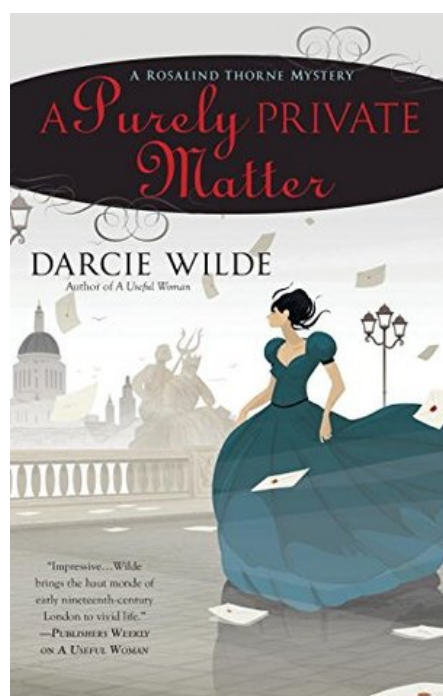




## A Purely Private Matter

*Darcie Wilde*

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# A Purely Private Matter

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## **A Purely Private Matter** Darcie Wilde

The Rosalind Thorne mystery series—inspired by the novels of Jane Austen—continues as the audacious Rosalind strives to aid those in need while navigating the halls of high society...

Rosalind Thorne has slowly but assuredly gained a reputation as “a useful woman”—by helping respectable women out of some less-than-respectable predicaments.

Her latest endeavor is a tragedy waiting to happen. Desperate Margaretta Seymore is with child—and her husband is receiving poisoned pen letters that imply that her condition is the result of an affair with the notorious actor Fletcher Cavendish. Margaretta asks Rosalind to find out who is behind the scurrilous letters. But before she can make any progress, Cavendish is found dead, stabbed through the heart.

Suddenly, Rosalind is plunged into the middle of one of the most sensational murder trials London has ever seen, and her client’s husband is the prime suspect. With the help of the charming Bow Street runner Adam Harkness, she must drop the curtain on this fatal drama before any more lives are ruined.

## **A Purely Private Matter Details**

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Author : Darcie Wilde

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## From Reader Review A Purely Private Matter for online ebook

### Giedre says

An enjoyable second instalment in the Regency set murder mystery series featuring Rosalind Thorne, aka "a useful woman". This time around Rosalind's particular brand of ingenuity is required by a friend of a friend. Unsurprisingly, it's a situation that quickly evolves into something more than she bargained for.

*A Purely Private Matter* offers a fun murder mystery. That said, I thought the pacing was slightly awkward. Also, I remain ambivalent about the burgeoning love triangle between Rosalind, Lord Casselmaine and Bow Street runner Adam Harkness. I don't find the situation that compelling, so I wish it would resolve itself faster.

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### Amanda says

I loved this book. I really love the character of Rosalind (I will be reading this whole series). This mystery really kept me guessing, which was so fun. I love Adam Harkness' character as well. The theater scenes seemed very accurate and the different characters are great. I especially love the handwriting analyst in this book.

The only parts that lagged were the Rosalind and Devon scenes. The "love triangle" seems really strained. It's pretty obvious Adam and Rosalind are going to be together. I wish the author would either make Devon a more attractive option or remove him as a prospective suitor for Rosalind.

