



From the Charred Remains

Susanna Calkins

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It's 1666 and the Great Fire has just decimated an already plague-ridden London. Lady's maid Lucy Campion, along with pretty much everyone else left standing, is doing her part to help the city clean up and recover. But their efforts come to a standstill when a couple of local boys stumble across a dead body that should have been burned up in the fire but miraculously remained intact—the body of a man who died not from the plague or the fire, but from the knife plunged into his chest.

Searching for a purpose now that there's no lady in the magistrate's household for her to wait on, Lucy has apprenticed herself to a printmaker. But she can't help but use her free time to help the local constable, and she quickly finds herself embroiled in the murder investigation. It will take all of her wits and charm, not to mention a strong stomach and a will of steel, if Lucy hopes to make it through alive herself, in *From the Charred Remains* by Susanna Calkins.

From the Charred Remains Details

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Author : Susanna Calkins

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From Reader Review From the Charred Remains for online ebook

Jean says

Hurray for Susanna Calkins! Her second book presented a mystery that Agatha Christie would be envious of. It was not just one mystery but several! And add a little romance and you have a 5 star book! Loved it!

LK says

An excellent mystery set in London just following the Great Fire, and second featuring servant, sleuth, and budding true crime writer Lucy Campion. Lovers of historical mysteries will find Campion fine company for rainy afternoons.

Lorene says

I picked up this galley at the Macmillan booth at PLA. I really liked the first book and was excited to read the second one a bit early. You don't have to read the first book to like the second one, but I would recommend it for continuity of the characters and the setting. From the Charred Remains had even more going on than Murder at Rosamund's Gate. A lot of characters and their family members brought a lot of action to the story. I love Lucy Campion! She reminds me of Nancy Drew. I highly recommend both books.

Louise Morris says

Quite a good mystery story. Had trouble putting it down.

Abra says

Okay... I may read another if Susanna Calkins gets another published, but the painful anachronisms in the second of her Restoration England series are becoming more numerous. The feminist former chambermaid servant is now informally apprenticed to a full on publishing empire-in-a-box -- the author acknowledges that she combined several trades (and guilds) into one, 'to make the story more logical' or something like that. Thus, printers a) make their own ink; b) write their own copy; c) make their own paper; AND set up the frames and press the inked pages. Oh, and d) hawk the wares by singing the 'penny sheets'. I mean, that last part may have been part of a printer's devil's work.

Other howlers: use of "guy" as a casual reference to a person, only sixty years after the gunpowder plot. "Not so much," as a disclaimer. Drinking tea in England in a middle class (gentry, but not noble -- a magistrate's) house when it had only been introduced to Charles II's Portuguese queen the year before...

The mystery is so-so. There are two separate strands, or maybe even two and a half, which confused matters.

Another reviewer said the secondary characters were annoying -- Darius and Rhonda, the Earl of Cumberland and Jack and Tilly. I agree. And the thing of a young woman being spoiled for choice between two stalwart swains is tired.

Alicia Riley says

I'm disappointed with this book. What should of been fun historical fiction mystery set after the Great Fire in 1666 about servant name Lucy Campion helping to solve a murder instead turn about to be boring. I'm lucky to even get up to near page 160 before I gave up on this book.

Debbie says

Second in the Lucy Campion historical fiction series, set just after the Great London Fire of 1666. The story starts with the fire clean-up and with that, the challenges and opportunities many had to switch identities because of the lack of paperwork, burned, lost or just not available. Talk about identity theft - it was rampant!

Lucy is a strong, young woman, never fearful of taking on anyone, and although I think that type of character would have been very rare in that rough time period, I enjoyed the storyline.

Aimee says

Lucy Campion stumbles upon a grisly scene in the aftermath of the Great London Fire of 1666. A corpse has been discovered amid the rubble, strangely preserved, with a knife sticking out of its chest. When a bag of miscellaneous items turns up next to the corpse, Lucy's natural curiosity kicks in, and she can't resist using her connections and wit to assist Constable Duncan in solving this mystery. I liked this one well enough to go back and read the first in the series, and I look forward to more to come.

Sharmaine Ceballos says

Sorry I goofed up! Didn't mean to do a one star!

Laura Lee says

Second in a series. Liked as much as the first, tho I think the first should be read first to get full enjoyment of this book, as is the case of many series. Lucy is apprentice to a printer and gets involved in a murder committed before the Great London Fire. Has lots of twists and turns. There is still that romance between Lucy and Adam, but Adam better make up his mind! There is someone else interested in Lucy, too. She's smart and feisty and I enjoyed the book very much.

Karen says

Looking forward to reading this second installment of a feisty educated woman!

Georgia Lengyel says

This is a "can't put it down" book. Very good story line and also plausible.

Amy says

The second book in the series was almost as good as the first... I really enjoyed following Lucy on her adventures. I found her new career interest fascinating. And of course the historical notes both in the book and in the authors notes at the end were extremely interesting. I like how this authors books seem to have more than one mystery even though you really think it is only one mystery at the beginning of the book. It's fun to watch the Play evolve. I'm looking forward to reading the next book in the series.

Vinnie Hansen says

I don't read many historical mysteries. The strictures placed on a female protagonist of bygone eras can be irritating. However, *From the Charred Remains* gripped me with its opening scene where we find heroine Lucy Campion raking through the debris of the Great Fire of London. Author Susana Calkins, who has a doctorate in British history, writes with fascinating detail of the time. I particularly liked the gossip, such as the fire started because 1666 was "the devil's year."

Perhaps sensing readers like myself, the author notes that she releases Lucy "from some of the constraints that would likely have bound her" Calkins makes clear, though, that in the chaos following the plague and Great Fire, more freedom and social mobility were possible than during surrounding periods, so Lucy's character falls within the realm of possibility. She convinced me!

Nominated for the Bruce Alexander Historical Mystery Award, *From the Charred Remains* is an easy book to recommend. The plot became a little convoluted for my taste, but overall the book was a charming read.

Angie says

Errrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrggggggggggggggggh. As someone who loves historical mysteries, and can usually find SOMETHING nice to say about the media I consume, this was just.... Bland? Boring? The core mystery wouldn't be half bad if the prose had just been SLIGHTLY more interesting/descriptive/varying. Things happened too simply or too quickly. There wasn't enough characterization or build-up to evoke ANY sort of emotional response. The best I can say is that it was a relatively quick read.

