



# Angels in the Gloom

*Anne Perry*

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## **Angels in the Gloom** Anne Perry

With this latest entry in a bestselling series that evokes all the passion and heroism of history's most heartbreaking conflict—the war that was meant to end all wars—Anne Perry adds new luster to her worldwide reputation.

Angels in the Gloom is an intense saga of love, hate, obsession, and murder that features an honorable English family—brothers Joseph and Matthew Reavley and their sisters, Judith and Hannah.

In March 1916, Joseph, a chaplain at the front, and Judith, an ambulance driver, are fighting not only the Germans but the bitter cold and the appalling casualties at Ypres. Scarcely less at risk, Matthew, an officer in England's Secret Intelligence Service, fights the war covertly from London. Only Hannah, living with her children in the family home in tranquil Cambridgeshire, seems safe.

Appearances, however, are deceiving. By the time Joseph returns home to Cambridgeshire, rumors of spies and traitors are rampant. And when the savagely brutalized body of a weapons scientist is discovered in a village byway, the fear that haunts the battlefields settles over the town—along with the shadow of the obsessed ideologue who murdered the Reavleys' parents on the eve of the war. Once again, this icy, anonymous powerbroker, the Peacemaker, is plotting to kill.

Perry's kaleidoscopic new novel illuminates an entire world, from the hell of the trenches to the London nightclub where a beautiful Irish spy plies her trade; from the sequestered laboratory where a weapon that can end the war is being perfected to the matchless glory of the English countryside in spring. Steeped in history and radiant with truth, Angels in the Gloom is a masterpiece that warms the heart even as it chills the blood.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **Angels in the Gloom Details**

Date : Published October 31st 2006 by Ballantine Books (first published 2005)

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Author : Anne Perry

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# From Reader Review Angels in the Gloom for online ebook

## Carol says

I didn't read the first 2 books but this one was GREAT! I really think I learned some of the personal affects war has on people reading this book. Plus she had some very detailed scenes of battle and ships sinking and lives being lost. Plus there was a mystery to solve and traitors to uncover.

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## Bev says

Angels in the Gloom (2005) by Anne Perry is third novel in her WWI series which follows the Reavely family. On the day WWI began, Joseph, Matthew, and Hannah's parents were killed in an automobile accident. At least that's official version. Joseph and Matthew know that a man known only as the Peacemaker is really responsible and even as they go to work for their country--each in their own way, Joseph as an army chaplain and Matthew in intelligence, they vow to discover the Peacemaker's identity and bring him to justice.

This third book finds Joseph sent home from the front after suffering an injury while rescuing a soldier caught in the no-man's-land between trenches. Having helped the police on two other occasions when murders occurred, he is asked to help once again when a scientist working at a local top-secret establishment is found murdered. Are enemy agents at work in the small village of St. Giles or is the motive a more prosaic matter of jealousy or a woman scorned? Matthew is also hard at work on a mystery of his own--trying to track down the German spies who are leaking details of Britain's war strategies.

### Observations While Reading:

Hannah--sister of Joseph--is incredibly annoying. Every time she's in a scene we get to witness her angst over whether or not she's doing/saying/feeling the right thing...whether it's reacting to people who are hurting (her brother, women in the community who have lost loved ones in the war, etc.) or whether she's being selfish wanting Joseph to stay at home after being wounded or if she's going all maudlin over the fact that life has changed (because war) and why (please insert as much whine as you can on that word) can't life just be like it used to be?

Too much introspection and self-doubt. I mean, yeah, I understand that watching the young men you grew up with die (Joseph on the front lines) OR reading the lists of the missing and killed (those back home) would make you question a lot things you took for granted...but this is supposed to be a historical mystery not high drama and conscience-searching.

It is taking For-Ev-ER to get to anything even slightly resembling "gumshoe work" or "mystery" (referred to in blurb on back of book). Constant references to the Peacemaker who killed Joseph Reavley's parents--but no actual trying to track down said Peacemaker. No actual detecting. There are rumors that a murder is gonna take place somewhere in this book....but not sure when. Made it to the 100 page mark (that first third of the book really drags--it felt much longer)...finally the mystery is going to start! Let's see if things pick up.