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### QNPoohBear says

Rosalind Thorne has made herself useful to ladies of the ton solving little matters that need the utmost discretion. When her friend Alice comes to her with a friend in need of Rosalind's help, Rosalind isn't sure she can help. Beautiful Margaretta Seymore seems to have it all but beneath the surface, her life is falling apart. Her husband, a former officer with the Royal Navy, is a drunkard and disappointed in life. Now he is accusing Margaretta of having an affair with the handsome actor Fletcher Cavendish and wants to sue Margaretta for criminal conversation [i.e. divorce her on grounds of adultery]. Margaretta maintains her innocence and wants Rosalind to help her out of her predicament, not for her own sake, but for her unborn child's. If she has a son and he is declared a bastard, he will never inherit the Marquisate from her husband's cousin (granted the cousin never marries and produces an heir). Matters become more complicated when Fletcher Cavendish is found dead in his dressing room. Who killed him becomes a matter of public speculation as the female population of London goes into mourning. Margaretta or her wronged husband seem the most obvious choices but Rosalind isn't sure it's that easy. She's determined to figure out the truth, even if it means hurting her new friend. She enlists the aid of Adam Harkness, Bow Street Runner. Meanwhile, she is also searching for information about a mysterious woman of the demi-monde she thinks might be her long lost sister Charlotte. Can she trust anyone to help her? Does she really want to know what Charlotte has been up to all these years? If she finds Charlotte, does she want to be a family again or is she happy living alone? Could she give up her occupation and her sister to marry her childhood love Devon Winterbourne, now the Duke of Castlemain? Rosalind decides to tackle one problem at a time!

I really really liked this mystery much better than the first. Now the characters and world have been

established, the mystery started almost right away. It kept me reading until I was too tired to keep my eyes open. I dreamed about the story and woke up early to keep reading. I couldn't put it down until the end. I never guessed who the murderer was-ever-not even when it became clear. I was almost there but not entirely. The story is so complicated and takes many twists and turns that mystery fans will love it. My only real complaint is actually a big one. Can a peer pass on a title to his wife's sister's offspring? I didn't think it worked that way. I was under the impression it would pass to his sons and then his brother's heirs or cousins to the nth degree or in some cases MAYBE his sister's child but his wife's sister's child? A huge part of the plot hinges on this and many other coincidences. (I did like how she used the names Sir and Lady Bertram- a nod to Mansfield Park). The only other thing keeping this book from 5 stars is personal taste. I'm not sure Rosalind made the right choice. Though she couldn't have predicted exactly what would happen, she surely could have guessed she would destroy at least one family. I don't know if I could have made the same choice.

Newcomers to the Regency genre can jump right in with no prior knowledge of the haut ton. Rosalind fills the reader in on the rules of etiquette and social customs. The epigraphs from court cases and a servants' manual will add to the background knowledge.

I liked Rosalind better in this novel. She's more sure of herself but still has some lingering doubts over whether she's doing the right thing. I think she realizes, deep down, that she's happy being useful and living an independent life. If she married/marries Devon, she'd have all the duties and responsibilities of being a Duchess and maybe a mother. She wouldn't be able to solve problems for people or venture where she shouldn't be. She wouldn't have to but I think she WANTS to and needs to in order to be completely happy. I really appreciate reading about an independent spinster. Rosalind does have a love triangle but so far, she isn't aware it's a triangle and hasn't made any firm decisions.

I still have mixed feelings about Devon. I do feel sort of sorry for him. He has duties and responsibilities he never wanted and he can choose whether to help Rosalind or to withhold information. I still can't entirely forgive him for something in the first book but I almost did until the end. I really liked seeing him with his silly cousin Louisa. I think being with her shows him he doesn't want a debutante for a bride. His cousin is enough to deal with!

Some of the story is from Adam's point-of-view. Like Rosalind, he believes in truth and justice and he is very good at his job. It was nice seeing him in his element at the inquest and seeing just how good a fit his occupation is for him. His point-of-view also gives the reader his private thoughts about Rosalind. He's attracted to her for the right reasons but knows she's above him in station and thinks they could never be together even if she cared for him. I think she does care and they're a good fit- more than Rosalind and Devon.

Devon's young cousin Louisa adds some humor to the story. She's in Town for her debut season and is quite young and silly. Her raptures over Fletcher Cavendish and her insistence on full mourning for him are very funny-unintentionally on her part of course. I remember being that age and infatuated with celebrities and being very silly so I think she's spot on for her age. I just found her amusing. Her aunt is a sharp lady. She wants what makes her nephew happy and won't cause a scandal. She's willing to accept a little impropriety because the older generation was less stuffy than the current one.

