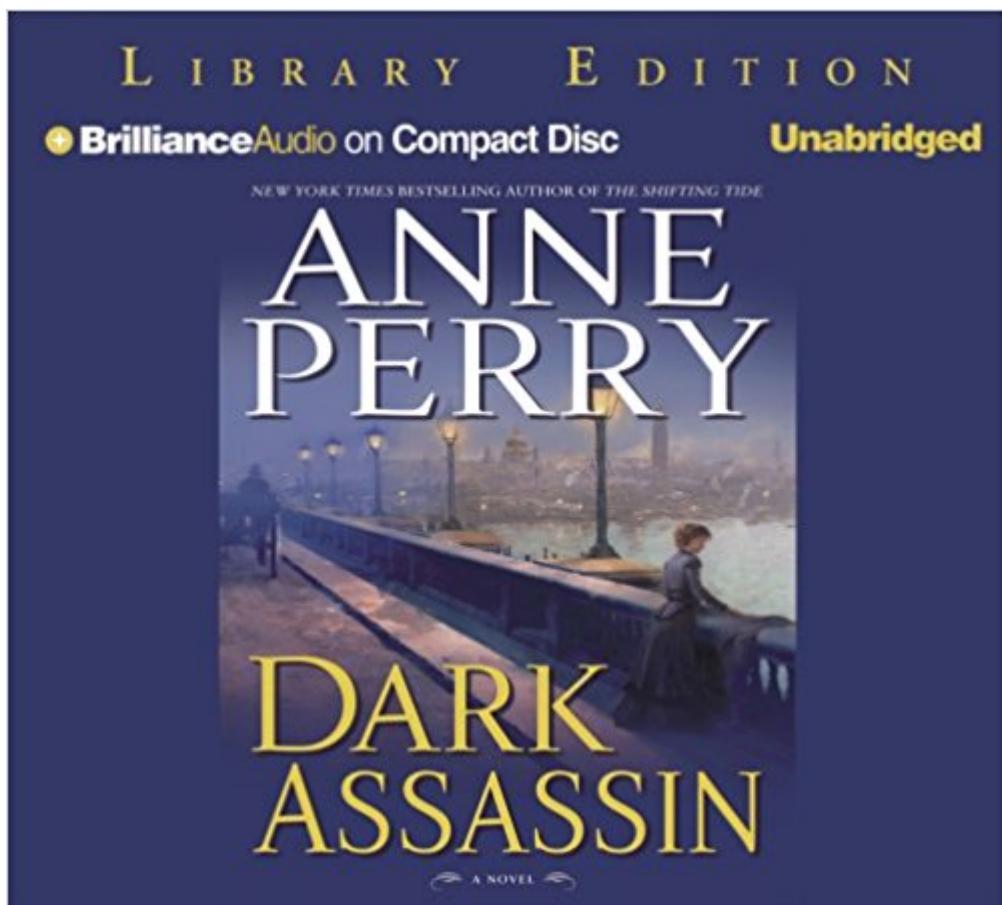


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Dark Assassin (William Monk Series)



Synopsis

A superintendent in the Thames River Police, William Monk is on a patrol boat near Waterloo Bridge when he and his men notice a young couple standing at the bridge railing, apparently engaged in an intense discussion. The woman waves her arms and places her hands on the man's shoulders. A caress or a push? He grasps hold of her. To save her or to kill her? Seconds later, the pair plunges to death in the icy waters. Monk can't help but wonder, has he witnessed an accident, a suicide, or a murder? It seems impossible to determine the truth but, haunted by the woman's somber beauty, he is impelled to try. Mary Havilland is her name and until recently she and Toby Argyll, the fair-haired man who shared her fate, had planned to marry. Her father, an engineer employed by the Argyll Company, has also recently died - a suicide according to the police and Mary's sister. But friends tell Monk that Mary suspected her father had been murdered because of his stubborn insistence that the Argyll Company's current project - participation in the construction of a splendid new sewer system for the metropolis - is so badly flawed that the entire city may be in dire peril from flood and fire. Already struggling to win the respect of his men, Monk is faced with two urgent mysteries. With his intrepid wife, Hester, he is soon treading a slippery path - from luxurious drawing rooms where powerful men hatch their unscrupulous plots to a world beneath the city where poor folk fight starvation. In nightmarish tunnels, Monk and Hester find true friends, among them Scuff, a young mudlark; Sutton, the ratcatcher, and Snoot, Sutton's clever terrier. For once, even Monk's old enemy, Superintendent Runcorn, is on his side. But as rainfall strains the fragile manmade underground, a murderer remains free - and poised to strike again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