Actually, no. The "gumshoe work" really takes a back seat to everything else here. Don't get me wrong--I'm not opposed to dramatic historical fiction. BUT. Don't plaster your book with blurbs advertising what a

suspenseful thriller this is with mystery and detection all over the place when that's really not the focus of the story at all. Solving the mystery of who killed the scientist is almost an afterthought. More attention is given to the difficulty Joseph faces when he realizes who the culprit is than is given to following the processes of detection that led him to that conclusion. And...by the third book in the series you'd think that Matthew and Joseph would have made some sort of substantial progress on hunting down the Peacemaker.

On the plus side, Perry does know human relationships and has a way of writing about them that can be quite appealing. I just wish she didn't feel the need to go at the inner workings so hard and heavy OR if she does feel that need, then I'd like to see her do a straight fiction novel. I will say that I do like the representations of the Reavley brothers...and I might even like Hannah more if she could break out of her introspection. This is a complicated family with a lot going on which makes them very interesting. ★★★ which would have been more if the mystery elements had been stronger.

First posted on my blog My Reader's Bloc. Please request permission before reposting. Thanks.

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### **CakesandCat says**

Dans ma jeunesse, j'aimais beaucoup les histoires policières de Charlotte et Thomas Pitt. Surtout parce qu'elles se déroulaient dans le cadre de l'Angleterre victorienne.

Je suis tombée sur ce livre par hasard dans un vide grenier. Je n'ai donc pas lu les tomes précédents. Pour autant, cela n'a pas gêné ma lecture et j'ai rapidement compris les enjeux.

J'ai aimé:

- le cadre historique très développé (peut-être que pour certains, l'histoire peut sembler "lente"). L'histoire se passe pendant la première guerre mondiale et j'ai trouvé passionnant de suivre à la fois les femmes restées dans les villages, les retours des combattants sur le front et les personnes ayant rejoint les services secrets. je ne suis habituellement pas très "policier" mais le meurtre n'est finalement pas tant que ça au centre des préoccupations
- l'histoire humaine: la jalousie, la trahison, le pardon, l'ambition, la peur, l'incompréhension, la peine...
- d'un point de vue émotionnel les relations entre mari/femme, frère/soeur, espions....
- le mystère qui émane du Pacificateur
- la trame de l'histoire qui nous conduit d'émotion en suspense
- le style de l'auteur qui nous plonge dans les petits détails du quotidien et les pensées de chacun avec beaucoup de justesse.

Je n'ai pas aimé:

rien en particulier! Je suis restée sur ma faim pour certains développements, mais je pense qu'il faudra que je lise les autres tomes pour satisfaire ma curiosité!

Bref, une lecture bien agréable qui m'a donné envie de lire les autres tomes même si ce n'est pas le meilleur livre que j'ai lu de ma vie.

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### **Davney Stahley says**

The third in her new series about WWI, highly recommended by my mother. Unfortunately, I'm tired of Anne Perry. While her stories are good and full of intrigue, I find myself telling the characters to "get over it"

(the murder of their parents). It's really not their fault that Anne continues to use the same phrases over and over: "Joseph again felt the deep loss of Arlys and John," and "Arlys and John's murder could still not be left behind, the loss was too great." (Not her writing mine, but still...so I'll finish it 'cause I'm almost done, but I'm tired of Anne Perry.

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## **Cathy says**

4-1/2 stars. Heard this on CD. This is the third book in the World War I series by Anne Perry, although the first for me. I thoroughly enjoyed the story; the reader did a very good job. I've read quite a few of Ms. Perry's Thomas and Charlotte Pitt books and a few of her William Monk books. Her books are always good. As usual, the characters were interesting and well written, and the story well developed. I also learned quite a bit about WWI from this book. I will definitely pick up the other books in the series.

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## **Roman Clodia says**

In this third of her quintet of WWI novels set in each year of the war, (and which *must* be read in order), Perry temporarily leaves the trenches of Flanders behind for the home front in 1916.

Joseph is wounded and is recuperating back in Cambridge, allowing Perry to explore the experiences of Hannah, the married Reavley sister, who has been a shadowy figure up until now. A self-described 'wife and mother', married to a Naval commander, Hannah doesn't want the freedoms that the younger Judith enjoys and sees no need for women to take a more active role in society, to agitate for the vote and so on - an interesting perspective that must have been prevalent at the time but which novelists tend to shun for the feisty, feminist figure. It's a mark of Perry's thoughtfulness in this series that she gives the conservative space in her story.

