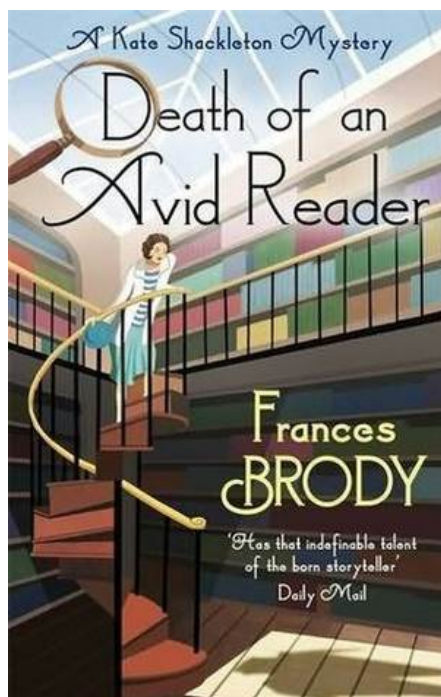




Death of an Avid Reader

Frances Brody

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A lady with a secret

Kate Shackleton's sterling reputation for courageous sleuthing attracts the attention of the venerable Lady Coulton. Hidden in her past is a daughter, born out of wedlock and given up to a different family. Now, Lady Coulton is determined to find her and puts Kate on the case.

A mysterious killing in the library's basement

But as Kate delves deeper into Lady Coulton's past, she soon finds herself thrust into a scandal much closer to home. When the body of the respected Horatio Potter is found in the Leeds Library basement, the quiet literary community is suddenly turned upside down with suspicions, accusations and - much to Kate's surprise - the appearance of a particularly intelligent Capuchin monkey!

The most puzzling case in Kate's sleuthing history yet

Convinced an innocent man has been blamed , Kate sets out to discover the truth. Who would want Dr Potter dead? Does Lady Coulton's missing daughter hold a vital clue? As the stories start to emerge in the seemingly quiet Leeds Library, Kate is learning fast that in this case, she can't judge a book by its cover.

Death of an Avid Reader Details

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Author : Frances Brody

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From Reader Review Death of an Avid Reader for online ebook

Debra says

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Debra's Book Cafe

Debs :-)

Laura Edwards says

Without a doubt, the best book in the series thus far. Ms. Brody hits all the right notes from beginning to end. After a perplexing last effort, Ms. Brody had Kate back to her old self in this book. I also liked that the case had an adoption angle and the connection linked to Kate's own circumstances. We also had more insights into Kate's thoughts and life than in the previous book.

I was a little surprised at the abrupt way the second mystery was inserted into the book, but Ms. Brody did a nice job of weaving the two stories together. Again, the mystery was perfectly nuanced. And I experienced a range of emotions throughout. Tenseness when Kate was cornered in the basement by Mr. Castle. Anxiousness when Lady Coulton's secret was revealed to Sophia and also over Inspector Wallis' competence. And during the scene where Mrs. Sugden shot at the fleeing man and then the banter between she and Kate after cutting her finger had me laughing out loud. And there were even a few tears at the end when Lady Coulton died. And while the monkey was a hoot for one book, I was relieved Percy was given a different home by book's end as such a schtick would wear thin in a hurry.

A wonderful book and I look forward to the next as I'm always happy to spend time with Kate, Mrs. Sugden and Jim Sykes.

Shannon says

I was pleasantly surprised by this charming book, which, at first glance, appeared to be something in the vein of M.C. Beaton or Rhys Bowen; fortunately it is quite a step above those series of books.

In fact, the first half of the book is sparkling and delightful; later it loses some of its shine and becomes more plodding and tiresome, as it works its way through red herring after red herring. Although there is only one actual killer, there are many villains before this tale is finished. A couple of quirky touches are the capuchin monkey and the pistol-packin' housekeeper! Also the "exorcism" is wildly unexpected and Kate's reluctant participation is one of the best examples of the author's wry humor found through-out the book!

The plot centers around Kate Shackleton, private detective in Leeds, England, hired to track down the illegitimate daughter of an aristocratic lady who gave her up for adoption 24 years ago and the dead-ends (literally!) she runs into. Yes, there are a couple of murders along the way, which appear to have no bearing on the adoption case. However, there IS a connection, although not the one that Kate (or the reader) thinks it is. As always in books with a bookish theme, I wish there had been more substance to the books themselves,

but they play less of a role than they are set up to do, which I found disappointing.

