



Murder in the Locked Library

Ellery Adams

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Welcome to Storyton Hall, Virginia, where book lovers travel from near and far to enjoy the singular comforts of the Agatha Christie Tea Room, where they can discuss the merits of their favorite authors no matter how deadly the topic . . .

With her twins, Fitzgerald and Hemingway, back in school, Jane Steward can finally focus on her work again—managing Storyton Hall, and breaking ground on the resort’s latest attraction: a luxurious, relaxing spa named in honor of Walt Whitman. But when the earth is dug up to start laying the spa’s foundation, something else comes to the surface—a collection of unusual bones and the ragged remnants of a very old book. The attendees of the Rare Book Conference are eager to assist Jane with this unexpected historical mystery—until a visitor meets an untimely end in the Henry James Library. As the questions—and suspects—start stacking up, Jane will have to uncover a killer before more unhappy endings ensue . . .

“Combines clever clues, a smart and courageous heroine and an interesting setting in a whodunit that will inspire readers to make further visits to Storyton Hall.”

—*Richmond Times-Dispatch* on *Murder in the Paperback Parlor*

Murder in the Locked Library Details

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Author : Ellery Adams

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From Reader Review *Murder in the Locked Library* for online ebook

Melanie says

Murder in the Locked Library was an enjoyable read with an intriguing mystery and a delightful setting.

Jane Steward, manager of Storyton Hall, is looking forward to breaking ground on the resort's newest addition, a luxurious spa. Her spirits are dampened however when upon breaking ground for the spa, a skeleton is discovered along with the remains of an old book. When attendees of the Rare Book Conference being hosted at Storyton Hall learn about the book, they're more than willing to lend their expertise to discover its origins. After one of the attendees who helped with the book is murdered in the library, Jane is left with more questions than answers. As suspects begin piling up, Jane will need to work fast to discover who the culprit is before the killer strikes again.

When Jane isn't spending her time managing Storyton Hall, she's spending it trying to wrangle her twins Fitz and Hem. Jane has a great relationship with her boys and is completely devoted to them. I liked that the author showed her getting frustrated with them rather than going the "everything is perfect" route a lot of authors choose for characters with children. Storyton Hall sits on land that has been in Jane's family for generations and Jane along with her family, still live on the property. Not only is this to help with managing the resort, but Storyton Hall also houses a secret library that Jane's family has been charged with protecting. As the current Guardian, Jane is tasked with the protection and maintenance of a library housing some of the world's rarest books.

In addition to Jane, there are a number of characters who frequently appear in the book. Jane has a large group of friends she is in a book club with who are referred to as the Cover Girls. As the Guardian, Jane has a group called the Fins who help her protect the library. The Fins all work on the property in one capacity or another, so they're always around. Because *Murder in the Locked Library* is the first book in this series I have read, I don't know a lot about the backstory of the Fins or even how Jane's family came to be the protectors of the library. It isn't explained very well in this book, so I'm guessing you need to have read the other books in order to understand how their group works.

Throughout the book there are a few plot lines that ultimately tie together. The plot that most interested me was discovering the identity of the skeleton and finding out more about the book that was discovered with it. I felt the mystery surrounding this plot point was the best one and it held my attention the most. One element in the book that didn't work for me was how much leeway the sheriff gave Jane when it came to being involved in the various crimes. I don't know if it would have made more sense if I'd read the other books, but I couldn't buy into how much Jane was allowed to do. The way the book ends, one plot line is left open and I'm interested to see where that goes in the next book.

Overall while I enjoyed *Murder in the Locked Library*, I wish I had read the previous books in the series before reading this book as I felt I was missing a lot of backstory. I will definitely be reading the first three books in the future and would recommend the series to those who enjoy cozies with a focus on books.

I received an advance copy of this book from Netgalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Sue Ross says

If you start this book don't plan on getting anything done until the end. Ellery Adams writes in a way that will have your heart racing your hands sweating and you holding your breath.. If you like murder, intrigue, deception. Kidnappings. And a little romance thrown in. Then this is the series for you.

JoAn says

Murder in the Locked Library by Ellery Adams is the fourth book in the Book Retreat series and was worth waiting for (even if it did seem like forever).