We also get an insight into Matthew's emotional life as he pursues a relationship with an Irish Nationalist - 1916, of course, being the year of the Easter Rising which happens in the background. To add to the nod to international politics, Trotsky has a walk-on part as a London journalist/writer looking forward to the 1917 revolutions to follow.

While the overarching arc of the Peacemaker's manipulations continues in this book, the main theme seems to be about betrayal in all its forms: of one's country, most obviously, but also in personal relationships, both married and other, as well as questions of betrayal of oneself.

There are moments where the high purpose and moral purity of the characters, especially Joseph can get a little wearing (and it's good to see Joseph lose his temper a bit, though obviously he beats himself up about it later!) but there's an exciting finale set at sea which offers some action and reminds us that Perry can be a very versatile writer.

Overall, this is a wonderfully melancholy and bleak series. I need a break before moving on to book 4 set in 1917, but will certainly be back with the Reavley family soon.

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## **Marilaine says**

Started this series because I am obsessed with reading about England during WW1 and WW2. I believe this is a 5 book series. Thought the first one good enough to read the second but after the third it is wearing a little thin. The characters are not as vibrant as they appeared in book one. However, I will persevere.

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## **A.L. Sowards says**

After the second book in the series, I was kind of indifferent about reading this one, but since I already had it from the library, I dove in. I'm glad I did. This one was my favorite thus far in the series. It included interesting internal struggles for the characters, such as Joseph (a chaplain) trying to decide if he wanted to go back to the trenches after he was wounded. While recovering he saw how much good he could do in his own village and how much his family at home needed him. But he also felt a duty toward the men in the trenches. The book also included a mystery and a spy-vs-spy plot. The part about the Battle of Jutland was the highlight of the book for me—hard to put down.

I loved this quote from when the war made one of the characters question his beliefs: (view spoiler)

Rounding up a bit to 5 stars.

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## **Stephanie Pieck says**

The first volumes in this excellent follow brothers Matthew and Joseph as they work respectively as an intelligence officer and a military chaplain during World War I. They are also trying to find and stop a man they call the Peacemaker who was responsible for the death of their parents. A younger sister, Judith, is serving in France as a volunteer ambulance driver.

In "Angels in the Gloom," Joseph returns to his home in Cambridgeshire to recover from serious wounds. The book finally allows us a chance to meet the elder sister of the family. Hannah, who never wanted anything other than to be a mother and wife, tries to pick up the role her deceased mother held in the village as confidante, caregiver, and pillar of the community. She also struggles to find a way to understand the men she loves who are so irrevocably changed by war. Her husband Archie is captain of a naval destroyer, and her older son is anxious to follow in his father's footsteps. But as Joseph slowly recovers, Hannah realizes there is a barrier between her and them that the men feel may be too painful to break.

Joseph also has to reckon with a village vicar too paralyzed by fear and doubt to help anyone. Add to that murder and intrigue, and once again, the plot deftly lays bare the inner workings of human psychology. And once again, Joseph realizes that the people he thought he knew so intimately are strangers. His lack of knowledge may turn out to be too costly, not only for him and his family, but also for England and its grim march through the protracted hell of a war that everyone thought would be over by Christmas of 1914.

Anne Perry's sensitive yet unflinching portrayal of humanity at its greatest and basest shines from almost every page. In beautiful language rich with detail, she paints rural England in summer, with alternately harrowing and bleak chapters aboard a naval destroyer or in the trenches of France. It is every author's dream to create a series in which each volume is a dynamic, strong, and compelling step forward in a long tale, even as it is also a masterpiece in its own right. In "Angels in the Gloom," Perry has achieved these goals admirably. Once again, I only paused long enough to walk my dog before embarking on the next installment.

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## Kris says

Audible version -- really like the narrator's voice. This is the third book I've listened to with him. He's a skilled voice actor.

Update: My favorite so far in this series. Author made it difficult to distinguish "who done it" until it was revealed. Even then, I had doubts.

This book made WWI for those who were left at home, very real and told of the emotional difficulties they faced. Apparently, women were not told of the horrors of war in order to spare them. However, this showed their real anguish in being shut out and the isolation they felt because of it.

