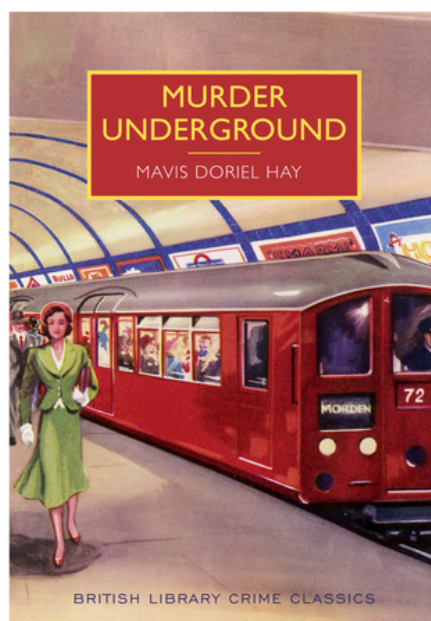




Murder Underground

Mavis Doriel Hay , Stephen Booth (Introduction)

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If you were suddenly to be found murdered, would your friends have theories about who had done the deed?

Well, when the wealthy and unpleasant Miss Pongleton meets her end on the stairs of Belsize Park underground station in 'Murder Underground', her housemates — though not particularly grieved — have plenty of guesses at the identity of her killer. While they're merely airing theories, events arise that unexpectedly enable several of them, including Tuppy the terrier, to put them to the test.

This novel from the golden age of British crime fiction is sure to puzzle and charm fans of Dorothy L. Sayers, Agatha Christie, and Josephine Tey.

Murder Underground Details

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Author : Mavis Doriel Hay , Stephen Booth (Introduction)

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From Reader Review Murder Underground for online ebook

Leslie says

3.5*

I enjoyed the setting and characters in this Golden Age mystery. This isn't really a 'detective' story, even of the cozy variety, since none of the main characters do any real investigating and the police are mostly "off stage". Instead, the reader pieces together clues from the actions, statements and reactions of the various people involved. The author does at one point deliberately prevent the reader from information available to the characters but by that time I had already a firm suspicion.

I did like the way it all came together in the end & the brief glimpse into the police thinking that came right before that.

Ian says

I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book. Published by British Library Crime Classics and downloaded via NetGalley.

When Miss Pongleton is found murdered on the stairs of Belsize Park station, her fellow-boarders in the Frampton Hotel are not overwhelmed with grief at the death of a tiresome old woman. But they all have their theories about the identity of the murderer, and help to unravel the mystery of who killed the wealthy 'Pongle'. Several of her fellow residents – even Tuppy the terrier – have a part to play in the events that lead to a dramatic arrest.

This classic mystery novel is set in and around the Northern Line of the London Underground. It is now republished for the first time since the 1930s. Includes an introduction by Stephen Booth, award-winning crime writer.

I would class this classic mystery as partly comedy farce and murder/mystery, and is very well plotted and written. Even though I guessed the culprit quite early on, it was a delight to watch all the pieces of clues knit together so seamlessly.

An enjoyable read for anyone who likes the classic mysteries.

If you like the review and would like to read reviews on other books I have made, visit my blog at www.finalchapterreadersgroup.wordpress... like, comment and follow.

Pamela says

Miss Euphemia Pongleton is found dead, strangled with her own dog lead, on the stairs at Belsize Park underground station. She was a boarder at the Frampton, where her fellow residents are at first shocked and then curious. Over the next few days, the police try to untangle alibis, red herrings, misleading statements and misguided attempts to cover up for loved ones. Meanwhile, the boarders of the Frampton take their own

steps to resolve the crime.

A lively and amusing Golden Age mystery. Although it's occasionally hard to believe that the police investigation would not have uncovered some of the key evidence, the likeable characters and their clumsy attempts to protect each other make any plot weaknesses more tolerable. The setting is interesting too - 1930s tube stations and the residential areas of North London. There is even a sweet little map of Belsize Park station.

