



A Christmas Secret

Anne Perry

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Just in time for the holidays, Anne Perry gives her fans a marvelous gift: a new yuletide yarn full of light celebration and dark mischief.

Dominic Corde is thrilled to “fill the robe” as substitute vicar in the village of Cottisham, while the Reverend Wynter is away on a three-week Christmas holiday. Glad to escape his dreary London flat and a less-than-satisfying job as church curate, Dominic and his beloved wife, Clarice, set off for what they hope will be a lovely winter getaway.

Upon arrival, in the midst of a frigid, exceptionally snowy season, Dominic and Clarice are welcomed by warm, hospitable neighbors and enchanted by the cozy, inviting vicarage. Everything seems almost too perfect. Dominic’s only concern is how he will be received by the congregation, who hold the Reverend Wynter in such high regard. But as Clarice soon discovers, she and Dominic have much more dire matters to worry about. It turns out that the Reverend Wynter isn’t on holiday at all—and that something very sinister has transpired.

As a blizzard leaves Cottisham treacherously snowbound and the isolated village swirls with unsavory secrets, Dominic and Clarice suddenly find themselves in deadly danger.

A Christmas Secret Details

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Author : Anne Perry

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From Reader Review A Christmas Secret for online ebook

Dorothy says

This is the book selected for reading by my library mystery book group. It's probably not one I would have chosen on my own, although I am a fan of Anne Perry. I have long loved and followed the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt and the William Monk series. This is a story of another couple in the tradition of those two series. This time it is a vicar, Dominic Corde, familiar from the first Charlotte and Thomas book, "The Cater Street Hangman," and his wife, Clarice. This couple shares many of the same characteristics of those earlier couples and so they seem very familiar, although this is the first one of their tales I've read.

This is a very short novel or a very long short story. I finished it in one sitting on a Saturday afternoon. I wore a sweater the whole time I was reading, as the descriptions of the winter landscape made me cold.

Dominic is chosen by the bishop to take over for an old vicar who has gone on an end-of-the-year vacation, just at Christmas-time. It is a welcome assignment for Dominic and Clarice, but then Clarice discovers that the old vicar did not really go on vacation. There is a mystery to be solved and the couple determines to find the answer.

This is a minor entry in the Perry repertoire but it carries all the hallmarks - the attention to details, the appreciation of homely virtues and the everyday chores that were necessary to the running of a house, and the compassionate humanity of the characters. She excels at describing settings and interpersonal relationships.

Josephine (Jo) says

Although I had not realised that this was the fourth book in a series it was a fine stand alone read.

The story is set in 1890 in the village of Cottisham. The Reverend Wynter notifies the bishop that he is going on holiday for Christmas and the bishop sends Rev. Dominic Corde and his wife Clarice to stand in. Dominic and Clarice have been in a London parish where Dominic is curate to the Rev. Spindlewood. They are not very happy in the London Parish and are both delighted to arrive in the lovely village to spend the festive season at the cosy old vicarage.

Initially the villagers are a little wary of Dominic and Clarice, the Rev. Wynter has been their vicar for many years, but they start to come around and things seem to be getting off to a good start.

Clarice is very much in love with Dominic and although she is not what some would consider as good 'vicar's wife material' she is doing her best to live up to the position. She does however like to investigate things and it is not long before she starts to wonder why the Rev. Wynter, (a keen artist) has not taken his drawing equipment and even more surprising his much used personal Bible with him on his holiday.

There are some shocks ahead for the couple as the secrets of the village start to come to the surface and some very old 'sins' are brought back to haunt some of the local folk.

A very nice read and a good cosy mystery.

Karen says

I love these at Christmas time. This year I did not get around to it with several Christmas books to get done. I got it for the

"Wacky Winter Seasonal Challenge" and finally got it finished on the last day.

Nice little mysteries that even a teenager could read since it is clean. She uses Characters in these from sideling people in her larger novels, but you do not have to read them for it. The background might be helpful for many. But I just go with the story as a new start and with new players.

Addison Public Library says

Dominic Corde is extremely happy when he's asked to be a substitute vicar in the village of Cottisham while the Reverend Wynter is away on a Christmas holiday. Dominic and his wife, Clarice, have not been happy in his current assignment in a city under the supervision of a fault-finding and overbearing superior. Once they arrive, however, they find an uneasy feeling about the village. On top of that, it seems suspicious that no one knows where Reverend Wynter actually went for his vacation, or if in fact he ever left the village at all . . .

KD 12-17

Check out this book today!

Hannah says

A very enjoyable short mystery set at Christmastime in Victorian England. It took me just over an hour to read and had several great twists to the mystery. Recommended.

Jamie says

This is not my typical type of book and it's clear to me why. I found the story and characters to be quite simple and uninspired. The characters were bland with no depth, and the characters just somehow "magically" figured out things that seemed so incredibly far-fetched. It was not enjoyable to me to read something so banal. The story was shallow the characters barely defined and the story unrealistic with characters coming up with answers seemingly out of thin air with nothing to back them up. No thanks.