I would love to spend a few days at Storyton Hall, Virginia with Jane, her family and the Fins. I could probably spend a month there and never get bored. Jane is one strong and dedicated woman who doesn't hesitate to act when her loved ones are in peril. The recent murder has Jane and the Fins looking at many of the attendees of the Rare Book Conference; but there is also an additional cold case that also must be resolved. The swiftly paced plot kept me turning the pages with so many twists and turns, two murders, a kidnapping and a missing Templar. All of these events led me along on one of the best adventures that I have had this year. Oh, and the ending, has me hanging by a thread for the next book. All of the characters have now been established; but there always seems to be more to learn about each one. I enjoy seeing the layers being peeled back as these new insights are revealed.

I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book from Kensington via NetGalley. All of the above opinions are my own.

Carla Johnson-Hicks says

Murder in the Locked Library by Ellery Adams is the 4th book in the Book Retreat Mystery series. I have not read any and when I began to read this one, I realized that it is important to read the others in the series first. I was able to figure out what was going on but I have so many questions.

The protagonist, Jane is the guardian of a Secret Book Library. She is assisted in protecting this library by a group of people called Fins. (at this point I am not sure who they are). She is a single mother with twins. She runs a resort called Storyton Hall that is a retreat for book lovers. They hold teas, balls, conferences and give book lovers the opportunity of a lifetime. All the rooms, including the group rooms are literary themes. The mystery in this book involves a skeleton found during the digging for a new spa, a mystery book buried with the skeleton, the death of a rich book collector as well as repairing books for others, a hit and run and more.

The characters seem to be well known and developed, but as I have not read the other books, again, I feel I have missed a lot. The plot of this story had me turning pages to see how it would end and it was well-paced. Although there were many guests attending the conference, there were only a few suspects that were investigated. There were a lot of clues, although many I missed until the end of the story. There were also many twists and turns. I had no idea who the real culprit was. The reveal was climatic and leaves the reader with a lingering question that I hope will be solved in the next book. This was a well written cozy with a very

different theme from others I have read. I will go back and read the first three books in the series and I recommend that you start and read these books in order. I am sure I would have given it a higher rating if I had done so. The publisher generously provided me with a copy of this book via Netgalley.

Karen says

Murder in the Locked Library by Ellery Adams is a late April release but one I could not wait to get my hands on and review. I love this series. The Book Retreat series centers around a young mother, widow and guardian of a super secret book library. Her ancestral home has been turned into the most amazing retreat for booklovers. They hold teas, balls, conferences and give book lovers the opportunity of a lifetime. Right down to the ability to stay in literary themed rooms and libraries. This is one of the most exciting of the series I read. Main character Jane is a literary superhero of sorts raising the most adorable twin boys, living on the estate and working to carry on with day to day life, while protecting the most important books of all time. She is not alone, having trained guards called Fins that work with her and she is up against book thieves professional and amateur. I found myself holding my breath several times in this book. Great mysteries with in mysteries, cozy for sure and a healthy dose of adventure. This is a spectacular read and one not to be missed.

Peggy R says

I love reading a book written by Ellery Adams. I find her to be a terrific storyteller. No matter what book or series I am reading, Ms. Adams has a way of writing a plot, crafting characters and creating a setting that just draws me into the story. This book was no exception. I was happy to see this series return with Kensington as the publisher. I love visiting Storyton Hall and wish it were a real place where I could book a vacation. Once again, Jane and the Fin's are called upon to solve mystery that has occurred at one of the events held at Storyton. The plot of this story had me turning pages to see how it would end. The characters are well developed and I love to revisit them to see their growth. I thought the mystery was well-crafted in typical Ellery Adams fashion. Although there were many guests attending the event, there were really only a few suspects that were viable candidates to be the culprit. Ms. Adams weaves plenty of clues and some really well done twists and turns that I didn't not expect. The reveal was climatic and leaves the reader with a lingering question that I hope will be solved in the next installment.

I voluntarily read an advanced reader copy of this book which was provided to me by the publisher, Kensington, through Netgalley.

Kristina says

Murder in the Locked Library by Ellery Adams is the fourth tale in A Book Retreat Mystery series. Jane Steward is excited that the construction is beginning on the Walt Whitman Spa. The groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for the next evening. After the digging begins, it looks like the festivities will have to be postponed. Bones were uncovered by the excavator along with a padlocked box and a farthing. Inside the box is the remains of a badly deteriorated book. It so happens that the Robert Harley Rare Book Society is attending a conference at the Storyton Hall and they are happy to help discern the book's title. Bart Baylor identifies the book and then expires in the Henry James library. Jane, with the aid of her trusted employees

delves into the lives of the members of the Rare Book Society to pinpoint the culprit before the conference ends. How does the skeleton relate to Bart's death? Jane is also worried about Edwin Alcott. There has been limited communication and the recent postcards people have been receiving seem unusually chatty (for Edwin). As the investigation into Bart's murder heats up, her concerns about Edwin will have to take a backseat. Time is of the essence. They need to work quickly or something very precious could be lost.