Mavis Doriel Hay's work has been forgotten for many years, so I am glad this book has been reissued as part of the British Library Crime Classics editions, as she writes well and deserves to be read more widely.

Nancy Oakes says

The very barebones of plot can be found at my reading journal ; as always, feel free to click or just keep reading here.

Considering how very much I love these old books and British murder mysteries in general, overall this one was, like the dead woman, Miss Euphemia Pongleton, a bit tiresome. What I enjoyed about it was the focus on the boarders who shared a house with the dead woman, who have their own theories on what happened. The best scene takes place at the beginning of the story, when all are together in one room, waiting to be called individually to talk to the (somewhat invisible at this point) police Inspector. There we discover that while these people feel sorry that she met such a terrible end, they're also realistic, with one woman noting that

"It would be hypocritical to pretend that any one of us is overwhelmed at the removal of Miss Pongleton."

This conversation is very lively, with a novelist, Mrs. Daymer, applying her "expert" knowledge of the police, of investigations, and of the victim herself while "surveying the possibilities of the situation." The other boarders voice their own opinions or come up with logical questions that are discussed in turn, each one speculating on motive, means and opportunity. But when outside of the boarding house, someone decides to gum up the works to protect himself and starts covering up his own movements and telling a series of lies, the story quickly gets tedious, making the novel tough to get through. Talk talk talk, very little in the way of action until the book is nearly finished. I read several reader reviews where people had said that they got bored enough to flip to the end, but really, it's so incredibly easy to figure out that no one should have had to do that. For me the question was one of waiting it out to see how long it took before things are set right, and exactly how that was going to be accomplished.

While I won't sing the praises of this novel, I do still plan on reading her other two, so maybe (hopefully!) they'll be a bit better. However, as an example of the work of a previously-obscure woman mystery writer of the Golden Age, Murder Underground is very much worth reading.

Susan says

Published in 1934, this mystery was re-published, after being out of print for many years. Mavis Doriel Hay only wrote three mysteries, but was popular in her time, and British Library Crime Classics are to be applauded for bringing long out of print novels, and authors, back to our attention.

The novel is set around the Frampton Private Hotel – a boarding house in North London (indeed, most of this novel is set around the area where I live, which only added to my interest). The wonderfully names Miss Euphemia Pongleton is heading for a dentist appointment, but is found murdered on the stairs of Belsize Park tube station; strangled by the lead of her dog, Tuppy. Obviously, things have changed a little since this book was written, as the body is not discovered for some time and the police actually look for prints on the hand rail of the stairs, suggesting it is both little used and also cleaned!

Miss Pongleton is not much mourned by her fellow boarders, but they are intrigued by the mystery of her death – not least as Bob Thurlow, the young man of maid Nellie, is implicated in the crime. Also, Miss Pongleton was well known for writing and re-writing her will, although her money was supposedly destined for her nephew Basil. When annoyed, though, it was re-directed to her niece, Beryl, and it is generally supposed that she changed her will shortly before her murder. Even worse, Basil is a young man whose alibi is decidedly suspicious and this concerns Betty Watson, who also lives at the Frampton and who is keen on him.

This is a fun and interesting mystery. You do wonder why Betty cares so much for Basil, whose every utterance seems to dig a deeper hole for himself and throw more and more suspicion upon his actions. However, although the members of the boarding house do not actually get together to work out who committed the crime, they almost all become involved in somehow trying to solve the case. The police, meanwhile, have their jobs cut out trying to unravel all the various clues, alibis and false trails that come their way – bemoaning the constant stream of information pouring forth from the various inhabitants of the Frampton, that they need to investigate. An enjoyable read for anyone who loves classic, Golden Age, mysteries.

Ivonne Rovira says

Like John Bude, J. Jefferson Farjeon, and Patricia Wentworth, Mavis Doriel Hay has undeservedly faded into obscurity since her heyday in the Golden Age of detective fiction. A contemporary of Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham, Josephine Tey, and Dame Agatha Christie, Hay's novel *Murder Underground* was praised by no less than Sayers herself, who went on to call one of the novel's characters and main suspect — the irresponsible, prevaricating dilettante writer Basil Pongleton — “one of the most feckless, exasperating and lifelike literary men that ever confused a trail.”