William Monk faces special challenges in bestseller Perry's absorbing 15th novel to feature the Victorian policeman (after 2005's *The Shifting Tide*), as he must convince skeptical fellow officers of his competence to lead the corruption-ridden Thames River Police during a rampant crime wave. In a fogbound setting evocative of Conan Doyle, newly appointed Superintendent Monk and his river patrol watch helplessly as two young lovers plunge to their deaths from a bridge. Monk's exhaustive investigation, aided by his activist wife, Hester, soon reveals a deadly conflict between the two lovers' families over the hasty construction of a vast sewer complex built to prevent a recurrence of the "Great Stink" and typhoid epidemic of 1863. A riveting pursuit of an unknown assassin brings Monk in contact with the city's most destitute, one of several incidents highlighting the growing conflict between the abject poor and those whose houses have such luxuries as sewers and gas pipes. Some readers may have trouble with the cockney dialogue, but all will relish the last-minute twists that lead to a compelling resolution. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Since first making his appearance in *Face of a Stranger* (1990), William Monk has continued to hunt for the memory that vanished following a nearly fatal accident. By now, much of his background has fallen into place, but he still yearns for proof that he's become a better man. His new job, superintendent of the Thames River Police, brings fresh opportunity. On a routine river patrol, Monk and his men watch in horror as a man and a woman plunge off a bridge to their deaths. Was it an accident? Urged on by his beloved wife, Hester, Monk investigates, and discovers that the woman had a mission that made suicide unlikely; she was in the midst of proving that her father's recent death was murder. To close one case, Monk must solve the other, and his pursuit of the truth leads him into the dark, stinking world beneath the streets of Victorian London. A shaky premise notwithstanding, this fifteenth episode once again demonstrates Perry's artful mastery of the period details and social concerns of the times, and series fans will appreciate the fact that Monk's genuinely appealing combination of uncertainty and determination remains largely unchanged. Stephanie ZvirinCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Dark Assassin is the eighth of Anne Perry's William Monk series books I have read. I am also posting my review of "The Sunless Sea"---my number nine. Anne Perry is a wonderful writer. I am amazed at her depth of knowledge, her large vocabulary, her writing ability and her prolific writing history. Her books are always worthwhile and a good read. (Here comes the however) however, as I grow older and see more of the dark and sinister things of our world, the less I enjoy reading about them even if it is in Victorian times. This book was too "dark" for me. While I enjoyed most of the details of the story above the ground, the descriptions of the vast, filthy, rat-filled, pitch dark, damp, and dangerous underground sewer tunnels where people live, grub, struggle, are maimed, and die, is not enjoyable to me. At this time, William Monk is a newly-appointed Thames River senior officer policeman. While patrolling on the river with his crew, he witnesses a young couple on the Waterloo Bridge who appear to be arguing when they fall into the water and drown. They are quickly found and identified as Mary Havilland and Toby Argyll. As Monk tries to determine whether it was a suicide or an accident he learns that Mary's father was thought to have committed suicide just two months earlier and that Toby Argyll is her ex-fiancé. Mary's father was an engineer working for Alan Argyll, Toby's wealthy older brother, who was drilling tunnels underground with big machines for London's new sewer system. The mystery unfolds as Monk and his old adversary, Superintendent Runcorn, work together to discover what actually happened to Mary's father and why, and what the Argyll's had to do with it. As always, the courtroom scenes with Oliver Rathbone are brilliant. Ms. Perry knows how to develop the dialog and descriptions of non-verbal facial and bodily movements skillfully--making you feel as if you are actually there; (another however), I have learned after eight Monk books that Perry's endings are often a let down. Like other authors, they seem to have become somewhat the same--fade away into _____? (you fill in the blank). Nevertheless, I will give this book five stars because all of Perry's books are good. I just didn't enjoy the darkness of this particular subject.

The writing is great and the story line comes together in a hurry at the end of the book! This is one of my favorite series and unlike some other series I have read I never tire of Monk.

Being English, I always like Ann Perry's books, they give an insight as to what it would have been like to live in London during the Victorian period. Life could not have been easy unless you had some money, and she also brings to bear the life of women, not being able to own anything and not being able to vote or indeed to have an opinion on anything. The Dark Assassin tells of the condition that the workers (the Navies) worked in while they were building the underground and new

sewers in London. I can often times figure out the plot but this time I was surprised at the ending.

Anne Perry never ceases to amaze me. Her writing takes me back in time to another age, giving me an innocence which is so missing in this time. It is refreshing to feel again that there can be good and evil, while still caring for the people who commit the deeds. We seem to have lost that capacity to know what is right in this day and age - everything can be understood, explained and excused in this century. The writing is amazingly descriptive, with such an attention to detail, that I find myself in the room, smelling the earth, seeing the blossoms - or wanting to be there. Furthermore, the use of descriptions of characters through the emotions that they evoke in the eyes of the viewer is once again old, but good. And she can always keep you guessing as to the truth behind the crime.

First Sentence: "Waterloo Bridge loomed in the distance as William Monk settles himself more comfortably in the bow of the police boat." William Monk is now an Inspector with the Thames River police. London is building a new sewer system after The Great Stink of 1858. While on boat patrol, Monk and his men see a couple arguing and both go into the polluted Thames which kills them. But what did they see? Was it an accident that became a fatal accident? A murder and the killer dies with the victim? A suicide and the man dies trying to save the woman? The woman's death is proclaimed a suicide. Monk doesn't believe anyone who was working so hard to clear her father's reputation, after he also died of a supposed suicide, and provide he was right in believing the way in which the sewers were being built was dangerous would take their own life. Monk even joins forces with his old nemeses, Superintendent Runcorn. Ms. Perry continues to impress me with her writing. Her ability to take an historic event and build an interesting, suspenseful story around it is unsurpassed. She creates fascinating characters and makes them real; not only Monk and Hester, his wife, but Scuff, the street urchin who feels responsible for Monk, and Sutton the ratcatcher and his dog, Snoot. Each of the characters is brought to life and image under Ms. Perry's writing. I am always delighted to find the newest book by Ms. Perry.

Absolutely one of Anne Perry's best Monk stories!

I have loved every Monk book so far. This was no exception. Dark Assassin takes Monk to the river and Hester into quite an experience as well as a few new characters introduced. I don't like spoilers so I will say no more. If you like the Monk and Hester series so far, I think you'll like this as well.

Just another very good read with all the usual elements one comes to expect. Author has a real talent for making you feel the energy of the moment and the feel of the scene.

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