The newest characters are involved in the mystery. This is a tale of two sisters- one married a brewer and one married a peer (sound familiar Mansfield Park). The brewer's sons William Seymore and Sir Bertram are unhappy with their lot in life. Perpetual complainers, they always want want want and feel someone screwed them over. I actually did feel sorry for William. His biggest problem was that he loved unwisely. His love for his wife, or his infatuation for a beautiful woman, may send him to the gallows. He also has a difficult decision to make. He's stuck between a rock and a hard place with no easy way out. Rosalind didn't like him but I did. His brother, Sir Bertram, on the other hand, is awful. He's selfish and greedy. His wife seems like she could possibly rival Lady Macbeth while still appearing to care about appearances and the dictates of

Society. There was a third brother, Cecil, whose widow and daughters reside in the Bertram household. I really liked Virginia. She's a complicated character and I didn't want her to be involved in such a sordid mess. I was surprised by her actions and didn't pity her after that.

The Marquis of Weyland's family is a mixed lot. Lady Weyland is a terrible mother. She focuses all her attention on spoiling her eldest son because he's ill. I found him creepy. It's a good thing he isn't well or he would be preying on beautiful women to add to his collection of objects. His brother, Adolphus, seems like an honorable, upright man. He does his best to smooth over any family scandals and works tirelessly to keep the family name honorable. I liked him at first because he seemed kind but I think there's more than meets the eye and so does Rosalind.

Margaretta is the major player the mystery centers around. She's beautiful but brittle. She's one of those unfeeling women that populate the pages of these types of novels. I think she does have feelings and she cares about her husband, in her own way. She cares about her unborn child enough to try to extricate herself and the child from the scandal of criminal conversation. I don't think Rosalind really liked her. I'm not sure how I feel about her. I don't really feel a lot of sympathy for her based on her actions.

Though this story is on my Regency shelf, it's not much of a romance.

Read this if you love Jane Austen, the Regency period, and clean mysteries. I hope to read more about Rosalind!

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## Abigail Bok says

*A Purely Private Matter* is the second Regency mystery starring Rosalind Thorne, a plucky gentlewoman who has fallen on hard times through no fault of her own. She maintains a tenuous position in society by serving as what would these days be called a crisis manager for women of *ton*.

This is a series that would probably best be read in order: while this tale could stand alone, I feel readers would have more of an attachment to the heroine if her backstory were more fully fleshed out by reading the first novel in the series (*A Useful Woman*).

The author is a pro: she ticks off all the plot boxes for mystery novels with romantic elements. There are the two potential suitors, each with his pros and cons; the wisecracking sidekick; the climactic scene when the perpetrator brandishes a pistol at the heroine; and so forth. That the stories don't feel overly formulaic is owed to two factors—the unusual premise and some fairly elegant Regency-esque prose. I'm a reader who gets knocked out of the story whenever there are anachronisms or grammatical errors, and there aren't many here (though there are a few: the author, for instance, needs to learn the difference between *like* and *as if* and how each should be used; for another example, I don't think "slumming" was a term in the early nineteenth century).

The plot is satisfyingly intricate and the dénouement is psychologically plausible. One of the two romantic possibilities got rather short shrift in this book, but he's still in the running and I look forward to developments in the next story. I enjoyed following the trail of clues; the Regency setting is nicely realized—especially when it comes to servant characters, who are often overlooked in stories written in this era. This is a solid historical mystery series.

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## Cindy Burnett says

A Purely Private Matter continues the crime-solving adventures of Rosalind Thorne. The story takes place in the early portion of the 1800's where Rosalind's family has fallen on hard times, and she is tenuously holding onto her position in London society as a "useful woman", meaning she extricates respectable women from less-than-savory situations. In A Purely Private Matter, Rosalind is approached by Margaretta Seymore regarding threatening notes Margaretta has been receiving. What starts out as a seemingly straightforward request quickly morphs into a much more complicated matter that Rosalind much work to resolve without creating a stain on her own reputation.