That said, *Murder Underground* is no *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (view spoiler) — more like Christie's so-so *The Big Four*. Still, I enjoyed reading it, although the feckless Basil and other over-the-top characters make so many ridiculous decisions that the novel becomes more of a slapstick comedy than a Golden Age cozy.

In *Murder Underground*, first released in 1934, the irascible but wealthy spinster Euphemia Pongleton meets her end in a Tube station, strangled by her own dog's leash. The leash had been stolen from where it usually hung at the entrance to the boarding house where she lived, and suspicion at first falls on a laborer with a slight criminal history. Miss Pongleton's fellow guests at the boarding house (pompously named the Frampton Private Hotel) theorize about who “done her in,” at first as a lark, but later they plunge into a serious — and ultimately successful — investigation, besting poor police Inspector Caird.

Hay had fun with satirizing the various English stereotypes, from fusty spinster to police plod to ghoulish young women to fastidious bachelor — perhaps too much fun. Even so, readers, even 80 years later, will still enjoy this quick-read, as long as they curb their expectations; therefore, I am still grateful that the British

Library has republished the three detective novels Mavis Doriel Hay wrote.

Peter says

Elderly Miss Pongleton is strangled with her own dog's leash on the stairs of Belsize Park tube station...and her fellow residents of the Frampton Private Hotel are abuzz with speculation. So it begins.

I quite like the claustrophobic, class-conscious, petty bourgeois world of novels set in prewar boarding houses – The Slaves of Solitude being a prime example. But unfortunately Mavis Doriel Hay is no Patrick Hamilton, though it has to be said that the best parts of the novel are her descriptions of this suffocating world and its denizens who are “*apt to appear in the foreground of one's daily view unpleasantly larger than life but rather less than human.*” There is, for example, “*a middle-aged lady who liked to accentuate the gaunt strangeness of her appearance by unfashionable clothes*” – all hand-crafted and redolent of sheep – and a gentleman “*greyly respectable in melancholy solitude*”.

But all too soon we get into the minutiae of amateur sleuthing, which does not seem to have been the author's forte. We are given the thoughts of the innocent characters, which isn't a great idea since it substantially reduces the number of potential suspects. Even I, always slow on the uptake, rapidly identified the guilty party as being just about the only person left. And much of the book is taken up with the muddling antics of a buffoon – one Basil Pongleton, a tedious nephew – whose exploits cause mystery and suspicion amongst the police and other characters...but not the reader, since we are already privy to his antics. So where's the mystery, Mavis? All that's left are some scraps of period charm (fast driving in an Alvis, Basil seizing a humpty, problems with a bowler hat) and that's pretty thin fare for a longish novel.

Andrea says

The police investigations are almost completely sidelined in this story, as residents and friends of residents of a boarding house try to escape suspicion and solve the murder of a fellow resident.

Frankly, I think all the young women in this story would do well by ditching their respective young men, who caused them a great deal of stress and bother for not much reason at all.

Rachel Stevenson says

I'm not that interested in cosy crime; I prefer the seedy underbelly, the pyrrhic victory, the man or woman destroyed by his or her search for truth. But this re-issue from the publishing arm of the British Library isn't set in a country house or a Somerset village, but in shabby hotel in Hampstead (this is 1934, NW1 is still bohemian rather than Billionaire's Alley), featuring a host of Evelyn Waugh-esque characters: the snobbish proprietor, the sensible/ditzy young office workers, the caddish writer, the creepy older man who collects murder clippings in a scrapbook, the determined lady novelist (perhaps based on Hay herself) and the respectable businessman.

I guessed whodunnit at the end of the first chapter, but then again, this is the golden age of crime - not twisty, not dark, simple enough so that anyone can work it out and feel pleased with themselves at the denouement.