I love the concept for A Book Retreat Mystery series. As a booklover, I would love to visit (let's face it—live at) Storyton Hall. If you are new to the series, I suggest starting with *Murder in the Mystery Suite*. There is more to Storyton Hall than a beautiful book themed inn. Jane is the latest Guardian who safeguards a hidden library filled with priceless (and rare) books and manuscripts. Jane's role and that of her staff (the Fins) is explained in the first book. *Murder in the Locked Library* is well-written, but it does have a slower pace. I did not mind the pace because the story drew me in from the very beginning. Storyton Hall with its beautiful book themed rooms were brought to life for me courtesy of the author's descriptions. The characters are established and engaging. There is a cast of regular characters that include Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Butterworth, Hem and Fitz (Jane's twin boys), and the Cover Girls (Jane's friends which make up the female book club). I like the boys are portrayed as mischievous and curious. Jane loves them dearly, but she does get frustrated with them at times (which is realistic). I like how the three storylines come together in the end. The mystery was compelling and complex. I do wish, though, that it had been harder to identify the guilty party. Two little pieces of information gave it away to me (this is the only weak part of the book). The why did not become apparent until much later in the book. I am glad that the sheriff works with Jane and her group on the investigation. They have resources that are not available to the local police. At the end of *Murder in the Locked Library*, we get a glimpse of what will be happening in the next A Book Retreat Mystery (which I am eager to read). My rating for *Murder in the Locked Library* is 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Juli says

Jane Steward is the owner of Storyton Hall, and guardian of its secrets. The Hall is a retreat for the bookish crowd...professors, book collectors, experts and those who love to read. To make the experience even more sublime for guests, construction is starting on a spa. Guests will be pampered and spoiled. Plans come to a halt suddenly, however, when old bones are found by the construction crew excavating the new building site. And with the old bones is a small box containing a very damaged old book. The book is so damaged it's impossible to tell what it once was. Luckily a group of rare book experts are coming to Storyton Hall for a conference. Jane plans to show them the ruined book and ask if they can ascertain what title it was and why someone might have been buried on the grounds with it. When a guest at the conference drops dead just after revealing facts about the book, Jane realizes there might be more to the story than just a century old murder and a damaged book.

This is the first book in the Book Retreat Mystery series that I have read. *Murder in the Locked Library* is the 4th book in the series. It wasn't necessary to have read the earlier books to enjoy the story, but I would have understood the characters and the back story of Storyton Hall a bit better if I had read the earlier books first. The background story of the Hall is so creative and intriguing. I have definitely moved the series up on my tbr list to start reading ASAP. This book has a bit of the Indiana Jones/Librarians sort of feel to it (cozy mystery style, of course).

I liked Jane Steward as a main character. Her twin sons add some shennigans and the other supporting characters are quirky and interesting in a way befitting the background theme. I think when I go back and

start reading from the start of the series I will understand her and the other characters a bit better. I like the idea of Jane being guardian of the Hall and its secret book collection. It's a very unique premise for a cozy series. I liked the front cover art for this book. I could definitely sink into one of those chairs and relax with a book!

The story unfolded at a good pace with lots of suspects and interesting clues. The story definitely kept my interest the entire time! I am definitely backtracking to read the entire series, and am anxiously waiting new books in the series! I'm really never disappointed by any book by Ellery Adams. Her mystery novels are always great! Adams also writes the Books by the Bay and the Charmed Pie Shoppe series, plus The Secret Book & Scone Society.

****I voluntarily read an advance readers copy of this book from Kensington via NetGalley. All opinions expressed are entirely my own.****

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

As a fan of this remarkable series, I chose to read this book as a 'new' series since a change in publishing houses occurred. I think that was a wise choice. The Author gifted me a copy but did not ask for a review. It was a true gift. This review is of my choosing.