I am giving it 4 stars, based mainly on the scintillating first half and a memorable bit of philosophy right at the very end. It's well worth reading and I recommend it to anyone with a love of good writing and plotting.

QNPoohBear says

Kate Shackleton's success at finding missing persons has made its way to London to the ears of Lady Coulter. Lady Coulter wants Kate to find the daughter she gave up for adoption many years ago. Kate and Jim think finding Sophia will be easy at first, but they run into some roadblocks. While researching at the Leeds Library, Kate runs into another proprietor, Dr. Potter, an eccentric mathematician and the library's most avid reader. He spins her a tale of a library ghost (which he doesn't believe in), asks her to check out some articles he wrote for a student newspaper in his youth and hints the library may be moving to a new premises. Kate doesn't know what to make of all that or the planned exorcism for the building. One thing she does know is that the library is not haunted. Or is it? During the exorcism the priest stumbles across the dead body of Dr. Potter. While the police zero in on a homeless organ grinder, Kate feels there's more to the case than that and it's up to her to solve it. Can she find out who killed Dr. Potter and find out who stole some rare and valuable books? What should she do with the organ grinder's monkey living in her house? This is another great mystery. The first person narration didn't bother me this time because Kate is largely detached from the crimes. Her personal life doesn't much come into play, though there is a hint that someone cares for her in more than a professional manner. She doesn't reflect on it, which is fine with me. She does reflect on Gerald and comes to terms with his probable death, though I am not convinced she's 100% over him. The mystery is so complicated and there are so many mysteries going on here that I simply couldn't figure out how or whether they were all connected. I never guessed who the villain/s was/were. I thought something entirely different so was pleasantly surprised when I was wrong. The story of the adopted girl was both boring and fascinating, depending on how far along Kate was in her investigation. What did we do before Google? Call Kate Shackleton!

I really liked the library. Being a member of the oldest subscription library is something special and I also have that privilege. I would have liked a little more about the books though. Kate knows what the library is and how it works so I think that is the limit of the first person narrator. The reader feels thrown into unfamiliar territory with little or no explanation.

There are many many new characters for Kate to interact with, in addition to Jim Sykes and Mrs. Sugden. I love Mrs. Sugden here. She has hidden talents and a kind heart. Jim is growing on me too, for all he is an ex-policeman. My favorite new character is Percy, the Capuchin monkey. I felt sorry for him to be kept in captivity. I also felt very bad for Dr. Potter's animals though I believe he meant well. I'm certain that his experiments were wasted on the animals he had but if he could have experimented with Great Apes, then he would have met with success. As for Dr. Potter himself, I quite liked him from the beginning. He's charming, intelligent and he respects Kate's intelligence, which is important to her. I didn't really understand his rivalry with Professor Merton and was confused when an additional mathematician was introduced. Professor Morton seems a bit more of the absent-minded professor type than Dr. Potter. He's oblivious to anything that doesn't directly concern his work. His sister keeps house for him and I didn't really like her. She's a gossipy, ambitious woman who would love to see her brother rise to the top of his profession.

At the library there's Mr. Castle, the President and Mr. Lennox, the Librarian. I got them mixed up at first. Neither are very appealing characters. Mrs. Carmichael is a stereotypical librarian and personifies hell hath no fury like a woman scorned! She is truly a bitter woman but her character development is excellent.

Other new and important characters include Sophia Wells who may be going by another name. Marian

Montague (or is she Sophia?) has had really rotten luck. I was very distressed by what happened to her and found it hard to believe that someone would do such horrible things to her. She was dealt a bad hand in life. Her friend didn't appeal to me at first because of the obvious difference in backgrounds and the mysterious manner in which he is introduced. He grew on me though.

I can't wait to read more of this series when I have a chance.

Anmiryam says

The mystery was solid, the characters fine, I was just not thrilled with the writing style which I found competent, but bland.

Kb says

This book, the sixth in Frances Brody's series about 1920s private investigator Kate Shackleton, was more engaging than the fifth book in the series, but I was still bothered by many of the same things that have come to annoy me about Brody's books. So much unnecessary detail. So many peripheral characters. Incorrect usage of the modal phrase "had better" (all of Brody's characters, regardless of age, employment, education, class, or dialect eliminate the word "had", as in saying "you better go" instead of "you'd better go"; this is clearly not correct or believable in 1920s England -- you would expect people associated with a library to use more precision in their speech).

