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*The Medieval Murderers* , Simon Beaufort (Contributor) , Philip Gooden (Contributor) , Susanna Gregory (Contributor) , Michael Jecks (Contributor) , Bernard Knight (Contributor) , Ian Morson (Contributor)

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It was July, 1100. Jerusalem lies ransacked. Amidst the chaos, an English knight is entrusted with a valuable religious relic: a fragment of the True Cross, allegedly stained with the blood of Christ. The relic is said to be cursed: anyone who touches it will meet an untimely and gruesome end. Several decades later, the Cross turns up in the possession of a dealer, robbed and murdered en route to Glastonbury. Investigating the death, Bernard Knight's protagonist, Crowner John learns of its dark history. In Oxford in 1269, the discovery of a decapitated monk leads Ian Morson's academic sleuth William Falconer to uncover a link to the relic. In 1323, in Exeter, Michael Jecks' Sir Baldwin has reason to suspect its involvement in at least five violent deaths. Thirty years later, several suspicious deaths occur in Cambridge - and, once again, the tainted relic has a crucial part to play. Finally, it's despatched to London, where Philip Gooden's Nick Revill will determine its ultimate fate.

## The Tainted Relic: An Historical Mystery Details

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Author : The Medieval Murderers , Simon Beaufort (Contributor) , Philip Gooden (Contributor) , Susanna Gregory (Contributor) , Michael Jecks (Contributor) , Bernard Knight (Contributor) , Ian Morson (Contributor)

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## **From Reader Review The Tainted Relic: An Historical Mystery for online ebook**

### **Kelly says**

An interesting short story book. Authors of several medieval murder mystery series wove their characters into a series of short stories relating to an object moving through time. The tainted relic, a piece of the "true" cross, soaked with the blood of Christ that has been cursed.

I am not familiar with any of these series, so I am unable to compare the stories to the longer stories. I found the stories entertaining, but not entralling. A nice read, perfect for me at the moment while I fight allergies & jet lag. I picked up more of the series and will continue to read them. I may pick up a few of the serials eventually, but must admit to rather disliking one. One of the best things about anthologies is introducing me to new authors for the good & the bad. I found authors here I liked and one I rather disliked.

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### **Christopher Taylor says**

This is an interesting experiment in a sort of shared world alternate history in which six mystery writers combine to create a single tale across Medieval England. The story is of a relic which is cursed by its protector as his family is slain: allegedly a piece of the cross of Jesus Christ, stained by His blood. Any who touch the relic will die upon relinquishing control of the item.

Each author tells another tale through a few hundred years of history, a short story about the relic as it passes through hands, featuring the author's main characters. Several are somewhat forgettable; but to be fair, a short story does not give time to develop characters nor adequate time to truly tell a compelling story in most cases. Still, Michael Jecks and Phillip Gooden stand out with interesting stories and characters, and Bernard Knight does a decent job.

The real drawback is that the book feels unsatisfying, with a strangely sudden ending to the tale, without a real feeling of completion or resolving the events and the legend.

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### **Labijose says**

Confieso que a mitad del libro estuve a punto de dejarlo, por encontrarlo falso de interés. Pero entonces vinieron los tres últimos capítulos, que ocupan el 50 % final, y entonces ya decidí acabarlo, porque esos últimos capítulos son, sin duda, los mejores, y los que te hacen engancharte al conjunto de la obra.

Las "peripecias" de un supuesto trozo de la Santa Cruz, con su mancha de sangre y todo, arrancan en Jerusalén en 1100, y a lo largo de varios capítulos escritos por famosos autores especializados en novela medieval culminan en Londres en el año 2005. La reliquia posee una maldición, y todo aquel que la toca y al final acaba deshaciéndose de ella termina falleciendo, normalmente asesinado.

El mayor interés radica en leer las diferentes aproximaciones al tema de cada autor, según su estilo de

escritura. Por lo demás, no ha sido una novela excesivamente gratificante. Eso sí, como expertos que son, la ambientación de la época medieval está muy bien conseguida.

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### **Sophie Narey (Bookreview- aholic) says**

Published: 01/05/2005

Author: The Medieval Murderers

Recommended for: fans of murder mysteries.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and couldn't put it down! I love all of the authors in this book. It was brilliantly well written and I would definitely recommend it to anyone who likes murder mystery novels! The authors in this one are: Michael Jecks, Susanna Gregory, Ian Morson, Philip Gooden, Simon Beaufort and Bernard Knight, these are all incredible authors separately so put them together all in the same book and you get a really incredible novel!

