



The Body In The Transept

Jeanne M. Dams

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Dorothy Martin, new widow moved to England, enjoys the Christmas service in Sherebury Cathedral until she trips over the body of Canon Billings. With handsome Chief Constable Alan Nesbitt, neighbor Jane, cat Emmy, and amusing hats, she sorts through suspects: pompous dishonest verger Wallingford, fired student Nigel, philandering George - to the truth.

The Body In The Transept Details

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Author : Jeanne M. Dams

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From Reader Review The Body In The Transept for online ebook

Mary Ronan Drew says

The Body in the Transept by Jeanne M Dams. I found The Body in the Transept . . . no, let me rephrase that, I found Jeanne M Dams' mystery through a useful service the Spokane Public Library provides through their catalog (see yesterday's post.) I had not heard of Dams, though she has been writing since the mid-90s. And I'm glad to hear of her now as this, her first Dorothy Martin mystery, is quite good.

Dorothy is an American, a widow who has moved to a cathedral town in England. She knows a handful of people from the days when she accompanied her husband as he did research at the local red brick university. But now she feels a bit isolated, is not really making friends, and is still grieving for her beloved husband.

After midnight services at the cathedral a man who was seated next to her during the service offers to walk her home and while he is off to find her coat and scarf she stumbles over a corpse, in the north transept. The man turns out to be Chief Constable Alan Nesbitt, a widower.

At first Dorothy talks to her acquaintances about the murder - it of course turns out to be a murder. But she soon finds the likely suspects are among her few acquaintances in town and she begins to dig deeper into the case in hopes of finding that these people have alibis or that their motives are weak.

Dorothy Martin has a good deal of charm and is clever and discerning. As she decides to stay in England at the end of the book we readers feel confident that she is beginning to make friends in her new home. Let's hope not too many of them are killed off in the forthcoming books in this series.

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Beckiezra says

2.5 just for the long note about what turned out to be an entirely fictional building (lead with that information next time. Also, define your terms and don't make markings on a diagram if you're not going to provide a key or be consistent). I had decent feelings for the book at the end of the story until that ecclesiastical note. It honestly makes me want to lower the stars to just two.

Anyway, this book was AMAZINGLY predictable. I tend to make a lot of predictions while reading mysteries but NEVER have I been spot on with all of them before. Don't look at the comments I made while reading if you want to be surprised. It was kind of nice being right all the time, but the book really dragged on for the 100 pages between when I figured out the murder and when Dorothy even looked in that direction.

I guess there was one thing I didn't get quite right, and that was how annoying I thought the main character would be. I imagine as the series goes on she may become unbearable, but she wasn't the caricature of a "unique" busybody solving mysteries in a small English town that I expected from her behatted entrance.

Am I interested in reading any more of this series? No, but I may look at summaries just to see where the characters go and I wouldn't hate to have to read another one for book club.

Barbara says

First in the series and I know I've read a few others in the series previously. I don't remember ex-pat American, now residing in Shevebury, England being so nosy and impulsive. Yes, she stumbled over the body in the transept; however she seems to take this as giving her the right to investigate the murder. This doesn't help her budding romance with the Chief Constable, which she doesn't even recognize right away - so much for her observational and investigative skills. Oh well, I guess we can be clueless when it comes to ourselves.

Other than Dorothy being a bit too much like a clueless cozy heroine, I did enjoy this book. The mystery was not simplistic, though the heroine could be at times.

Eager Reader says

Introduces a very fun series transporting us with Dorothy Martin, an American scholar to small village life in England. Prone to colorful elaborate hats and adjusting to the loss of her husband Dorothy is trying to make her place in village life. Far less subtle than Miss Marple Mrs. Martin seems to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and trips over a body as she leaves the cathedral on Christmas Eve and so the story and series begins. The strong characters and pure English village setting has me looking forward to learning the village with her.

Shannon says

This is a nice cozy mystery set in a typical British village. I enjoyed the overall book. At times the main character did annoy me but that may just be me. ;) For the most part I found the characters colorful but not necessarily believable. The plot was easy to follow but did drag in a couple spots. I did guess the murderer before the reveal but that isn't a turn off for me. Overall, I enjoyed it enough to give the second book in the series a try in the future.

Karen says

Boring, stilted writing. Unimaginative and illogical descriptions, such as a "silent fanfare". Weak characterization.

An Odd1 says

Narrator, newly bereaved American Dorothy Martin, enjoys the Christmas service in Sherebury Cathedral until she trips over the body of Canon Billings and screams, comforted by chief constable Alan Nesbitt, handsome, friendly, also widowed. Too logical what happens between them, too many questions elsewhere. Empty, shallow, bland, serious.

Dorothy repeatedly sees a hooded monk, local ghost. Why supernatural pothor? Why does Dorothy's cat

Emmy lap up the poisonous antifreeze? Humor non-existent - mentions of Dorothy's hats too brief to count. The convoluted solution climaxes in suitably dark, lonely, lucky chase around the deserted church.