Darcie Wilde captures the essence of the time period beautifully – food, manners, the streets of London, and the position of women. She also creates clever and sympathetic characters and provides them with snappy and witty dialogue. This series is a ton of fun to read, and I look forward to the next book.

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## Katie says

Is okay. \*shrugs\*

I think something about the story telling in these doesn't work for me. It feels too vague at times--sometimes misleading, sometimes just not giving enough info for the reader to figure anything out.

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## Barb in Maryland says

Very engrossing mystery, with the clues being slowly revealed. I **had** to keep reading, intensely interested in what our intrepid heroine would discover next.

On the surface, it appears to be a straightforward mystery. Captain William Seymore believes that his lovely wife Margaretta has been unfaithful and that the child she carries was fathered by famous actor Fletcher Cavendish. Margaretta hires Rosalind Thorne (our heroine) to find who is writing anonymous letters to her husband; letters that bolster his belief in her guilt. To complicate matters Margaretta freely admits that she and Cavendish have known each other for many years and are good friends, but definitely not lovers. Cavendish is murdered several days later--And the Captain finds himself in prison, awaiting trial for murdering Cavendish. It is not a spoiler to say he didn't do it. But who did?

Bow Street officer Adam Harkness and Rosalind are racing against time to solve that mystery. The trial could be held any day and matters are looking grim.

I am a sucker for a cleverly plotted mystery full of interesting characters and Ms Wilde delivers the goods. The Captain's younger brother and his wife are particularly well-drawn, as is Cavendish. And then there are the rich cousins: the dying Marquis of Weyland, his younger brother Lord Adolphus, and their reclusive mother, the Dowager. Just how do they figure into the whole mess?

Also making a return appearance is Devon Winterbourne, Duke of Casselmain, Rosalind's beau when they were both younger. He is still smitten and Rosalind is still conflicted. Some humor is provided by Devon's young cousin Louisa, who has a major fangirl crush on Cavendish.

You need not have read the first book to enjoy this one. The returning characters are presented with enough backstory to keep new readers up to date.

I am looking forward to the next one

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## **Mara Pemberton says**

Loved the story, but not crazy about narrator.

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## **Daniele says**

With this second entry in the series, the Rosalind Thorne Mysteries have become must reads for me. I enjoy protagonist Rosalind's integrity and intelligence. Great storytelling in a socially complicated era and plenty of intrigue. My only quibble is the love triangle.

I received a copy of this title from the publisher. The opinions here are my own.

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## **Alicia says**

<http://wordnerdy.blogspot.com/2017/03...>

The second book in Wilde's Rosalind Thorne series is just as entertaining as its predecessor--I love historical mysteries where ladies get things done! In this one, Rosalind is asked by a friend of a friend to help prove she is innocent of adultery--so the child she is carrying won't be labeled a bastard. Wilde does such a good job highlighting the issues of women in this era, while also filling her books with super awesome ladies. The mystery here is a bit convoluted but the storytelling is riveting--though I do hope the love triangle is resolved sooner rather than later, because that has the potential to become really repetitive. Anyway, I look forward to reading more in this series for sure. B+.

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A review copy was provided by the publisher. This book will be released on May 2nd.

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## **Susan in NC says**

I am really enjoying this series so far! This is only the second book in Darcy Wide's Rosalind Thorne mystery series, but I was so enthralled with the first in the series (A Useful Woman) that I decided to buy this second mystery as soon as it came out. I was saving it for a time when I could really savor an engrossing read...