All my favorite characters were back. However, they were re-introduced to a new readership. Well done. Twins, Hemingway and Fitzgerald were there immediately to greet me to this very interesting tale of murder, old and new. The reliable 'Cover Girls' which have a double meaning, were present to always cover their girl, Jane Steward were on the scene to aid in any way needed. Then there are the 'Fins.' Now, I'm going to let you, the readers that are 'new' to the series find out about them. Do take the time to find 'Book Retreat Mysteries 1-3,' and you won't be sorry.

Jane Steward, the resort manager, is a dedicated Mother, Granddaughter, and protector of Storyton Hall. Jane has other skills as well, as you will realize reading this book. Storyton Hall is a resort geared entirely to the customer who is an avid reader. Each room has a novel inspired theme. However, Jane realizes that her customers may also want to partake of other luxuries such as Spa's etc. So, She decides to create a spa area. However, when you move the earth, the earth can sometimes move you... curious, yet? You should be. What is unearthed will have long reaching effects on convention goers, the staff, and the family of Storyton Hall. Not to mention...well, I'm not going to mention. You need to read this novel.

My favorite part of this book, is the fact that I see the Author, Ellery Adams, taking us readers and story plots to new horizons. We are entering a mysterious world of secrets, daring adventures, and more...I see many more possibilities coming in future books, and for that? I'm so excited.

Give this book and the entire series a read and you will be hooked on Storyton Hall as am I.

Lisa Morin says

When the team of workers breaking ground for the new spa dig up a shovel full of bones, Hem & Fitz are the

first to notice.

The discovery of the bones leads to an investigation, which involves an old book and family rivalry.

Murder in the Locked Library by Ellery Adams will take you on an exciting adventure that will keep you looking over your shoulder!

's. Adams writes a clear, concise story, while creating a vivid picture in the reader's mind, providing the opportunity to escape into the story.

Reading a book by Ellery Adams is always a great experience.

I voluntarily read and reviewed an ARC of this book provided by the author.

Fred says

Murder In The Locked Library is the fourth book in the A Book Retreat Mystery series.

I love this series and have been a fan of Ellery Adams writing for a number of years. I am very happy that this series has found a new publisher and hope that there will be many more to come. I would say that this is best one in this series so far. Truly, a series for book lovers, what with all the different libraries at Storyton Hall and the very knowledgeable staff who are eager to serve their guests.

The one the thing that Jane Stewart has felt that Storyton Hall has needed is about to come to fruition, that being a spa, which will be named the Walt Whitman Spa. Heavy equipment is in place and excavation is about to begin and Jane's twin sons, Hem and Fitz couldn't be happier. They have front row seats to watch the earth mover jockey into position, lower its claw begin the excavation work. After just a few buckets or dirt are removed, Fitz and Hem get the equipment operators attention to stop digging as they have spotted a skull and some bones fall from the last load. Sheriff Evans shuts down the site and is able to get an anthropologist, Dr. Celia Wallace, to come and collect the remains of the unknown victim. Also found with the bones was a box containing a mysterious book that appeared to be a cookbook. From the book and a couple coins that were also found, Wallace feels that the body had been buried since the 1800's.

The Robert Harley Rare Book Society is having their annual meeting at Storyton Hall, as the bones are being discovered. Jane enlists the help of Bart Baylor, leader of the society, to find more of the history of the book and hoping that it might provide information about the person whose bones had been found. When Baylor returns his finding, he is able to relay that it is indeed a cookbook whose recipes had tainted foods used that caused many deaths. He also reports that there had been a fire at the publisher and all the books had burned, but the author had received 5 copies. Baylor proceeds to put on a pair of latex gloves to tell more of the history of the book, he experiences severe breathing difficulties. Thinking that he was having a reaction to the gloves they administer an epi-pen, but to no avail.

Jane and her staff, Sinclair, Sterling, and Lachman must sort through what information they have learned who was buried at Storyton Hall and who wanted Baylor dead. When there is another death they are sure that these recent deaths are indeed related to the bones that had been dug up.

Ellery Adams is a wonderful storyteller and this is a well-plotted story with a believable cast of well-developed characters. I would love to live in the village of Storyton and be able to visit with the residents all the time.

I can't wait for the next book in this exciting series.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

Storyton Hall is expanding and building a wonderful spa named in honor of Walt Whitman. Construction begins by digging the hole for the foundation. Jane Steward's twins Fitzgerald and Hemingway are very excited to watch the big excavation. Imagine their surprise when a skull, bones and a very old book are uncovered. Storyton Hall just happens to be hosting the Rare Book Conference and those attending love a mystery as much as Jane so they offer up their assistance to find out as much as they can about the book. The police are calling in an anthropologist to help with the bones. Storyton Hall also has its own experts to investigate all the findings. But when one of the Hall's guests suddenly dies in the Henry James Library just as he starts to share information about the book the police and staff of Storyton Hall realize they now have two murders to solve and they are probably connected.