Also, there was at least one subtle anachronism, with Kate referring to herself as "Dragon Queen-like", although it's arguable that maybe she just made it up on the spot without any contemporary references. The term "Dragon Lady" was used from the mid-1930s onward (so, ten years later than this novel is set), while "Dragon Queen" is actually quite modern, being mainly associated with D&D and Game of Thrones.

Language discrepancies aside, this is definitely one of the better books in the series so far, and I would certainly recommend it over *Murder on a Summer's Day*, which is the last one I read. (Though if I had to choose, I think my current favourite is *A Woman Unknown*.)

There are still more to read, so I guess I will keep trying...

Elizabeth says

I swear I say this every time I finish one of the Kate Shackleton series but this was my favourite! I'm so glad that my grandma recommended and lent me all the books she had. Frances Brody writes a really good detective story with intrigue, the possibility of romance and the ability to make you think that is fresh every single time. I love that she combines locations in the north mainly but also the south. This book spooked me from the very beginning and had a lot of good twists and turns that kept me page turning. It was one of those books that let you think you had the answer early on. I love Mrs Sugden in this book you really saw more into her personality and it was great to see Mr Sykes more relaxed within his role enough to take more charge. I'm also looking forward to discovering inspector Wallis first name as I think we may be seeing more of him! Can't believe I only have one left to read....it's a mixture of disappointment and excitement!

Lavender Davies-Brown says

Didn't enjoy this one very much. I guess it just isn't my kinda thing?

Diane says

Enjoyed this mystery set in a library. Kate is detective and former nurse. Reminds me of the Maisie Dobbs books.

Magill says

Back on form indeed, a 4 just from sheer relief (for the genre, of course), the 6th book of the series is an improvement from #5.

Kate, as usual, ends up with several puzzles to sort through: finding a lost daughter who may have disappeared from view again, and the murder of a library patron. Besides, of course, book stealing, ghosts, a very sick man and a monkey. Mrs. Sugden gets a bit more back story... and a gun, while Sykes keeps an eye on Kate and, as always, has a knack for turning up with information.

There is a warmth to Kate that is pleasant to read and that seemed to shine on this outing. There is a new police inspector, Wallis, whom Kate distrusts but maybe he will grow on her.

An enjoyable read.

Ruth says

Looking through my bookshelves for something to read, I picked this book out because it has such a great cover and it's set in a library - forgetting that it was not the first in the series and I was saving it until I'd read the others!

But I was immediately so absorbed in the book I decided to carry on regardless and catch up with the rest of the series later.

I love the detail that the author puts into the story about the period she is writing about. I know some reviewers think this slows the pace of the story down too much but I actually like this aspect of the book and enjoy absorbing all the atmosphere, and checking on Google maps to see the places she mentions. Her accuracy in the details of, for example, the Leeds Library give me confidence that her research is thorough and I found myself looking in my fashion books to see what sort of clothes she would have been wearing and immersing myself in the world of the 1920s.

The main character, Kate Shackleton, has a back story which I gleaned parts of but I think the series is probably best read in order. So I'm looking forward to reading more of this series, and I'll make sure that it's

the first book in the series that I pick up next!

Heather Duff says

Thank you to Piatkus for providing me with an advance copy in exchange for an honest review

So first of all my confession out of the way, this is my first Kate Shackleton Mystery novel, how I have missed the others I do not know but I will blame my children, they are my go to excuse and terrible at getting in the way of my reading (bless their dirty socks).

Anyhoo I love a good mystery from my all time classic favourite Agatha Christie's Miss Marple to my hi-tech fave Eve Dallas in J.D. Robb's In Death series. These stories never fail to entertain me but muscling in to my favourites list is this newcomer in the shape of Kate Shackleton and her very enjoyable tale set in the 1920's.

I must first of all draw your attention to the cover, I love it, when the review opportunity arose it was this cover that drew me in, it kind of reminds me of the railway posters of this era which had beautiful eye catching designs.

This is the sixth book in the Kate Shackleton Mysteries series, it starts of with Kate being called to London by the venerable Lady Coulton. She wishes for Kate to track down her daughter who was born out of wedlock and was given up many years before, her husband is ill and she feels now is the time to track down her daughter.