Once again, I was entranced by the author's writing and grasp of the restrictions and social rules applying to gentlewomen of the Regency period. Rosalind Thorne lost everything when her profligate father took her older sister Charlotte and abandoned Rosalind and her mother about 10 years previously; her mother died and left Rosalind alone to cope as best she might. Despite the scandal that destroyed her family, and the personal pain still haunting Rosalind, she has survived on the fringes of polite society and even built a business and supported herself by being a useful woman: at first, by using her polish, organizational abilities and social knowledge to help arrange functions and events, but now she also helps gentlewomen of the ton recover from embarrassing or scandalous situations.

I think my favorite thing about Wilde's writing is that the mystery and pace build slowly until the reader is engrossed; all of the characters are multi-dimensional, with layers of motivations. In that way Wilde reminds me of another favorite mystery writer, Ann Perry, and her Victorian mystery series. With the upper classes of both periods, so much of life is dictated by society and expectations of station and background. It makes for an enthralling mystery.

I also enjoyed returning characters from the first mystery: Rosalind's old friends Alice and George Littlefield, a brother and sister also forced to earn their living by writing for a London newspaper, and Devon Winterbourne, Duke of Casselmain and Rosalind's first love, who is still around to tempt Rosalind to toss aside the independent life she has built and become a duchess.

Also returning is Bow Street Runner Adam Harkness, who is investigating the death of notorious actor Fletcher Cavendish. Rosalind has been asked by Margaretta Seymore, a poetess of some renown, to investigate blackmail letters her husband has received, suggesting she was having an affair with Cavendish. Margaretta's husband is threatening divorce, but then Cavendish is found dead. Rosalind once again finds yourself embroiled in a multilayered intricate mystery - this time, surrounding the grasping, avaricious Seymore family, and the mysterious Cavendish.

I can't wait for the next book in this exciting series. I love that it is set in the Regency, and inspired by Jane Austen. The author seems very aware of the strict manners and expectations governing society, and a gentlewoman like Rosalind Thorne, who has barely survived the fallout of her scandalous family and could lose everything again. Fascinating multilayered mystery building to an exciting conclusion -delightful!

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### **steph says**

[ the fact that the Seymour branch of the family eyed the title of Marquis from their cousins whom they were related only through their mothers (the Seymour mother and the dowager marchio

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### **Kristen says**

I enjoyed this second book in the Rosalind Thorne mystery series, but not quite as much as I did the first book.

I still love the character of Rosalind, and her capability to make a life for herself within a social structure that is mean, petty, judgmental and self-important. Rosalind, through no fault of her own was changed overnight from a proper lady within the "ton" to a penniless nobody with nothing, and she managed to build a new life without becoming a whore or marrying some horrid nasty man just to survive. That makes for an interesting, likable character. The fact that Rosalind uses her intelligence and her connections from her previous life to help other women survive problems offers plenty of fodder for a good story.

I think the reason I didn't love this book as much as the first is the subject-matter of the mystery. It drifted into the maudlin for me by the end, and the hyper-dramatics of the relationship matters of this era are not of particular interest to me. It was still a good, well-written story, and Rosalind was given plenty of opportunity to show her intelligence and ability to find things out and get things done. I was just a little less interested in the matters on which she was putting her skills to use this time around.

I love the series, this world, and Rosalind, and will definitely read a next book in this series [I hope there will

be one although I realize it may be a while until that would happen given this one is only recently published].

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## OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/a-...>

A Purely Private Matter

Rosalind Thorne Mystery, Book #2

By Darcie Wilde

ISBN #9780425282380

Author Website: [darciewilderomance.com](http://darciewilderomance.com)

Brought to you by OBS Reviewer Daniele

### Synopsis:

Rosalind Thorne has slowly but assuredly gained a reputation as “a useful woman”—by helping respectable women out of some less-than-respectable predicaments.

