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Erika Rosenthal has always been secretive with her friend and neighbor, Detective Inspector Gemma James, about her past, except for one telling detail: She and her long-dead husband, David, came to London as refugees from Nazi Germany. But now the elderly woman needs Gemma's help. A unique piece of jewelry stolen from her years ago has mysteriously turned up at a prestigious London auction house. Erika believes the theft may be tied to her husband's death, which had always been assumed a suicide.

Gemma has a tough challenge. She must navigate the shadowy and secretive world of London's monied society to discover the jewelry's connection to David's murderer. However, the cold case needs to be put back on the books and possibly into the hands of her partner, Duncan Kincaid. When a second, present-day murder kicks the investigation into high gear, Gemma becomes more determined to exact justice for Erika—in a case that will have lasting repercussions.

Where Memories Lie Details

Date : Published (first published January 1st 2008)

ISBN :

Author : Deborah Crombie

Format : Kindle Edition 380 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review Where Memories Lie for online ebook

CatBookMom says

I may like this best of the entire series. It moves along briskly, with all the present-day action happening in just a couple of days. The back story goes back many years, and could have been stretched out to explain a great deal more, but there's plenty of information to drive the present-day mystery.

Bob says

Duncan Kincaid and Gemma James are caught up in a case involving Gemma's friend Erika Rosenthal and a broche made by her father that has long been lost but has turned up as an offering at an auction house. The tale advances on two fronts, Old history covering Erika's escape from Nazi Germany and her husband's murder in London and subsequent investigation and the present day investigation into the broche and several subsequent murders that appear to be connected. Another good author that I will be reading more of.

Cindy says

Read awhile ago and forgot to rate.

Patricia says

A diamond brooch, an old friend and murder, sends Gemma Jones searching through records that are dusty with age. Gemma's old friend, Erika Rosenthal, contacts her and asks for her help. This is the first time that Erika has ever approached Gemma wanting help and Gemma is determined not to let her down.

Erika escaped Nazi Germany along with her husband David and settled in England. Gemma's father was a famed jeweler and remained in Germany but helped Erika and David escape. Her father gave Erika a brooch when she left Germany. Although Erika had kept the brooch hidden, the brooch was taken from her during the flight from the Nazis.

The brooch has now turned up at an auction house. Gemma goes to the auction house and questions Kristen Cahill, a beautiful young woman. It is not long after that Kristen is killed by a hit and run driver.

Although Gemma James and Detective Superintendent Duncan Kincaid live together with their two children, they no longer work together. Gemma begs Duncan to ask for the Cahill case and he does take on the case.

Soon there is another hit and run and one more person connected to the brooch is dead. Kincaid and his partner have a number of suspects but no proof. Meanwhile Gemma is trying to come up with answers and keep watch on her mother who had collapsed and is now hospitalized with a serious illness.

Gemma learns that Erika's husband David was murdered years ago. When Gemma tried to get in touch with

the detective assigned to David's murder case, she found that he was dead. His death was listed as a suicide and the case was closed.

Where Memories Lie is an intriguing tale of events of the past that have led to violence in the present. I would recommend this book very highly. The ending is one that was quite a surprise.

AngryGreyCat says

Where Memories Lie is book 12 in the Duncan Kincaid and Gemma James series, which I have been reading in order for a while now. This is a much more Gemma-centric book, Gemma is called to her friend Erika's house to resolve a WW II related case. Erika is Jewish and escaped Germany with her husband. Her father, a famous jeweler, was left behind and perished in the camps. Gemma's investigation into a piece of jewelry that has surfaced from Erika's past, sets off a chain of present day crimes connected to past ones. Gemma and Duncan get to work together on the interconnecting cases. As well as dealing with the mystery and investigating the handling of past crimes, Gemma deals with a personal crisis in her family. An on-point depiction of the push-pull that many working women face.

This was a good read in this series, which is best read in order as the characters grow and their relationship changes over the course of the series. The ending left me anxious to read the next one and see what happens.

E says

While Crombie usually sits near the top of my top-10 list of serious detective fiction authors, and while any Crombie book is always better than the average-bear mystery novel, I had trouble engaging with this one, in spite of the multiple-plot, multiple-time-frame nature of it. There is very little of Duncan in this one, and while Gemma is beset with family troubles, there doesn't seem to be much depth to them. Perhaps Crombie got too involved with her research on WWII Jewish experience in London - demonstrated as an epigraph into every chapter - and not involved enough in giving it more than lip service in the progression of characters and story. Her attempts to imitate British diction and dialogue also seemed to suffer in this one as well - as though throwing in the occasional use of "snog," "posh," and "brolly," would give characters that UK-feel. Maybe she's getting tired of the Duncan-James series?