Kate very ably takes up the case, once more assisted by Sykes the former policeman but as she delves deeper in to the past and searches for Lady Coulton's daughter she discovers more than anticipated and a lot closer to home.

A respected scholar Horatio Potter is found dead in the basement of her local library, delving deeper in to his murder she finds that these two cases could be linked, could an innocent man be found guilty of this horrible crime and is Lady Coulton's daughter a link in this poor man's murder?

Well Kate investigates with such amazing stamina, she is a woman who never gives up and considering the setting where a woman's place was usually at home she does not let anything get in her way including a stowaway in her car in the shape of a Capuchin monkey.

The story is seamless, it flows beautifully and the setting mainly in Leeds is just perfect, I truly loved Death of an Avid Reader, you could almost smell the books in the library scenes and feel the chill air from the misty evenings plus it did keep me guessing right up to the end when the killer is revealed and of course does Kate find Lady Coulton's daughter?

As much as I love a modern crime book, I love a book set in the early part of the last century which shows us that before the invention of the Internet and looking up your iphone, things can be solved with true determination and brain power!

Death of an Avid Reader is awarded 5 out of 5

GONZA says

Death of an avid reader (Kate Shackleton Mystery #6) by Frances Brody

Titolo: Death of an avid reader

Autore: Frances Brody

Serie: Kate Shackleton Mystery

Edito da: Piatkus

Prezzo: 8.99 £

Genere: Cozy Mystery

Pagine: 360 pg.

Plot: A lady with a secret

Kate Shackleton's sterling reputation for courageous sleuthing attracts the attention of the venerable Lady Coulton. Hidden in her past is a daughter, born out of wedlock and given up to a different family. Now, Lady Coulton is determined to find her and puts Kate on the case.

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The most puzzling case in Kate's sleuthing history yet

Trama: Una signora dell'alta società con un segreto

La reputazione di Kate Shackleton da investigatore attira l'attenzione della venerabile Lady Coulton.

Nascosto nel suo passato c'è una figlia, nata fuori dal matrimonio e lasciata da allevare ad una famiglia di ceto medio. Ora, Lady Coulton è determinato a trovarla e mette Kate a lavorare sul caso.

Un omicidio misterioso nel seminterrato della biblioteca

Ma, mentre Kate scava più in profondità nel passato di Lady Coulton, si ritrova rapidamente coinvolta in uno scandalo molto più vicino a casa. Quando il corpo del rispettato Horatio Potter viene trovato nel seminterrato di Leeds Biblioteca, la tranquilla comunità letteraria viene improvvisamente sconvolta da sospetti, accuse e - con grande sorpresa di Kate - arriva anche una scimmietta cappuccina particolarmente intelligente!

Il caso più sconcertante nella storia della detective Kate.

Recensione

Anche stavolta Clara della Orbit ha colpito ancora, era chiaro che per una persona come me che a ragione si considera un "avid reader" o lettore ingordo che dir si voglia, un titolo del genere non poteva passare inosservato ed eccoci quindi a recensire quello che è il sesto titolo di una serie che purtroppo non conoscevo, ma che mi è subito piaciuto.

Inanzitutto l'ambientazione nello Yorkshire pochi anni dopo la fine della prima guerra mondiale è molto affascinante. Visitare attraverso gli occhi dell'autrice questa Leeds dei primi del secolo, con i tram che salgono nella nebbia, le carrozze di prima classe del treno per andare a Londra, gli uomini che si stupiscono di una donna che guida e per di più da sola, i vecchi maggiordomi e le signore con le velette rende il tutto assolutamente molto più interessante di un qualsiasi crimine avvenuto ai giorni nostri. Ma non vi immaginate una piccola Miss Marple, tutt'altro. Kate ha 32 anni, è una vedova di guerra e assieme al suo amico poliziotto Skyes è una detective ormai rinomata e viene chiamata da Lady Coulton per ritrovare una figlia data in adozione perché nata al di fuori del legame matrimoniale.

Lady Coulton aveva avuto un amante, ma ora è decisa a ritrovare questa unica figlia femmina e incarica Kate

che fatica non poco anche perché nel mezzo delle sue ricerche si ritrova coinvolta in un omicidio molto più vicino a casa sua. Viene infatti ritrovato cadavere nel sotterraneo della biblioteca, uno dei patroni della biblioteca stessa e, a fianco al suo corpo, si trova anche un organista ambulante ridotto in fin di vita da una polmonite.