Dorothy's spinster neighbor Jane Langland dispenses tea and pronoun-less conversation, does not show "mind of diamond and heart of custard" p 4. They decide student Nigel's good looks prove his innocence, so defend the suspect, fired by Billings, and Nigel's sweetheart Inga, last to leave Billings' house. Billings knew George Chambers (Dorothy nicknames "White Rabbit" from *Alice in Wonderland*) cheated on his wife Alice, and knew pompous verger Robert Wallingford stole thousands from the church collections over the years. (view spoiler)

Angela says

A cute cozy mystery series. Although I have to admit it did take me a few chapters to get into the rhythm. Dorothy is an American widow who moved to a village with a college in England

Jessie says

This series is an anglophile's daydream. Well-off American widow moves to England and finds wonderful cottage in relatively unspoiled cathedral/university town. She has charming neighbors, wizardly gardener, inherits cat and cottage garden, strikes up romance with non-aristocratic upper class Detective Superintendent, is liked by everyone, is more British than the British, and has a penchant for hats. She is a whiz at detecting, charmingly incompetent behind the wheel of a car, and in economically depressed Britain, finds a job.

Ah, to day dream so well!

The murder is appropriately tragic, the villains appropriately villainous, and the ending appropriately neat.

It is a pleasant day's reading, with no thought required. Perfect with a cup of tea and a plate of cookies.

Re-reading May 2015 ~ Still an enjoyable light read. And I'd forgotten exactly which suspect did it, so that was nice too.

First read in August 2011

Rita K. says

This series I GREAT, especially if you love books set in England. Definitely read in order.

Cybercrone says

Possibly the worst writing I have ever come across in a mystery series - with the exception of books that have recipe or craft sections at the end. It risked becoming the third book in my life that was just so awfully done that I could not get through it.

The characters have not been defined at all and are all over the map. That's the most aggravating part of the book.

One thing I am grateful for though is that the author is actually American. I had thought it was a British series and had that reinforced when the American characters didn't behave like Americans at all.

So British literary standards are still safe.

As this is an older book maybe I'll jump ahead a decade and see if the author has gotten things in order. The plot had hope, but again, the characters were ridiculously terrible.

Kelsey says

Reading this put me in mind of other mystery greats like Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers, but even more of Dorothy Gilman's series, Mrs. Pollifax. It was a light(as much as a book about murder can be), fun read which I enjoyed reading immensely. I can't wait to start reading the other books in the series.

Mystereity Reviews says

The Dorothy Martin character was mentioned in another series I read (Penny Brannington) and remembered this book and gave it a try. Not sure what to think of it. On one hand, I liked the characters well enough and it was an intriguing plot. On the other hand, the writing was a little...overstated at times. The choice of wording had me rolling my eyes in a few places, and the utterly ridiculous ending was nearly too much to bear. Still, it has some charm to it, and if I ever stumble across the next book in the series, I'll give it a try, but I'm not bang on board with it just yet.

Ellen says

The Body in Transept by Jeanne M. Dams.

The first in the Dorothy Martin series.

After already having read a few in this marvelous series I decided to go back and read the first. This author is never a let down, a totally gifted writer.

Dorothy and her (late) husband are lovers of England and have decided to move there. Suddenly her husband dies and Dorothy is left alone. Surviving or rather going through the motions which have not been the most pleasant for Dorothy. She chooses not to dwell on self-pity. Dorothy takes the bull by the horns and goes it alone with her head held high...supported by good friends.

The Cathedral Church of St. Peter & St. Paul is having their Christmas service and Dorothy wouldn't want to miss it. She attends alone and is having a frustrating time trying to secure a seat. She finally does find a place for herself and right next to Alan Nesbitt, the Chief Constable.

Alan and Dorothy strike up a conversation and learn that each have lost their beloved partners in life. And so begins the growing relationship between Dorothy and her future husband Alan Nesbitt. Just in time since the first murder victim turns up as Dorothy is finding her way out of the church at the end of the service.

And excellent story beautifully written with clear details on the cathedral and each personality.

Damaskcat says

This is the first book in a series featuring Dorothy Martin – an American widow in her sixties living in a cathedral town somewhere in Kent. When we first meet her she is trying to find a seat in the cathedral for a Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.

On her way out at the end of the service she stumbles over a body. Naturally she is curious about who committed the murder and why and she gets involved because she was accompanied by the Chief Constable when she found the body and many of her friends are potential suspects.

An entertaining mystery featuring a far from stupid amateur sleuth with the right connections as she and the widowed Chief Constable soon become close friends. I liked Dorothy as a character and I enjoyed the author's depiction of community life centring round a cathedral. The book is well written and if you want a traditional mystery you could do worse than try this series.