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## Johnny says

*Angels in the Gloom* puts both Reavley brothers, co-protagonists of Anne Perry's World War One series of mysteries/thrillers, in harm's way. *Angels in the Gloom* is an emotional story. It features betrayal (emotional and national), infidelity (emotional and physical), espionage (intentional and unintentional), battle fatigue (physical and psychological) and even, unlike most of the previous stories, a rather vivid battle narrative. It is supposed to be a mystery, but the mystery isn't very mysterious—except for the overarching mystery of a master spy, the so-called Peacemaker, which may well be too drawn-out for most tastes.

In most ways, I have a tremendous appreciation for the way Perry weaves her protagonists through the inevitable faith crisis when confronted by evil. The assumption is that assuming God could remove evil and suffering that God *should* remove evil and suffering. Of course, that assumption doesn't take any self-limitation required in God's guarantee of free will into consideration. Yet, one wonders how far things should really be able to go. One wonders why God doesn't step in more often.

That's the milieu in which the events occur in *Angels in the Gloom*. But not everyone is strong enough to face the reality of evil! As Captain (Chaplain) Joseph Reavley is warned by his sister when he is confronting a shallow vicar, "Don't push him in the water, Joe. He can't swim." (p. 35) On another occasion, I particularly liked the phrasing, "religious shell shock" as it applied to the same vicar (pp. 182-3). And, although, it may seem trite to some people, I liked Reavley's observation that "You can be dragged into the future, kicking like a child, or you can walk in upright and with some dignity. That's almost all the choice you've got." (p. 165) I particularly liked the idea that one who is wise knows "answers don't always help" (p. 299) and Perry's reformulation of Mick Jagger when speaking of God's Providence: "I think He said we would have all that we need, not all that we want." (p. 325) When asked, "All we need for what?" the chaplain protagonist replied, "To realize the best in ourselves." "To practice pity and honor until they become part of us and the courage to care to the last strength we have, to give everything." (p. 325) That's powerful, emotional, and realistic. It doesn't answer the very human questions about evil, but it offers a perspective on moving forward in the face of evil. Indeed, when the chaplain is asked if he can recognize violence behind everyday faces, he responds in the negative because, "We all have the darkness. Some act on it; most of us don't. I can't tell who will or already has." (p. 237) Doesn't such a statement ring clearly with honesty like T. S. Eliot's "shadow?"



Of course, one reason that I read Anne Perry's historical novels is to get some of the flavor of history. More than one character expresses (in thought or statement) that this supposed War to End All Wars was worthwhile in spite of the cost. "Their ideals had been vast, a new age of peace and progress for mankind. Of course there was a price—nothing came without one, least of all change. But it had seemed then to be infinitely worth doing. How long ago that was now!" (p. 127) Another character compares the war to illness: "'We'll heal. As with any illness, the fever breaks, then we begin to get our strength back.' He gave her a quick, bright glance. 'Maybe it will give us an immunity?'" (p. 181)

I was also amused at one agent's interview with Leon Trotsky. During the interview, the famous revolutionary waxed eloquently about the oratory of Jean Jaures, "How he could speak! Like a great waterfall, elemental! And yet he could be gentleness itself, endlessly patient in explaining." (p. 200) And, while mentioning oratory, there is a great line about sermons, "Of course the difficulty is that if you speak of something in a sermon, so often the people you mean it for are quite sure it is directed at everyone but them..." (p. 239). That certainly holds true in my experience.

In addition to my personal bias that the Peacemaker scenario has dragged on for too long, there was one other place at which I was disappointed in the book. On page 223, the minister avoids using a biblical text to meet the needs of the assembled congregation because, "The Bible was all to do with other people, two thousand years ago and somewhere else." That is not my experience. Because the Bible deals with people remote from me in space and time, I can consider the narratives from more than my limited subjective perspective. In that way, the text can become alive enough to speak to me in the here and now without being too obscured by my existential presumptions. The historical nature of the narratives drops my guard and allows me to be impacted by whatever truth is contained in the passage.

One short episode in the novel may well be worth the price of admission. One character asks, "Do the ordinary laws of society apply to men like Newton, Galileo, Copernicus, or geniuses of the spirit like da Vinci or Beethoven? Would I have saved Rembrandt or Vermeer from the gallows, if they had warranted it? Or Shakespeare or Dante or Homer? Yes—probably. Wouldn't you?" There is no overt answer to this on page 176, merely Joseph's internal question, "Did you weight one gift against another, count the price in other people's lives, innocent people, make judgments?" (p. 176) Personally, I don't think a genius is above the law, but it's a fascinating thought exercise to work through.

