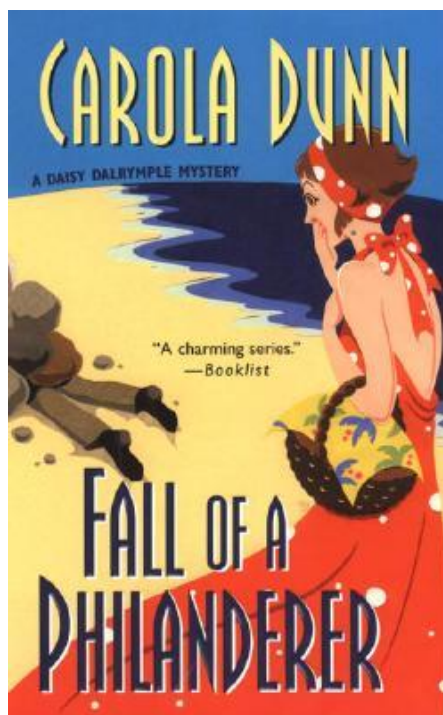




Fall of a Philanderer

Carola Dunn

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In the summer of 1924, the Honourable Daisy Dalrymple Fletcher is off on a summer holiday by the sea with her step-daughter Belinda and Belinda's chum Deva, and her husband, Detective Chief Inspector Alec Fletcher of Scotland Yard. Daisy is anticipating a relaxing, non-dramatic holiday. But Daisy doesn't have that kind of luck. It seems that a local low-rent Don Juan has been busily seducing the local womanfolk and, in a town this small, no secret is kept for long. A fact that is amply illustrated when the Fletcher's simple picnic is interrupted by the discovery of a broken body at the foot of the cliff--that of the philandering local innkeeper of bad memory. Like Jacqueline Winspear's much praised novels about Maisy Dobbs, Carola Dunn vividly evokes the life and times of 1920's England wrapped in a classic mystery to delight her many fans.

Fall of a Philanderer Details

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From Reader Review Fall of a Philanderer for online ebook

Colleendearborn says

I listened to this book through Overdrive. Bernadette Dunn is an excellent audio-narrator. Enjoyed the characters and plot.

Patricia says

My first Daisy Dalrymple Fletcher novel. For this genre, it was well done. It is 1924. Three months pregnant, Daisy, her husband Alec Fletcher is DCI with Scotland Yard, his daughter Belinda and Belinda's friend Deva are vacationing in Cornwall. They are residing with landlady, Cecily Omstruther whose husband Peter is in the military. There is another resident, Donald Baskin, a school teacher who plans to walk the cliffs. The girls make friends with a mute man, Sid, who is a beachcomber.

George and Nancy Enderby own a pub called the Schooner Inn. George is a philanderer and is having affairs with Cecily and a farmer's daughter, Olive Coleman. Sid is Olive's uncle. Then George is found dead on a cliff. Then Olive and Sid go missing.

Daisy and Alec work together to solve the case.

Denis says

Interesting story line destroyed by disconnection to aspects of english life and ,in the audiobook, a narrator who learnt to speak English at from Dick van dyke. The nuances of different accents in 1920s Cornwall, use of English and plain pronunciation grate terribly.

Susan says

A light woman detective story set in 1924 in England. Enjoyable if you are in the mood for something easy.

Susan Beck says

British who done it. Listened to it as I was playing on the computer. It is the only one in this series I have read. I thought it started out slow. There really wasn't much to it.

Windyhill says

Light hearted and entertaining. Audiobook which I enjoyed

Maggie Hesseling says

I found this novel really dissapointing. It was less mystery and more travellogue. Which, in itself isn't bad, but I was expecting more of what I've come to consider a 'classic Dalrymple mystery.'

What made the novel readable, was the fact that Alec really took charge of the case. And though Daisy's information was really invaluble, here we really get to see how good an investigator he is. But I wanted Daisy back. I miss her stumbling over bodies and insinuating herself in investigations. I know that because she was with the children she let it slide, but I hope that after she gives birth this doesn't turn to a regular occurance. I want her a forward thinking woman who throws caution to the wind and just goes for it.

Lbaker says

This series is great, very interesting reading about England 1920's. These are light books, but are neither silly nor shallow.

This is book 14 in the series, Daisy is married to Chief Inspector Alec Fletcher and enjoying married life and being a step-mother.

Jen says

A good cozy beach read :)

Olga Godim says

I'm a fan of this cozy mystery series and its protagonist, Daisy, a plucky young journalist and a daughter of a viscount in England of 1924. I've read almost all the novels of the series and I can say: this is one of the best. In this story, Daisy is on vacation in Devon. For the first (and only, I think) time in the series, she doesn't discover a dead body; her husband Alec Fletcher, the Detective Chief Inspector of Scotland Yard, does by accident when he joins her for a short holiday.