Her latest endeavor is a tragedy waiting to happen. Desperate Margaretta Seymore is with child—and her husband is receiving poisoned pen letters that imply that her condition is the result of an affair with the notorious actor Fletcher Cavendish. Margaretta asks Rosalind to find out who is behind the scurrilous letters. But before she can make any progress, Cavendish is found dead, stabbed through the heart.

Suddenly, Rosalind is plunged into the middle of one of the most sensational murder trials London has ever seen, and her client’s husband is the prime suspect. With the help of the charming Bow Street runner Adam Harkness, she must drop the curtain on this fatal drama before any more lives are ruined. (Goodreads)

### Review:

A Purely Private Matter is an entertaining study in the lengths to which people will go in the name of greed to get what they think they are entitled to and to keep secrets. Full of intrigue and great storytelling, this series holds a firm place on my “must read” list.

In this installment, Rosalind, who is making a name for herself as a “useful woman” or someone who helps society women solve their more delicate problems, is hired by a friend of a friend to find out who is writing damaging anonymous letters to her husband. Margaretta Seymore has been friends with famous actor Fletcher Cavendish for many years, but because of these letters her husband Captain William Seymore is now convinced that the pair has been having an affair and that the child Margaretta carries is not his own. Unfortunately, Fletcher is found dead, stabbed in the heart, before Rosalind can get very far in her investigations. When William is quickly arrested for the crime, Rosalind feels time is of the essence to find the real perpetrator – even if all clues seem to lead to Margaretta.

One of my favorite aspects of this book is that it delves into the everyday lives of both the ton and more modest folk. I enjoy the scenes set at the Bow Street station and the bowls of the Theatre Royal just as much as those in the morning rooms of the affluent. The multi-layered mystery unfolds at a steady pace, woven amidst these varied settings. Every time I thought I had it all figured out, Ms. Wilde would reveal a twist that had me reconsidering. All of the different threads come together for a satisfying resolution. There is a small subplot concerning Rosalind’s long absent sister Charlotte. It is nice to know a little more about her, but I

feel the bit concerning her is rushed. If there is anything to not like about the book it is the dreaded love triangle. Up until now, Rosalind and Devon, Lord Casselman, have played a form of cat and mouse based on their past relationship. Bow Street runner Adam and Rosalind have danced around their feelings for each other. Both relationships have progressed in an organic way thus far, but I do hope that Ms. Wilde resolves the triangle sooner rather than later.

Rosalind makes a fine protagonist. She is intelligent, level headed, ingenious, and a young woman of integrity. She is first and foremost intent on finding the truth and justice, sometimes without regard to how it will affect her social standing. Adam is my favorite character; his honesty and sense of justice are his finest qualities. His awkwardness, even if only portrayed in his mind, around Rosalind is endearing. The characters central to this book, mostly the Seymore family, are all well drawn and interesting. William's younger brother and his wife are particularly well developed and are ever so easy to dislike. Fletcher is oily and too charming for his own good, but I can see why he had so many devoted fans. And speaking of fans, one of the most delightful scenes in the book involves Devon's cousin Louisa, in full fan girl mode, decked out in full mourning and wilting in the heat. Also of note is the handwriting analyst Miss Onslow. I would greatly like to see her again.

A Purely Private Matter is sure to please readers who enjoy historical mysteries, especially the Regency period in England. It is smart and compelling. I do hope that there will be many more books in this series. I impatiently look forward to my next adventure with Rosalind.

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## Andree says

Thoroughly enjoyed this one as well. I really, really like the characters. All of the regulars are fairly great. A few notes:

- The mystery is generally solid. I like how the mysteries generally require people not being completely honest, because to do so would invite scandal.
- The love triangle is showing signs of getting annoying, merely because while not annoying yet, eventually the current limbo will start feeling vaguely untenable.
- The opening scene has little connection to anything, and felt weird.
- Also weird, the references to Harkness as "Adam," when Rosalind is ostensibly narrator. Weird in a historical.
- (view spoiler)

All in all, I really enjoyed this though. Immensely readable.

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