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### **Christina says**

I listened to this book on audio, but it was not able to hold my attention. The Tainted Relic is a collection of 5 related short stories centered around a relic. The relic, a splinter of the one true cross, was cursed at the beginning of the story during a crusade in Jerusalem in 1100AD. Whoever touches the relic will die once they relinquish the relic from their possession/guardianship. I really enjoyed and was able to follow the first story, but the subsequent stories were confusing to me. It seemed that characters kept dying before I was able to know who they were, or their significance to the story. I also felt that the supporting characters and investigators were 2 dimensional.

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### **Brenda Mengeling says**

This is a collection of five mysteries, each of which centers on a supposed relic of the true cross stained with Christ's blood that also happens to be cursed. The stories take place over time in the five Medieval settings the five authors of the tales set their main mysteries. This premise is intriguing, but I found the execution less enjoyable and somewhat contrived. I am a big fan of Susanna Gregory's Matthew Bartholomew mysteries, which take place in 14th century Cambridge, and she is one of the authors here. Although I enjoyed some of the other stories, I don't feel the need to rush out and start reading the main series of those authors.

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### **Katrina says**

So disappointed by this book. It sounded so good when I read about the series but as I read it, it was just... a mess. Having this many authors does not do the historical fiction genre any favors. They may be greats with their own books, but combining them together created just a mess. There were five acts in this book and I could tell where each author had written. The story did not flow, and was extremely loosely connected by a

relic. In addition to the mess of writing, I cannot stand it when authors (and it seems to happen more with British authors) use words that are frankly, just pretentious. If you're using a word that has a more common meaning, use that common meaning! Don't try to sound uppity and snooty just because you can.

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### **Dianne says**

A good collaboration between five medieval mystery writers, Susanna Gregory, Michael Jecks, Bernard Knight, Philip Gooden and Ian Morson. Apart from the prologue and epilogue which set and complete the theme, each section consists of a novella which traces the events at different times as the cursed relic, a piece of the Cross stained with Christ's blood passes from place to place.

I enjoyed Michael Jecks section the most, but this may be because I have read most of his books and it was a pleasure to come across Baldwin de Furnshill and Simon Puttock in Exeter again. Historically Susanna Gregories was the most interesting as I had not known of fierce division between the Fransiscans and the Benedictines over the question of the sanctity of Christ's blood, and the implications it could have for the celebration of Mass. This formed the basis of her contribution, although in the event simple greed was the motive. Philip Gooden has a light touch and a lively modern style. I must try to read more of his Nick Revill series set in Elizabethan and Jacobean London.

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### **Jean says**

I thought this was a great read, captivating the reader, and introducing new characters and mysteries along the way. The Tainted Relic is historical fiction written by a team of writers, each taking a chapter detailing the events surrounding the tainted relic. This is the first book in this series written by this group of authors. I am pleasantly surprised and intrigued and intend to read each of these authors own individual books.

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### **John Barclay says**

I had a lot of fun reading this book. It's really more like a collection of linked short stories, but that is it's charm. Each story is a different part of this history of the relic in the title and each section has it's own mystery. I would say that some of the mysteries are better than others, and one strains credibility, but that's fine, it's all good reading.

The Medieval part, that is the historical information and ideas are well done, good period feel and some nice specific details that really give a sense of veracity to the work.

I can't wait for book 2!

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### **Jane Irish Nelson says**

When Jerusalem is "saved" by the Crusaders in 1100, a long-protected piece of the true cross is cursed to kill anyone who ever touches it down through the ages. Naturally a variety of deaths occur in close proximity to

this relic — are they natural, accidents, or murders? That is what the various investigators must determine. I actually found this book rather dark and depressing, and slogged through the second half. Not sure if it was a fault in the book itself or my mood at the time (I was not feeling well).

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### **Vicki says**

Five well known writers use their well-known medieval crime fighting characters to solve mystery and murder in 5 separate, but interlinked stories is an interesting concept. On one level it works, but it can also be a bit confusing as the 'Acts' are about 100 pages long and the number of peripheral characters can be quite confusing. Even more so if you are not fully acquainted with the heroes of each piece, as I was not. Of course this was not made any easier by the rather disjointed way that I read the first two Acts, but it was well worth sticking with it.

