory to the crime.

Another funny and well-written mystery from Clara Benson.

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### **Maureen Hetzel says**

Love how Angela gets around to different locales which gives the author free rein to develop colorful local characters to meld with "the regulars".

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### **Betty says**

Since I read this immediately following Benson's exciting and romantic novel set in Italy's Lakes District, I wasn't quite so enamored with this one. However, in spite of promising her brother not to get involved in any murders while she is visiting their quiet family home, she is immediately faced with a dead body practically in her backyard. How she goes about solving the mystery while keeping her stuffy brother and sister-in-law happy makes for a bit of fun. Another good read.

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## Whistlers Mom says

After a long absence, Angela has reluctantly returned to the village of Banford Green, where the Cardews have occupied "Two Tithes" for several centuries. The lovely old home is now owned by Sir Humphrey Cardew (Angela's pompous windbag brother) and his awful wife Elizabeth. Having successfully avoided each other for years, the siblings meet with a great show of good manners and even greater mutual irritation. In 1920's England, there are still places where a woman can cause a scandal by CROSSING HER LEGS, and a divorced, independent woman who makes a habit of getting mixed up in high-profile murders is a serious social liability.

Poor Angela is determined to do her best in the Womanly Arts department and she arranges flowers and pays social calls and helps with the church bazaar and meekly suffers the insults heaped on her by her relatives. She's still a bit dazed by her romantic Italian interlude with handsome rogue Edgar Valencourt. (THE IMBROGLIO AT THE VILLA POZZI.) She's returned from Venice with a pretty bracelet and ambivalent feelings. Fortunately, she's backed up at Two Tithes by her faithful staff. Marthe, her imperious personal maid, has a Frenchwoman's guile and shrewdness and her amiable, American-born driver William is invaluable both for his supply of off-color jokes and his handiness in a tight situation. Together with the very British Angela, they are an international trifecta of crime-solvers.

And they'll need all their skills because a prosperous, obnoxious local farmer is found with a bullet in his head. The leading suspect is the neighboring farmer with whom he has a long-standing feud, but the neighbor has an alibi. Or does he? And, naturally, the victim's family must be scrutinized carefully. Both his downtrodden wife and the son who's desperate for his inheritance are gainers from the death of the late, (un)lamented Mr. Tipping. The local police have their hands full, assisted by Angela's old friend Inspector Jameson. Scotland Yard's Most Eligible Bachelor is pulled into the case and romance blooms - but not where I thought it would!

The book is enlivened by the presence of well-bred, irreverent newspaper reporter Freddy Pilkington-Soames, who was introduced in THE INCIDENT AT FIVES CASTLE. He and Angela are great pals and he further endears himself to her by refusing to believe that she could be related to stuffy Sir Humphrey. Together they discover the real murderer to the great relief of everyone, especially the love-struck Inspector Jameson.

I enjoyed Freddy, but for my money the best drawn characters are the three elderly women. Mrs. Hunter, the irrepressible vicar's wife, gives Angela (and everyone else) a hard time with her outrageously blunt remarks, but her bicycle wreck helps bring the murderer to justice. Elizabeth's lorgnette-wielding mother, Mrs. Randall, is a delightful surprise. And Margaret Tipping is a poignant reminder to Angela of the tragedy of loveless marriages and unrealized dreams.

I wonder if these realistic portrayals of older women could have come from a very young writer, as the publisher claims. I also noticed that young Peter is rewarded with an "ice cream" and I think that a frozen dessert was called "an ice" in pre-WWII England. Not that it matters. I'm hooked like a large-mouth bass and I have no choice but to keep grabbing and devouring the latest Angela Marchmont as they appear. I wonder what Edgar Valencourt is up to?

### **Rebekah says**

Another fun and easy read! I have been enjoying the Marchmont series, and this one was no different. It was comical to see the situations she got her self into even when she tried to be on her best behavior. It gave the series a nice change of pace, as opposed to her diving right in to solve the mystery.

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### **Martyn says**

This was an easy, okay read but disappointing in too many ways. I found most of the characterisation quite thin, including Angela Marchmont, but my main gripe is that it doesn't really feel like "An Angela Marchmont Mystery' anyway. She spends most of the book avoiding getting involved in the crime. Real policemen investigate the murder for 3/4 of the book, and I thought the romance angle involving one of them was handled in a half-hearted way.

This was my first Clara Benson book. I may give another one a try but there's a lot of competition out there in this genre now, so we'll see.

Like a few others, I have an inkling that Clara Benson never existed and that they are modern novels. I find it hard to believe someone would write nine (at least) fully formed and professionally crafted novels and not bother with publication. And if it were true, and they were only rediscovered after her death, the publishers would have made much more of the story as a marketing ploy, rather than merely providing the conveniently sparse and almost impossible to research/verify information about her that they do.

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### **Leanne Pazik says**

**So fun!!**

Another great Angela Marchmont book!!! I won't spoil anything!!! But worth the reading. There is nothing like a clean murder mystery!!!!

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