I love this series so much. I am also thrilled that this series has found a new home at Kensington Books. These characters stories were far from over after the first three installments.

All my favorite characters are back. Jane Steward is the manager of Storyton Hall. It is a huge job and a privilege to be its caretaker, its guardian. She has twin sons, Hemi and Fitz, who are as curious as can be. Jane has her book club, the "Cover Girls" and they always have her back. The staff of the hall have a variety of jobs and some are quite surprising. If you are new to the series you will have to discover what I mean when you read the story.

The setting is magnificent, Ellery Adams has created an amazing place that all book lovers would enjoy. Secret stairways, secret passages, secret rooms and most important of all a secret library. If I could I would pack my bags and move to Storyton Hall and probably never leave.

The author has crafted an amazing story with more than one mystery. An old murder, a new murder, an old book, all entangled together in the most delightful way. She keeps the pace brisk and throws in some dynamic twists. A cozy mystery with the perfect amount of action and suspense. She draws the reader in and holds us captive until the final page.

With the publisher change, the book has been written to give enough background for new readers to jump right in but this series is so fantastic I recommend you read the series in order. If you do decide to start with this one I guarantee you are going to want to read the first three.

This is definitely one of my favorite cozy series!

Valerie says

Another enjoyable story about Storyton Hall. This had me hooked from the very first page. Jane and her sons are a delight and it's wonderful to read about people who enjoy books as much as I do. Having two mysteries to clear up, one from a long time ago & one much more recent leaves Jane and the Fins very busy investigating & getting to know their guest. The ending was unexpected and leaves you breathlessly waiting

for the next book to save Edwin. #MurderInTheLockedLibrary #NetGalley

Annarella says

A very good and solid mystery full of twists and very entertaining. As I didn't read the previous instalments I had some problems in placing the different roles and groups but no problems in understanding the relationship amongst the different characters.

It's well written, there's an interesting cast of characters and it keeps you hooked since the beginning. Strongly recommended.

Many thanks to Netgalley and Kensington Books

Book says

Once again Ellery Adams expands the cozy genre by weaving strong thriller threads into the fabric of her latest Book Retreat Mystery, *Murder in the Locked Library*.

Jane Steward has been named the Guardian of the secret library* of rare books hidden within Storyton Hall, the resort that Jane manages. Her twin sons, Fitz and Hem, spot the bones of a body while watching a construction crew prepare the site for a new addition to the resort. In addition to the bones, a “time-ravaged” book is found in a box by the bones. An anthropologist is called to help identify the gender, and possibly the identity, of the bones.

In the meantime, Storyton Hall is preparing for The Rare Books Convention and Jane suggests that maybe one of the experts attending can help identify the book which may provide clues to whose bones they found. The sheriff agrees, and Jane solicits the help of the Robert Harley Rare Book Society who meet with Jane privately to examine the book. The next day, Bart Baylor, president of the Robert Harley Rare Book Society, comes to Jane and requests a private meeting so they go to the first-floor library. Bart explains that the book is quite possibly a book entitled *The Devil’s Recipes* because the recipes were thought to be “hazardous to the public’s health.” He also adds that the ink on the pages is not washed away but instead hidden and can be restored by a simple chemical process. At that point Bart experiences an allergic reaction and his Epi-pen is administered. Unfortunately, Bart dies within minutes.

Now there are bones to identify, an active death to investigate and well devised red herrings to distract. Ms. Adams has crafted a multi-layered story that combines elements of a cozy mystery with those of a thriller. At the core is the richly drawn community that make cozies feel so comfortable while trying to solve the mystery. Throughout this adventure Ms. Adams pulls in interesting thriller threads like: the story behind the bones and book; or the backgrounds of the men who serve in various functions at Storyton Hall while insuring the security of the secret library; or the covert sect that Edwin, the Templar and man she loves, represents.

Her characters are convincing. Dialogue is realistic. The pacing is steady but easily pushes the reader through the story. Bottom line: Ms. Adams conceives intriguing plotlines, writes engaging stories and literally takes the reader on a suspense filled adventure.

*“A treasure trove of rare, invaluable, controversial, and potentially dangerous books.... collected since man