I will be reading more by the Medieval Murderers.

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### **Vickie says**

I listened to this at work and that might have been part of my not digging it as much as I could have. It took me a little while to get into the story and then to understand everything that was going on. I got that the relic was supposedly cursed and death followed in its wake. My issue was not following who was dying and it seemed like there were a lot of victims with each story. They died before I had a chance to know them or the people solving the crimes or the people doing the killing or even why the killing was occurring, except part of it was to get the relic back from whoever had it.

The only time I could truly understand the story was when it moved up to William Shakespeare's time. The story made me laugh and care about the characters.

All that said, I will be getting more of this series of books, especially KING ARTHUR'S BONES, the reason I started looking for this team of authors. I have a collection of Arthurian legend, saw this book in a review, put it on the WWBL and then found out there's a series of books by this team who call themselves Medieval Murderers. Very cool premise and still intriguing. I know not all books are for all people and I will likely get this as a handheld book to read and pay closer attention...and read it someplace without distractions..like work can be....silly work....

Three need fewer distractions beans....

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### **Steve says**

A series of novelettes (or Acts) that follow the path of a piece of the Holy Cross which is cursed over a period of approximately 1000 years. Decent mysteries. I especially liked Act 4 by Susanna Gregory, because it rang true to what medieval clerics would have really cared about, i.e. the intellectual rivalry between the Dominicans and Franciscans, and were relics real and effective, why or why not? While this may sound esoteric and irrelevant to modern readers, it mattered in the Middle Ages and that controversy gives the story an authentic flavor. I was disappointed in Act 5, because it didn't pick up the thread of Act 4, although the resolution of the curse was ingenious. (The Epilogue sort of spoiled this resolution, however.)

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### **Eugenea Pollock says**

I began this short story collection as the Christmas holidays approached, and I knew my time for reading would be limited and sporadic. However, it was an interesting cluster of tales that were united by an ancient stained splinter of wood that was enhanced by a legendary curse of death. Superstition? Self-fulfilling prophecy? Uncanny coincidence? You decide!

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### **Patty says**

I was both attracted and repelled by this book, excited about a new series, dismayed to see it was written by a "committee" of multiple authors though each chapter is a short novella which mostly stands on its own. Not a bad introduction to six other mystery series since each chapter features the author's main character from their own series of books. The concept of tracing a particular story element through the centuries was a good premise but I just could not get interested in the individual story lines. This would probably appeal more to fans of the other series who were more familiar with the characters.

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### **Bettie? says**

Bettie's Books

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### **Victor says**

I just finished reading "The Tainted Relic" by a conglomerate of writers known as the Medieval Murderers. This is in essence, five short novellas and a prologue detailing events pertained by cursed relic, a splinter of the true cross of stained with the blood of Christ kept safe by a religious order in Jerusalem. When the Crusader army invaded Jerusalem, they killed every Muslim and Jew, including the family of the guardian, which, in a fit of rage, cursed the item to cause death to everyone that relinquishes it to another.

You can read the story as a murder mystery, or as a horror story. Its stories are a true representation of the superstitious nature of people for religious relics evident throughout the Middle Ages. Several episodes are very interesting and are very consistent; others are flat and hard to understand. In a way, this book is a good sample to see if you might like to read from some of these authors. I found Acts II and V very enjoyable and witty, although they were by far, the shortest.

The main strength of the stories as a whole is the way in which they present the events as common occurrences or unavoidable accidents; however, the medieval and esoteric character ingrained in each passage can defy our logic into becoming believers of the power of the curse. A short epilogue gives a nice ironic twist to the circle of death abounding in the book.

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**Don says**

Read this book to get an idea of how the writers were. found a couple to add to my reading list. Some I liked more than others but overall pretty good book

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**Barb says**

This novel is written by a series of authors tracing a holy relic over time. A curse is placed on the relic when its keeper, a Muslim, is killed by a knight during the first crusade. Thereafter, anyone who touches the relic is doomed to die. The relic is taken on a journey, not only passed on from person to person throughout history but passed from author to author. Each story has an interesting take on religious relics, greed and sanctity, the church and those who serve it. Though each new period in history is written by a different author, their styles are similar and the story moves seamlessly.

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