Shauna says

I really enjoyed this humorous romp set in mid 1930's London. This is one of a series of murder mysteries from this period by 'forgotten' authors which has been reissued by the British Library. I was going to do a review but then I read this one on the back of the book by Dorothy L Sayers.

'This detective novel is much more than interesting. The numerous characters are well differentiated, and include one of the most feckless, exasperating and lifelike literary men that ever confused a trail.' Couldn't have put it better myself Dorothy!

Lou Robinson says

A cross between a Christie and a Sayers, this is a republished novel by the lesser known Mavis Doriell Hay. Based on the murder of a dottie old bird at Belsize Park on the Northern Line, it's a fairly traditional who dunnit. I guessed relatively early on who the culprit was. Enjoyable, but for me wasn't quite up to Miss Marple standards.

Leslie says

This is a classic British who done it; written by an author who wrote only a few mysteries. When one of the lodgers at Frampton house is discovered murdered in a tube station almost everyone is a suspect. Due to the victim's irascibility she could have unlimited enemies.

This is fun, compelling mystery and several of the characters share names with rolls on the 1970s British TV show Are You Being Served including Slocumb and Grange(r).

K.J. Charles says

Reasonable murder mystery in which the inefficient amateur sleuths of a boarding house stumble on the solution while concealing clues from the police. Interesting period piece but not what I'd call a classic. Nice to see Belsize Park tube get its due recognition in fiction, though.

FangirlNation says

In 1934's Murder Underground by Mavis Doriell Hay, Miss Euphenia Pongleton goes to ride the London Underground to visit the dentist and, deciding to walk the 220 stairs down to the bottom, she gets strangled with her dog's leash before she gets to the bottom. It's a leash she keeps publicly at the hotel where she lives, so anyone could have taken it. Promptly, the police arrest Bob Thurlow, the suitor of Nellie, the maid of Miss Pongleton, when they find a brooch in an envelope in her bag. She had labeled the envelope that contains the brooch that she took it off her maid and suspected Bob Thurlow of having stolen it. So the police decide that Thurlow murdered Miss Pongleton just for the brooch and got too scared to look for the

brooch once he killed the woman. Because the family likes Thurlow and not the highly unpleasant “Aunt Phemia,” they try to help get to the truth to free Thurlow. However, they each have secrets that they are hiding from the police and from each other, obfuscating the truth from everyone and confusing the search for the truth from everyone.

Read the rest of this review and other fun, geeky articles at Fangirl Nation

Ali says

“Dozens of Hampstead people must have passed the door of the Frampton private hotel – as the boarding house where Miss Euphemia Pongleton lived was grandly called – on a certain Friday morning in March 1934, without noticing anything unusual. When they read their evening papers they must have cursed themselves for being so unobservant, but doubtless many of them made up for it by copious inventiveness and told their friends how they had sensed tragedy in the air or noticed an anxious look in Miss Pongleton’s eyes.”

A Friday morning in 1934 seemed just as usual, people hurrying off to their daily toil, when a bundle of clothes on the stairs at Belsize tube station, turns out to be the body of Miss Euphemia Pongleton. A long-term resident at the nearby Frampton Hotel, her fellow boarders are not noticeably overwhelmed with grief, but they are all fascinated by the murder of a woman they knew – though generally disliked. It seems that Miss Pongleton was a very tiresome old woman, miserly, despite her apparent wealth, she would walk to Belsize tube to save a penny on the fare.

The police very quickly settle on Bob Thurlow, boyfriend of Nellie who works at the Frampton, who they believe had reason to kill her. Nellie is inconsolable, telling everyone at the hotel that her Bob wouldn’t do such a thing – reminding them how good Bob was to Miss Pongleton, taking her little dog Tuppy for walks for her. However, things don’t look too promising for Bob, who was on duty at the station at the time of Miss Pongleton’s death, and over whom Miss Pongleton was holding information that she had threatened to go to the police about.

Full review: <https://heavenali.wordpress.com/2018/...>
