



Wake the Dead

Dorothy Simpson

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Inspector Luke Thanet and his wife, Joan, are among the guests when Member of Parliament Hugo Fairleigh opens the grounds of his beautiful Georgian mansion, Thaxden Hall, for the annual village fete. It's a cloudless summer's day, an idyllic afternoon for innocent enjoyment. Then sudden death casts its shadow over the proceedings. At first, nobody is particularly surprised when Isobel Fairleigh, Hugo's elderly mother, is found dead in her bed. She was an old lady, and she had recently suffered a stroke. But, as Thanet soon discovers, she did not die of natural causes. She was murdered, and there are more than a thousand possible suspects wandering the grounds who could have sneaked into the Hall and killed her. Or was the murderer someone closer to home? Could any of Isobel's family or friends have been brutal enough to smother a helpless old woman? As Thanet and his deputy, Sergeant Mike Lineham, delve deeper into Isobel Fairleigh's life, they learn once again that crime knows no class barriers. Even a setting as grand as Thaxden Hall provides motives for murder. *Wake the Dead* is a triumph of storytelling, a tantalizing puzzle interwoven with an absorbing portrayal of the painful realities of family life. Silver Dagger-winning author Dorothy Simpson proves once again that she is one of the most gifted and stylish of contemporary crime writers.

Wake the Dead Details

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Author : Dorothy Simpson

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From Reader Review Wake the Dead for online ebook

Bettie? says

[Book 11, 1992:]

Inspector Thanet's beat remains the town of Surrenden in Kent, his milieu the upper middle classes, his sleuthing style understated and shrewdly intuitive--when he isn't beset by such family problems as his teenage daughter's posh new boyfriend. The inspector finds a diversion of sorts at a local fete hosted by the prominent Fairleigh family. But then death strikes: someone uses a pillow to suffocate the clan's tough old matriarch only days after she suffers a stroke. Suspects include the immediate family--a son in politics, a daughter-in-law mourning her baby's death, a timid sister--and the usual collection of odd servants beloved by British crime writers. Simpson offers only a handful of possible perpetrators and only a few murder options in a scenario limited to high teas, socializing and typically unruly British weather. Yet she works wonders within that narrow framework.

Damaskcat says

Isobel Fairleigh was murdered during a village fete being held in the grounds of her home. She had suffered a stroke and it was only a matter of time before she died anyway but someone seems to have taken it into their heads to put an end to her existence. Her son - the local MP - calls DR Mallard, the police surgeon, who happens to be at the fete with his wife and DI Luke Thanet and his wife.

Naturally, Thanet and DS Lineham look to the victim's nearest and dearest first and soon realise that they are all hiding something. Apart from the family, there are potentially the thousand or so people who have been attending the fete to question. I think this is a well written mystery which demonstrates graphically how family secrets can fester and affect everyone in a family. I thought the relationships between the Fairleighs was very well done and I enjoyed reading the book.

I like the relationship between Thanet and Lineham and how closely they work together and I think this is portrayed very well in this book and in this series. The book can be read as a standalone novel or as part of a series. I think it is better read as part of a series.

Shauna says

Very average murder story in the series featuring Luke Thanet. I have enjoyed some of the others far better than this.

Donna says

These are nice little mysteries set in the 80's. The main inspector is a happily married man with two imperfect children. He spends long hours at work & therefore chooses to tell his wife about his cases so she

feels part of it all. His partner is rather stiff & has a stiffer mother, then wife. They work well together & are very organized. There's no gratuitous violence, no sex, no cussing & that's a good thing. The author doesn't waste words or our time, she gets on with it. I like that each night the inspector goes home to his family, that they share their lives & struggles with the reader. It's what kept me reading all of them up to the final four. The final four had a serious price increase over the first 14 or so, why I don't know. I've sadly resolved not to read those as a result.

Tamsen says

Felt a little like Simpson was trying to be SUPER relevant (ya know, in 1993) with the dyslexia diagnosis for Richard. Not my favorite.

Pgchuis says

Inspector Thanet investigates the murder of his local MP's mother, whose body is discovered during a fete at their country house. Despite the fact that there are hundreds of guests, it becomes clear that only a member of the family could have committed the crime.

This was a pretty run of the mill detective story. Thanet and his colleagues were normal people with happy marriages, which I always appreciate. It was a little dated in its attitudes to e.g. the roles of women and class, and also heavy-handed in its treatment of e.g. having a Downs Syndrome child or a child with dyslexia. The solution was perhaps slightly over the top, but it was foreshadowed competently. I wonder what happened with Pamela and Hugo...

Pat says

One of my favorite detective series.

Not sure if I've don't this before with this series but I actually knew it early on, though of course I realized I could be wrong. I do t usually guess the culprit.

Susan says

I hadn't read this in many years, but from about the third page, I remembered a lot of what would happen. Of course, I read it again anyway! I like Inspector Thanet - someday I would like to read them all in order, but that is probably impossible. The Thanets are at a village fete held on the grounds of the local MP's mansion, when the MP's mother is found dead in her bed. She recently had a stroke, but when the doctor sees her, he realizes she has been murdered and pulls Thanet into it. He and his deputy, Sgt Lineham, start delving and uncover several family secrets. The personal lives of the Thanets and the Linehams are also woven into the story in a small way, making the characters feel like 'real people.' Probably slightly dated, but a very enjoyable read.

Jenna Victoria says

As always I find Titles In Dorothy Simpson's Inspector Luke Thanet's British police procedural series to be first-rate. So sad that illness forced her to stop writing altogether. A mystery reader's loss but of course wish her continued improved health.

Jill says

Pedestrian paced "who done it". Inspector Thanet is far too ponderous and polite for my liking but the tale is told well enough. I won't be reading the rest of the series.

Nancy says

With a long mystery series, it usually makes sense to start at the beginning. I have a group of four or five of Simpson's books waiting to be read and just picked this one at random---it was a perfectly satisfying mystery, but I think I should follow my own advice and begin at the proper point with Book One.

I liked the characters, and liked the surprising resolution---I think my indifferent response to this book was less with Simpson's story-telling, but with my preference for classic mystery stories from the 1920's-50's.

Lauren Albert says

Again, the same annoying thing. Thanet has a sudden "flash" of insight late in the book and then they arrest someone and he gives a long-winded explanation of how he came to his insight to his wife and/or friends. And the explanation doesn't add up for me. I'm curious if anyone else either feels this way or feels satisfied by his explanation.
