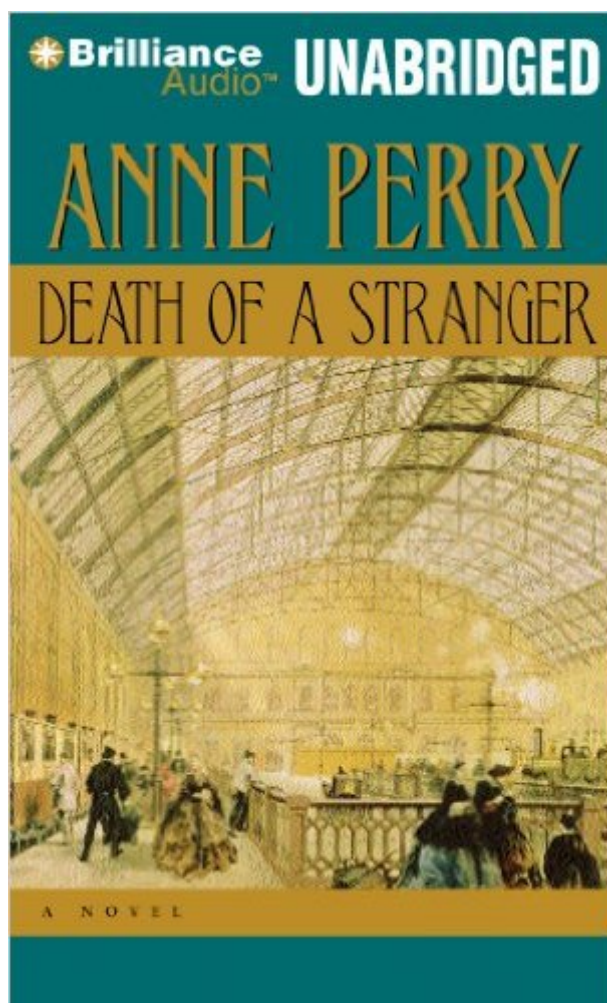


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# Death Of A Stranger (William Monk Series)



## Synopsis

For the prostitutes of Leather Lane, nurse Hester Monk's clinic is a lifeline, providing medicine, food, and a modicum of peace - especially since lately their ailments have escalated from bruises and fevers to broken bones and knife wounds. At the moment, however, the mysterious death of railway magnate Nolan Baltimore in a sleazy neighborhood brothel overshadows all else. Whether he fell or was pushed, the shocking question in everyone's mind is: What was such a pillar of respectability doing in a seedy place of sin? Meanwhile, brilliant private investigator William Monk acquires a new client, a mysterious beauty who asks him to ascertain beyond a shadow of a doubt whether or not her fiancé, an executive in Nolan Baltimore's thriving railway firm, has become enmeshed in fraudulent practices that could ruin him. As Hester ventures into violent streets to learn who is responsible for the brutal abuse of her patients, Monk embarks upon a journey into the English countryside, where the last rails are being laid for a new line. But the sight of the tracks stretching into the distance revives memories once stripped from his consciousness by amnesia - as a past almost impossible to bear returns, eerily paralleling a fresh tragedy that has already begun its inexorable unfolding.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I don't believe Anne Perry could write a bad book if you put a derringer to her head, but William and Hester Monk's latest case "Death of a Stranger" is definitely a series milestone and a solid gold reading experience. After their return from America, William has resumed his private investigative

practice while Hester is donating her time and nursing expertise at a clinic in Coldbath Square which her friend Callandra Daviot has established to provide medical care for women of the streets. When a wealthy railroad magnate is found brutally murdered in a squalid brothel in that area, suspicion falls on the women whom Hester is trying to help. Attempting to prove their innocence, she stumbles upon a plot to force gently-bred women into usurious debt and prostitution and resolves with or without Monk's assistance to put a stop to it. Naturally, she needs some help, so she turns to series regular, Sir Oliver Rathbone, with fascinating results. Meanwhile Monk has acquired a new client: Katrina Marcus, a beautiful and enigmatic woman who is concerned that her fiancé, a trusted employee of the murdered man, may be involved in some kind of fraud in connection with a new and highly secret railroad project that the company is presently undertaking. When Monk agrees to handle her case and looks over the relevant papers that she has brought him, they evoke tragic echoes from his own past which start to shake him loose from his amnesiac fog. Inevitably his and Hester/Rathbone's separate investigations intertwine, and another shocking death pulls the triumvirate deeper and deeper into the terrible implications of old horrors that suddenly threaten to become life-endangering present realities. The final pages of this brilliant piece of Victoriana held me completely spellbound.

I admit when I read the publisher's blurb about this book claiming that William Monk would regain his memory I was very worried that after the suspense of his past being drawn out for twelve books that Anne Perry was suddenly going to play the entire card with a wishy-washy explanation for his sudden regaining of memory. Thankfully, that's not the case. This is quite probably my favorite Monk novel since "The Sins of the Wolf". Great character development, and an intriguing mystery. The details of Monk's mentor and his ruin are worth the anticipation Ms. Perry's built up over the past few books, though in no way does he regain the entire memory of his life. Katrina Marcus is a fascinating character, and while I figured out her actions, her motivation remained a mystery until the courtroom. Rathbone's moved beyond his lovelorn feelings for Hester, which is a great relief, and it was great to see \*him\* holding all the cards to figure out the mystery before Monk and Hester for once. Margaret Ballinger's a good match for him, and I greatly look forward to seeing more of her in future books. Now, I admit I wavered between sympathy and irritation with Monk's reticence to talk to Hester about the entire affair. It seemed to be made clear in "Slaves of Obsession" that she cared only about the man he was, not who he had been. But then, none of us can truly appreciate losing our entire memory and finding it out piece by piece, and Ms. Perry does an excellent job of suggesting what it might be like for such a man. Another bit of confusion was some dates that don't

seem to fit with earlier books, but I can easily overlook that in favor of a very good tale. The mystery of railroad fraud is well-done, with the heat turned up when murder occurs.

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