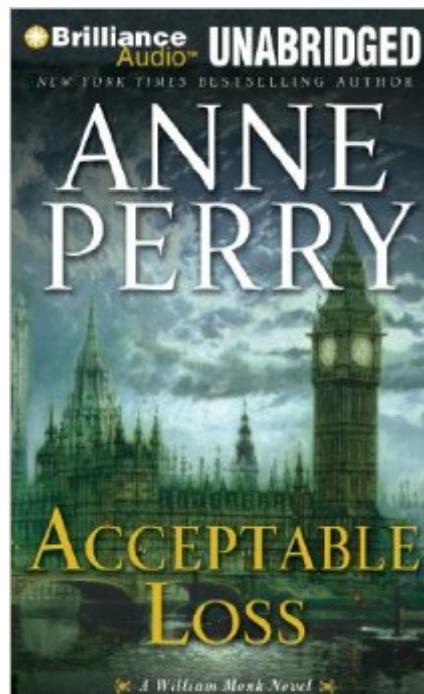


The book was found

Acceptable Loss (William Monk Series)



Synopsis

On a London riverbank, when the body of small-time crook Mickey Parfitt washes up with the tide, no one grieves. But William Monk, commander of the River Police, is puzzled by the murder weapon: an elegant scarf whose original owner was obviously a man of substance. Dockside informers lead Monk to a floating palace of corruption on the Thames managed by Parfitt, where a band of half-starved boys is held captive for men willing to pay a high price for midnight pleasures. Though Monk and his fearless wife, Hester, would gladly reward Parfitt's killer, duty leads them in another direction: to an unresolved crime, to a deadly confrontation with some of the empire's most respected men, and ultimately to a courtroom showdown with Monk's old friend, Oliver Rathbone, in a trial of nearly unbearable tension and suspense.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Anne Perry's "Acceptable Loss" picks up where her previous William Monk novel, "Execution Dock," left off. Hester is living contentedly with her husband, Monk, and their ward, a scrappy little boy named Scuff. Monk is the head of the Thames River Police and Hester works in the clinic that she founded to help wayward and abused women. Meanwhile, Monk and Hester's friend, Sir Oliver Rathbone, is happily married to the well-to-do and socially connected Margaret Ballinger. Although on the surface, all seems well, appearances can be deceiving. A small-time hoodlum named Mickey Parfitt is found in the river, beaten and strangled. Evidence points to Rupert Cardew, a dissolute young man of means whose long-suffering father has bailed him out of one tight spot after another.

Hester is appalled, since she knows and likes Rupert, who has contributed a considerable amount of money to her clinic. Still, she knows that it is Monk's duty to follow the evidence wherever it may lead, and William launches an investigation into Parfitt's and Cardew's activities and associates. Hester and Scuff also do some sleuthing on their own. Eventually, Monk and Hester suspect that someone with a great deal of power and influence may be behind Parfitt's death and other monstrous crimes. Perry has often touched on the subjects of hypocrisy, social inequality, and the misuse of wealth and authority in Victorian England. It was a time when men and women of integrity and good will faced an uphill battle in their efforts to help the poor and oppressed. Hester and Monk must decide whether to uncover the truth, however damaging it may turn out to be. William could be destroyed were he to unmask a villain who has both the power and authority to strike back.

As other reviewers have noted, this is a continuation of Perry's last novel "Execution Dock". This novel wraps up a hanging thread to determine who is the mastermind behind the child pornography ring and blackmail of those in the elite society who cater to this horrendous vice. Perry is strong on emotional descriptions and evoking responses from the reader, while not getting bogged down by useless descriptions of legalise. Compared to Execution Dock, Acceptable Loss is not as gripping or as exciting, nor as suspenseful. If you read Execution Dock, you already know who is the guilty party within the first pages of this book. It focuses more on the relationship between Rathbone, Margaret, and Ballinger. For the first time, Perry writes the characters as one dimensional - either they are good or bad, there is no in between. I found it bothersome that she had seemingly recreated Margaret into an entirely different person from her previous novels. Where is the Margaret who sacrificed her own safety to be with her friend Hester at a clinic that was shut off due to the plague? Where is the Margaret who didn't mind scrubbing dirty floors? Where is the Margaret who had compassion for the prostitutes who visited? In previous books, she was caring, she was courageous, and loyal to Monk and Hester. In this book, it's as if she morphed into a shrew and harridan, who was more concerned about her family's position in society and material wealth. It is understandable that her loyalties would be divided, and the book would have been better if Perry would have written in at least a struggle of beliefs for Margaret to experience. I did like the book because of the continuing relationship between Hester and Monk, and their developing relationship with Scuff.

First Sentence: Hester was half-asleep when she heard the slight sound, as if someone were taking in a sharp breath and then letting out a soft, desperate gasp. Inspector William Monk and his wife,

Hester, are still trying to help young orphan Scuff overcome his horrific experience of being kidnapped for use on a ship owned by Jericho Phillips used to "entertain" wealthy, corrupt men. No one much cares that Mickey Parfitt has been murdered, until the means of his death is discovered to be an expensive custom silk cravat belonging to a wealthy young man. In the investigation, they track Parfitt back to another such ship where 14 young boys are found held captive. Before his suicide, Lord Justice Sullivan, also involved in the previous case, had claimed wealthy barrister Arthur Ballinger, was the power and money behind the boat. A further complication is that the Monks' friend, barrister Oliver Rathbone, is married to Ballinger's daughter. To say Anne Perry is a superb writer is anything but hyperbole. There is no one who better captures the Victorian period. From the homes of the wealthy, to the lowest, meanest parts of London, she creates a fully-realized world and time. Her detail is exacting; answering any question a reader might have as to its veracity. She doesn't paint the pretty picture, but the rough-edged, realistic view of the time. Perry clearly illustrates the misconceptions and bias formed by people based only on social and economic differences. The subject of pedophilia and pornography is timeless and terrible. She raises strong moral and ethical issues, but never in a manner that is preachy or strident.

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