Beckiezra says

A fine story but nothing to ooh or ahh about. I've only read one other in this series (Leave the Grave Green) and things have changed a lot but it didn't seem as bad as some 12th books in a series. The mystery was okay but the personal things seemed to matter more. It wasn't a phone in mystery though as you sometimes get later in a series when really the author is just looking to tell stories about the characters and the mystery is barely there.

I just don't particularly care for Gemma; she's not a bad character, I just don't care about her. I didn't like her butting in on Kincaid and Cullen's case even if she was the reason they had it. I think I felt the same way in the other book, that I wanted more focus on Kincaid but the author seemed to prefer Gemma. I wonder if

focuses switch book to book and if they'd gotten a different one for book club I'd feel differently.

There were some editing issues that annoyed me, extra beens and an 'll out of place. One I can forgive but there were at least three glaring ones and possibly more I'm forgetting at the moment.

Sarah says

I may have said it before, but this series just gets better and better! I love the way Deborah Crombie weaves recurrent characters into her mysteries. In this 12th novel, a friend of Gemma's, Erika Rosenthal, a 90 year old Jewish lady who fled Berlin just before World War II, reveals some interesting secrets about her past.

Crombie is a remarkably good writer and, although she is an American writing Scotland Yard mysteries, I am very impressed with her British English! I only found one word in this book that seemed a bit strange to me: yard (as in garden). Off to enjoy the next one in the series!

Second read (audiobook this time: Definitely deserves the 5 stars. I think this is probably my favourite of the series.

Dorothy says

Some of my friends love this author but somehow, there is something missing that I can't identify. I think it is perhaps that I grew up in the UK, and there are some nuances that are hard to identify but are missing when American authors set their mysteries in England. Go figure. I'll still read them though. I did like the way in which this story involves the Second World War, and in particular the Holocaust, and ties it in with the art world and a famous Auction House that she calls 'Harrowby's', ..and yes we recognise that she is talking about Southeby's.

The plot is intricate...and I think I agree with another Goodreads member that the way in which Gemma moves into the investigation that is actually on the patch of her live-in partner, Kincaid, is rather irritating. True, it involves her elderly Jewish friend who escaped the Nazis in 1938, but she is also supposed to be supporting her mother who has just been diagnosed with Leukemia, fights with her father and leaves her 'stepson' to look after her much younger child....so I find it hard to accept her behaviour. That said, it is a good plot bringing together Nazi atrocities, upper class snobbishness, and dirty dealings at a prestigious Auction house so there is enough there to keep the reader engaged.

Ann Mcelligott says

No. 12 in Crombie's series of police procedural featuring Detective Inspector Gemma James and Detective Superintendent Duncan Kincaid. Gemma has developed a friendship with Dr. Erika Rosenthal, a retired academic who escaped Nazi Germany with her philosophy husband, David, during World War II. When a diamond brooch, stolen fifty years before, turns up in the catalog of a London auction house, Erika turns to Gemma for help. The brooch had been made by her father in 1938 and given to Erika when she left Germany. When a clerk from the auction house is killed in a suspicious hit-and-run accident, the murder draws Gemma's partner, Duncan Kincaid, into the case. The story evolves through flashbacks of 1952 London when Inspector Gavin Hoxley investigates the murder of Erika Rosenthal's husband that alternate

with the progress of the contemporary case. At the same time, Gemma finds that her mother is seriously ill. She finds herself torn in a mix of emotions--guilt over neglecting her parents in the complexity of work and personal demands, an on-going tension between Gemma and her father, and her continued reluctance to entertain Duncan's desire to marry her. From an Amazon review: The book "works on many levels--as an intriguing murder mystery, an exploration of an appalling chapter in European history, and a deeply affecting tale of complex personal relationships. This is a poignant and engrossing installment in a deservedly long-running and popular series."

I have read all twelve books in the series and find the character development in Gemma and Duncan and their relationship to be believable and fascinating. I await the next installation of the series. From an Amazon review: "The progression of the love story between the two cops and their interactions with and friends and family is compelling; the secondary characters, good and bad, are always exceptionally well drawn." I concur whole-heartedly.