Quella che per l'avvenente ispettore di polizia Wallis è un caso già risolto, resta per Kate invece, pieno di dubbi ed interrogativi e soprattutto le lascia in "adozione momentanea" anche la scimmietta dell'organista, Percy, che si rifugia nella macchina della detective per sfuggire alla confusione. Con quello che potrebbe essere l'unico testimone dell'accaduto nelle vesti di un primate, Kate e Skyes si trovano ad indagare sul passato, e sul presente, di quelli che sono amici e concittadini, molti dei quali non apprezzano l'intrusione. Uno dei migliori Cozy mystery in circolazione per quanto mi riguarda, anche perché l'ambientazione è la causa di almeno metà del successo del romanzo. Mi ha fatto venire voglia di leggere i 5 libri che lo precedono e soprattutto di vedere come procede la detective Kate nelle sue prossime avventure!

Clara from Orbit has struck again, it was clear that for a person like me who rightly consider herself an "avid reader", or a voracious reader if you prefer, a title like that could not go unnoticed and here we are then to review what is the sixth installment in a series that unfortunately I did not know, but I immediately liked. First of all the setting in Yorkshire a few years after the end of World War I is very charming. Visiting through the eyes of the author this Leeds of the beginning of the century, with the tram going up in the fog, the first-class coaches of the train to go to London, men surprised that a woman driving around alone, the old butlers and ladies with veils makes it very much more interesting than any crime occurred on the present day. But do not imagine a little Miss Marple, far from it. Kate is 32 years old, is a war widow and with his cop friend Skyes is a renowned detective and now is called by Lady Coulton to find a daughter given up for adoption, because she was born outside of the marriage bond.

Lady Coulton had a lover, but is now determined to find this only daughter and instructs Kate, but she has a hard time because in the middle of her research she finds herself involved in a murder much more close to home. In fact it is found dead in the basement of the library, one of the patrons of the library itself, and next to his body, there is also an itinerant organist dying from pneumonia.

What, for the handsome police inspector Wallis, is a case already solved, it remains to Kate on the other hand, full of doubts and questions, and especially she has the "momentary adoption" of the organist's monkey, Percy, who takes refuge in the car of detective to escape the confusion. With what may be the only witness to the incident in the guise of a primate, Kate and Sykes are to investigate the past and present of those who are friends and fellow citizens, many of whom do not appreciate the intrusion.

One of the best Cozy mystery in circulation for me, because the setting is the cause of at least half of the success of the novel. It made me want to read the 5 books that precede it, and above all see the progress of the detective Kate in her next adventure!

Frances Brody pubblica i romanzi molto ammirati della serie Kate Shackleton, una vedova della prima guerra mondiale che si è ritrovata per casa a fare la detective. Volete ritrovare qualcuno scomparso da tempo o avete bisogno di discrezione per identificare un'eventuale amante? Kate è la persona che fa per voi, e giusto per stare più tranquilli, viene accompagnata anche dal suo amico ed ex-poliziotto Jim Skyes. Prima di diventare romanziera, Frances ha scritto parecchi copioni per la radio, la televisione ed il teatro ed è inoltre stata nominata per il Time Out Award. Ha pubblicato 4 differenti saghe ed ha vinto l'Harper Collins Elgin Award nel 2006.

Frances Brody's highly-praised 1920s mysteries feature clever and elegant Kate Shackleton, First World War widow turned sleuth. Missing person? Foul play suspected? Kate's your woman. For good measure, she may bring along ex-policeman, Jim Sykes.

Before turning to crime, Frances wrote for radio, television and theatre, and was nominated for a Time Out Award. She published four sagas, winning the HarperCollins Elizabeth Elgin Award in 2006.

Gerry says

I usually enjoy the Kate Shackleton series and with 'Death of an Avid Reader' seemingly having a bookish background, I was ready for a most enjoyable read. However, I was slightly disappointed for the story seems to wander around and the various strands need putting together to bring out the tale. I am afraid that I was sometimes unable to do that; now that does not mean that Frances Brody has written a poor book, it probably means that I am not up to putting together difficult-ish plots!