In spite of my personal bias, *Angels in the Gloom* is a worthy addition to the series. I feel like the mysteries are not as strong as those in the Pitt or Monk series, but the questions are deeper and the characters even more real to me as the reader.

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## Chris says

This series continues to get better and better. This time Perry takes a break from the trenches of Flanders and turns to the war on the home front. After Joseph Reavely, and Army chaplain, is seriously injured (in the first chapter of the book), he is sent home to recuperate. There he finds his sister Hannah barely hanging on, trying to maintain a stiff upper lip. Her husband is commanding a Royal Navy ship and excluding her from the horrors of war; her neighbors are losing husbands, brothers, and sons; women are taking on more and more of the "men's jobs" because there are no men left to take them. and her eldest son can't wait until he's old enough to sign up. Great hope is being placed on a device being developed at the nearby "Establishment" that may turn the tide in the war at sea. But then the lead scientist on the project is found murdered in his

garden. Was he killed by his wife? the husband of the woman he'd been having an affair with? or was he the victim of espionage? Joseph investigates the murder while his brother Matthew continues the hunt for the Peacemaker, someone highly placed in British society and politics, who is trying to end the war without victory for either side but as a prelude to setting up a German-British global hegemony. I really liked this a lot. There is a brilliant scene where a young widow comes to see Hannah and talks about how little she really knew her husband. Hannah realizes that is something were to happen to her husband she may feel the same way. Joseph also has to decide what he's going to do. He does not need to return to his regiment in Flanders. He's much older than most of the men he serves with, and he could easily decide to stay home, where he is also needed. The book also ends with just a fine climax, which makes the reader very eager for the next book.

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## **Mary JL says**

This is the third book in the Reavley/World War I series. We have met in the first two book three of the Reavley family---Joseph, the chaplain; Judith, his sister, a volunteer ambulance driver in the same unit; and Matthew, who is fighting a covert war as he is in Special Intelligence.

Only Hannah Reavley, their sister, seems safe. She is a home in their small village not far from Cambridge. But things are about to change. Joseph is severely wounded while helping recue a soldier and is sent home to recuperate.

Joseph is glad to see his sister Hannah and she is indeed glad to see him. Her husbands is at sea with the Royal Navy; and she and their two children are alone.

When Joseph is finally on the road to recovery, their adversary strikes again. There is a top secret compound in the Cambridshire countryside nearby known as "the Establishment". They are doing some secret war work there and that is all anyone knows. Then a top scientist in "the establishment" is murdered. Again, I go no further due to spoilers.

One of the real parts of Book 3 that I enjoy was Anne Perry's description of the home front. in England. Hannah has the burden of waiting. Dreading the mail or a telegram to tell her hier husband has been killed or injured. Trying to raise two children alone. Wartime shortages. And mourning when local families lose sons and fathers and brothers for in these small English villages, everybody knows everybody and the casualties are people Hannah has known all her life.

The suspense keeps up--I have said in earlier reviews that this five part saga is imho one of Anne Perry's best sets of work.

Highly recommended for Anne Perry fans' mystery fans; historical fiction fans and family saga fans.

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## **Sharyn says**

Writing this review after finishing the whole series. Listens to the audio books, so slower than reading, We are back in Cambridgeshire for this book. We see a bit more of Matthew Reavley and also sister Hannah, who is married to a naval man. There is a thrilling but scary set of scenes in a naval battle, and once again

some murders to be solved. WWI has never been so well described in terms of the suffering in the trenches, on ships and at the homefront.

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### **Mark Adkins says**

This is the third book in Anne Perry's World War One series, and in this book the author changes things up a bit by having the book taking place mostly in England vice the western front. We also see a bit more of Matthew and learn more about the other sister Hannah in this book.

One one complaint about this book is the actual mystery in the book, I felt it was not that interesting. Now throughout the series each book has a murder mystery which is tied into the overall mystery of the series- who is the Peacekeeper. I just found that this book's murder was not handled very well. If you are more of a mystery/detective fan than historical fiction fan you might be disappointed.

I still liked the book and am moving on to the next book as I am curious to see what happens next in the series.

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