Jess Swann says

Un Anne Perry comme je les aime. Déjà il met en scène Dominic Corde, l'ex beau frère de Charlotte que j'ai toujours apprécié. Par ailleurs, l'intrigue est à la hauteur et l'ambiance est bien rendue et le suspense soigneusement distillé. Au contraire des autres contes que j'ai lu, il y a moins de passages philosopho-lyrique ce qui me convient bien aussi. Bon certes le personnage de Clarice fait penser à celui de Charlotte (d'ailleurs le couple en lui-même fait penser aux Pitt, version avant promotion de Thomas) mais justement, ça me fait plaisir de retrouver cette ambiance. L'histoire est bien menée et nous avons un VRAI crime et une VRAIE résolution

Les plus : une bonne histoire, bien amenée et intéressante. Des personnages aussi plaisants qu'intéressants.

Les moins : une construction à la Pitt qui pour le coup ne se démarque pas des romans habituels

En bref : un très bon conte de Noël, moins "gentillet" que ses prédécesseurs.

Ma note : 8/10

PennsyLady (Bev) says

MLBC Dec selection

Randy Tramp says

Set in the late 1800's, Dominic Corde is thrilled to fill the position of substitute vicar.

That excitement changes to concern, when things don't add up, creating a mystery around the previous vicar.

I love the "feel" of these Christmas books by Anne. They're a quick read and are quite entertaining.

As a reader, it felt like a real train ride, as I hopped on board. The story stayed mysterious all the way to the incredible ending. What an ending.

Carol says

yes, I know it's not as satisfying as one of Perry's full-length, non-holiday-set novels, but I loved A Christmas Secret for its sense of place and its narrator. I read it in 2 days and didn't want it to end. For me, that's the mark of a great book.

June Ahern says

Always Glad to Be Warm - maybe that's why I read so many of this author's Christmas novellas this summer. I enjoy Anne Perry's mysteries, some more so than others. This one is good. I certainly did feel a cold every time a character ventured out and at times, imagined how drafty the house was. A nice short read as are all the author's Christmas novellas. A youngish very handsome preacher leaves the crowded London with his new wife to take over the duties of a preacher who left quickly for a holiday. Seems the quick retreat is questionable. What is going on in the quiet little country village? One thing is, it's bloody cold! Other than that, an easy okay mystery.

Erica T says

Despite having a Christmas name and being set during the weeks before Christmas I wouldn't really call this a Christmas story. It was more of a cozy mystery. It was a fun, quick read that was very clean. I didn't really have it all figured out, but honestly I didn't think the author provided the clues to allow you to figure it out which was fine with me. This was my first book by Anne Perry, and I will likely read more by her.

Heather says

It was quite plain the Perry was trying to put out a short Christmas mystery for her publisher. It didn't deliver like I'd hoped. The story was very rushed at the end. Although there were plenty of red herrings to distract the reader.

Jaline says

Dominic Corde and his wife Clarice are related to Charlotte and Thomas Pitt through marriage. Both Dominic and Clarice came from privileged families, but when Dominic felt called to become a priest, Clarice happily gave him his full support.

The Bishop requests that Dominic attend a parish in a small town outside of London while the regular vicar is away on three week's holidays. Dominic and Clarice jump at the chance to take on the full responsibility of a parish during this time frame rather than assist the vicar in a London parish as Dominic had been doing.

They fall in love with the village and its people, and their wish is that they can somehow stay there or be sent to a similar parish nearby. Their wish comes true, but not the way they had wanted or expected. When the previous vicar is found dead in the cellar, Clarice identifies signs that indicate the vicar did not die of heart failure, which is what the doctor insisted on.

Dominic and Clarice realize they have to proceed with any inquiries with utmost caution for two reasons: (1) if Dominic is to retain this parish, he dares not put a foot wrong, and (2) if there is a killer at large and they know too much, Dominic and Clarice will be in danger, too.

Meantime, the holiday season is upon them. Dominic needs a theme for his sermon that will move the hearts of the villagers. Clarice wants to ally herself with the village in helping to prepare for feasting and celebration.

But who can they trust?

I enjoyed the lovely message of this novel, and many of the events warmed my heart. The ending was perfect and my heart soared as Dominic gave his brief Christmas sermon of inspiration and hope.

Correen says

Perry features lesser characters from earlier books in her Christmas series. As is the case with the in this series, it is not a complicated book but well done. The characters are a minister and a family member from a Pitt novel. The minister established himself in the earlier novel as highly empathetic. His wife was a daring family, willing to defy family expectations and marry a man of lesser social stature -- she married beneath her station. Perry appears to have used her parson to preach the Christmas sermon that she would have wanted to deliver.
