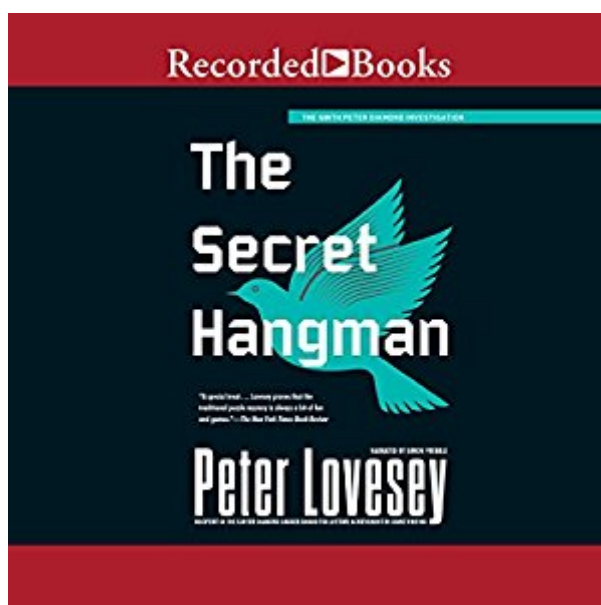


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The Secret Hangman



Synopsis

Delia Williamson, a waitress and mother of two young girls, is reported missing. She is soon found in a public park, hanging from the crossbar of a children's swing set. The postmortem reveals that she has been murdered. Her current partner, her ex-husband, and a traveling salesman who frequented her restaurant are all suspects. Before Detective Superintendent Peter Diamond can solve the mystery, more will die. But even as he pursues a killer, he finds himself pursued by a secret admirer.

Book Information

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#127 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime

Customer Reviews

Gruff, sharp and very much in charge, Bath Detective Superintendent Peter Diamond, still mourning the murder of his wife, Stephie, contends with a secret admirer as well as a murderer in this ninth outing. The story opens with an anonymous letter from a reasonable and cultured sounding woman who Diamond decides to ignore. When a woman is found hanging in a public park his solicitous underlings offer to spare him the trauma (he discovered his wife's body in a park), but Diamond deals with that in summary fashion. The victim was murdered then strung up to look like a suicide. When her husband is found hanging from a bridge a few days later Diamond suspects murder though his superiors prefer a neat murder-suicide solution. Meanwhile, Diamond has met a woman, a charming lady who, it will surprise no one, is his spurned secret admirer. Diamond feels used when Paloma gets around to admitting this, but he gets over it. Meanwhile, he has found a pattern in the hanging case - two very similar cases, with nothing to connect them but the method. While as

witty and sharp as ever, this is not the strongest in the Diamond series. There are a couple plot holes big enough to drive a truck through and the tension with his boss, Georgina, while clever, sometimes seems unnecessary. Still, Diamond is always entertaining and Lovesey remains a cut above most.

Bath Detective Superintendent Peter Diamond still grieves the death of his wife even as he feels some guilt over her being murdered. He currently pretends to not be excited over a secret admirer sending him notes, but inside he is thrilled and albeit a shade more guilt. On the job, Diamond investigates the public park hanging death murder of waitress Delia Williamson, a mother of two young girls. He quickly finds three prime suspects: her former spouse, her current significant other, and a traveling salesman witnessed as having dined with her just before she died. When they find the ex Danny dead hanging in a cave, Diamond believes two murders occurred while his boss Assistant Chief Constable Georgina Dallymore insists it was a murder-suicide. As he digs deeper to prove his theory, Diamond uncovers a shocker of similar double murders by a serial killer on the loose. THE SECRET HANGMAN is an exciting Diamond English police procedural. The serial killer case is cleverly drawn so that Diamond and Dallymore can argue over the deaths of Delia and Danny; whereas all these Ds mean delightful to fans as the crusty widower soon seeks a diabolical brilliant serial killer who hides his or her work in the guise of murder-suicide. This is a wonderful entry in a strong crime series. Harriet Klausner

Like a good potato chip or peanut, I can't stop at just one. I've always liked books about how the police work, loved Ed McBain, and Lovesey, with his Inspector Diamond, writes one of the best series of such books. And I thought this episode was one of the best of the best. I like Lovesey especially when he writes about the adventures of Peter Diamond.

I gave this story 5 stars, but then again, I give almost all of Peter Lovsey's stories 5 stars because he is so good. Someone is hanging people in Bath and displaying them in very public places. The who and the why is a mystery that kept me going. Surprise ending to me. Hope you give it a try.

Peter Diamond reminds me of several shadowy fictional British detectives doing the rounds. Collin Dexter's Inspector Morse is one that springs to mind. Just didn't really get a feel for the guy or why I should think him special or even interesting. I found the style a bit sterile, the dialogue often unconvincing (too many "guv"s), and the humor mostly unfunny. I twigged early (earlier than

Diamond) on a couple of crucial clues. However, all this aside, there were action scenes where I literally couldn't put the book down and the background on the old town of Bath was well done. Possible SPOILER follows: Now, I have to ask: A woman called Dove in Spanish? As if this alone wouldn't give someone pause...

I am loving this Peter Diamond series---his character is fabulously real and the history of Bath, England, is captivating. I have learned a lot about the area and about the people as well as being entertained--am nearly done with the series and will miss it and Peter!

Peter Lovesey is one of the last few standing. The master of the classic, purist British mystery, the dying art. His books are beautifully written, his characters rich and developed, and his plots are to die for. Peppered with fair clues, convoluted but logical, and his twists deeply satisfying and exciting. This novel is no exception. Such a joy...

The Secret Hangman, a Peter Lovesey detective novel, is good, not great. The plot is fine; it's the character of detective Peter Diamond that didn't impress me. Like so many other homicide detectives on the scene, he's a flawed person: out of shape and facing middle age. Perhaps my "oh, yeah, here's another one" is based on the fact that I'm already so familiar with Kurt Wallander, Harry Hole and Harry Bosch. My main criticism about the characterization of a curmudgeon Diamond is the description of his being so critical of the other members on his team. Hole and Bosch pride themselves on working alone, so maybe those comparisons aren't apples to apples. So my comparison is really with the character of Henning Mankell's Wallander, who does appreciate the work of his associates. It's better when the reader likes the hero, and my problem with the character of Peter Diamond is that I didn't particularly like this protagonist. This was the first novel I've read in the series by Peter Lovesey. But I'm not eager to run out and read another one.

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