Joe says

This is the 12th adventure of Duncan Kincaid, a Scotland Yard detective and Gemma James, a police sergeant in London. The two were initially work partners, but as the series progressed a romance blossomed, so they separated professionally and moved in together domestically – all the while solving murders. The author's books follow a formula with multiple narrative threads loosely connecting characters, sub-plots (usually a crime from the distant past that ties to the current investigation), the current investigation itself and the latest Kincaid/James domestic/romance issue.

In the first few books of the series this template worked very well, but as of late and again with this addition, this series has floundered terribly. There is simply nothing here in *Where Memories Lie* to grab the reader's attention. The plot centers on the reappearance of a family heirloom that has been "missing" since just before World War II. The first 100 pages of the book introduce the reader to the characters involved in the current day and historical plot-lines. During the second hundred pages the reader goes through it all again, as Duncan and Gemma begin investigating and are told the exact same story.

This repetition would make literary sense if the plot and characters were complicated or complex, but they're not. The "foundation" laid down in the 100 page opening is "patience testing", simply rehashing it becomes mind-numbing, and cannot disguise the fact that the story and mystery are minimal. The culprit is obvious once introduced – and I don't pride myself on solving the mysteries I read. Even poor Duncan and Gemma come across as mere shadows of themselves.

As stated, the first few four or five Duncan/Gemma books are very good, but unfortunately now – and for several of the previous books – this series has simply run out of gas. Pass on this one.

Diane Challenor says

I just love this series!

Nancy Ellis says

I love the characters in this series and how the author is developing them. This one focuses on Gemma's friend Erika, who escaped to London from Nazi Germany with her husband. She has learned that a priceless brooch which was stolen from her at that time is now being put up for auction, and she asks Gemma to investigate. The theft led to the death of her husband at that time, and now its reappearance apparently has led to two more deaths. Gemma, Duncan, and their teams all pitch in to solve the mysteries, both past and present. Great story!

Pat says

I would be hard put to choose a favorite in this series, however, I particularly liked this book. This thoughtfully plotted mystery visits a painful past between England at war and the plight of German Jews seeking asylum. That back story told through the voice of Gemma's friend, Ericka Rosenthal, a favorite recurring character and wise nonagenarian, forms a clever basis for the modern crime mystery. This is a common but never hackneyed device in Crombe's hands as she weaves several stories together using the past to inform the present.

Gemma is seen as the central character here, struggling to meet the demands of a serious job and duty to her family. It's fascinating to watch as she finally engages her issues with priorities and resolves them. Following the arc of Gemma/Duncan and company is satisfying in and of itself. It has served as a strong enticement to pick up the next installment in their hectic lives.

Matt Schiariti says

Twelve books into the series and these Kinkaid/James novels show absolutely no sign of getting old. It can be normal and sometimes expected for a long running series to seem a bit stale or 'samey' after a dozen novels but such isn't the case with Debora Crombie's fantastic detective novels. She seems to have a bottomless well of entertaining material to draw upon and write about. From long dead poets to the whiskey business to firefighting, life on boats...Crombie just seems to make the central theme of every novel just as entertaining and more importantly, just as FRESH as the next...

Memories focuses primarily on Erika Rosenthal, a character that we've been introduced before. Luckily enough, her back story is very much fleshed out in this novel. Erika has always been a rock for Gemma and yet she really doesn't seem to know much about her friend's past at all. Why does she never speak of her younger days? Why are there no pictures of her in her house? The fact that Erika is a German Jew who fled to England during World War II plays no small part in Erika's secretive nature in regards to her past.

Erika's father was a jewelry maker of some note as a child. When one of his most noteworthy pieces shows

up in an auction catalog it turns Erika's world on its end. Erika thought she'd never see it again and it brings the whole of her past back into focus, something she's tried hard to forget.

Gemma is asked by Erika to look into where the auction house came upon her father's master work. Little does Gemma realize how her inquiries will dredge up the past of one of her closest friends and put into danger the lives of anybody who comes into contact with it. Much like Erika, the piece has a history and the two quickly come to light.

Just another great 'can't-stop-turning-the-pages' mystery that Crombie has delivered time and time again. This series has a full head of steam and doesn't show a single sign of becoming boring or old hat. If you haven't read a Kincaid/James novel you should really go back to the beginning and get caught up. You'll be happy you did.