Our heroine Kate Shackleton has always been a first-class sleuth but her powers of detection are tested to the limit after Lady Coulton asks her to find a long lost daughter, born out of wedlock. As Kate begins her delving, she finds herself involved in a couple of murders that take place in the Leeds Library. What is more she discovers a Capuchin monkey close to the scene of the crimes!

Her investigations reveal skulduggery at the library and a seemingly innocent man has been blamed for the murders. Kate leaves no stone unturned to discover the truth and eventually, as is her wont, she comes up with the solution - and finds Lady Coulton's daughter. But, for me at least, there is difficulty along the way in comprehending it all - sorry!

Damaskcat says

Kate Shackleton is asked to try and trace Lady Coulton's illegitimate daughter who was adopted at birth. Kate is unusually reluctant to take on the case but isn't sure why. At first everything she tries leads to a dead end and then she becomes inadvertently involved in a murder which was committed at the Leeds Library of which she is a share holder.

Dr Potter - scholar and enthusiast is found dead under a fallen bookcase in the basement of the library. Libraries have a connection with Kate's search for Sophia Wells as she is believed to be working in a library and when she hears a library assistant has apparently left her employment without notice she starts to wonder whether the cases are connected.

Featuring Kate's assistant, Jim Sykes, a monkey called Percy, a parrot called Polynesia and some very nasty crimes this is an absorbing and well written mystery story set in and around Leeds in the 1920s. The author brings the background vividly to life and Kate Shackleton herself is an interesting character. I thought the plot was particularly well constructed in this story which in my opinion is probably the best of this excellent series so far.

If you enjoy crime novels set in the 1920s then you may enjoy this series. They can be read as standalone stories but if you read them in the order in which they were published you find out more about Kate's background and how she came to be a private detective.

Tracy says

Death of An Avid Reader might appeal to fans of the Masie Dobbs mystery series. Kate Shackleton is a female detective in Leeds in the 1920s who is intelligent, part of the gentry, and a woman working within the

constraints of her society. As she takes on a missing persons case, a body is found in the local library (a slick nod to Agatha Christie) Mrs. Shakleton leads the charge in unearthing the filthy laundry of the town while trying to meet a deadline on the missing person. What makes the story especially worth a read is that even when readers think the mystery is solved, Brody throws in a feasible plot twist to lead us to the true culprit.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

It took me a while to read this because school was keeping me so busy. This is a solid historical mystery with an intrepid female detective in the 1920s. There is some very dark aspects to this story that are surprising for a genteel historical mystery. Well-plotted and populated with interesting characters.

Reviewed for Affaire de Coeur Magazine. <http://affairedecoeur.com>.

Faa says

She made me google Leeds and I have this impulse to wander around Leeds. I love how Miss Brody described the library and the books inside. It was an excellent touch on the Capuchin monkey and I bloody love it.

The death of Horatio Potter started Kate's involvement with the library's mystery. The rest was solved by a team of Kate, Mrs Sugden and Mr Sykes. As always..

Susan says

Kate Shackleton has a paying job tracking down a lost daughter. However, she is also called in to help rid the local library of a ghost in the basement. The library has been suffering from book thefts and a counter assistant, who is of an age and has a name similar to the missing daughter, has vanished. During the exorcism, Kate Shackleton finds not only a body in the library basement, but also a man who is almost dead from pneumonia and has fifty gold sovereigns in a hidden money belt. In the meantime, an organ grinder's monkey named Percy has stowed away in her car. All these elements make for a satisfyingly intricate plot. However, it is hard to believe that any author could pass up the opportunity to title a book "The Body in the Library."

Kirsty Darbyshire says

I've enjoyed the previous books in this series so I was a bit disappointed to walk into Waterstones in Huddersfield a few weeks ago and find a big sign telling me that Frances Brody was coming to sign books... I was disappointed because the time on the sign ended about an hour before I had arrived. Happily as my brain was still processing this a little lady popped up beside me who turned out to be Frances Brody - still there and happy to sign a book for me. Thanks!

I liked this too - it's set mostly in the middle of Leeds which will have me wandering round looking for the right buildings next time I am in the city centre, it's 1920-something and Kate's searching for the adopted

daughter of a lady and getting tangled up in a murder at the Leeds Library. Nicely plotted as usual and lighthearted without being too lightweight. Good entertainment.