Although the body doesn't appear until chapter 7, the writer unflinchingly keeps the reader's interest from line one. Little, seemingly inconsequential events spring up along the pages, the plot romps ahead like a playful colt, inciting smiles, and the atmosphere building through vivid descriptions – alternately idyllic and foreboding – is done by a master storyteller.

Thursday was another sunny day, but Friday brought a dank and dismal grey mist that left droplets beading everything it touched. Before dawn, Daisy's dreams were haunted by the mournful howl of a foghorn.

Later the same morning:

Halfway back to Westcombe, they could see ahead a solid-looking mass of fog lying in wait, crouching between the hillsides, "Like a big grey cat waiting to pounce," Belinda said.

Daisy is her usual charming self, warm-hearted but sensible. Around her revolves the multitude of secondary characters, all different, all living and breathing and possessing their unique quirks: the bevy of suspects, the local policemen, the denizens of the small seaside village. Some of them provide comic interludes so common to Dunn's tales.

The village bobby Puckle, for example, has an edifying conversation with Alec shortly after the body was found. The author makes Puckle's accent unmistakable but clear, unlike some less skillful writers. Alec, who had hoped to keep his Scotland Yard identity secret for this holiday, asks Puckle in frustration:

*"But why should they think it was murder, not an accident?"
Puckle looked at him in surprise. "Acos of I told 'em you was here, sir. Stands to reason. If 'tweren't murder, why would a detective chief inspector from the Yard be on the spot, like?"*

The constable's logic is irrefutable, albeit circular.

Another source of giggles is a medical student Vernon, assisting Alec in the investigation. Vernon is a fan of mystery novels, but Sherlock Holmes is not among his favorite fictional detectives. Instead he admires Dr. Thorndyke of R. Austin Freeman much more (a new name for me, I must admit). Alec says to him:

*"I'm sure you would have made an apt pupil if he were not a fictional character."
Unoffended, the medical student grinned. "Julia thinks I'm an absolute ass, but I do think I'd make a better pupil than Jervis. He's definitely not too swift in the uptake. It seems to be the fashion to give the top detectives rather thick assistants. Look at Dr. Watson. And do you know this new chappie, the Belgian detective? Same thing—he has the bumbling Colonel Hastings to crow over."*

My sentiments precisely! I read this quaint little book very fast, I chuckled a lot, and I enjoyed it tremendously. I also learned a new concept: *a ducking stool for scolds*. Only Daisy would be so brazen as to introduce it to the modern day readers.

Overall, a delightful novel of mystery and mayhem in the post-WWI England.

Kaitlyn Dunnett says

I quite enjoyed this one, and particularly liked the way the author worked out a satisfying ending. An added delight came from the snippets (just the right length to set the scene without turning into a travelogue) of Daisy (and to a lesser degree, Alec) walking on the cliffs and through the countryside and setting out to sea as a passenger in a lifeboat. Talk about pulling the reader into the scene!

Sarah says

I actually liked this one better than some of the others. There were a lot of suspects, interesting characters, and it took place at the beach!

Bodwisebooks says

This was just what you would expect from a Daisy Dalrymple book. Characters a plenty and a new countryside scenery. Ended well, it was what I had expected and I think the right way as any other would probably have made people a bit sad.

Kris Laabs Malmberg says

All that and it was an accident!!! First time reading this author. Cute characters easy brainless read which sometimes is needed!

Grey853 says

Daisy is on a summer holiday by the sea with her step-daughter Belinda and her school chum Diva. Her husband Alec shows up a while later and on the first day there they run across the body of the local Don Juan. There are any number of suspects.

The mystery is on equal footing with the personal interactions in this one. I rather enjoy seeing how Daisy interacts with the children and how easily she fits in with a small village life. What I like about Daisy is how she seems to be so sympathetic and less judgemental than others of the same time period.

Karen Potts says

This adventure of Daisy & Alec really pleased me. The characters were varied & interesting individuals whose interactions made an entertaining & hard to solve mystery story with a hugely satisfying ending. The bad guys get their comeuppance & the good ones have their reward.

Josephine says

Daisy strikes again.

Pamela says

In this latest episode in the series, Daisy is on holiday in Devon with her stepdaughter Bel and Bel's friend Deva. She meets some of the locals, including the landlord of the local pub, George Enderby, who has a reputation as a bit of a lothario. After a week, her husband Alec aka Detective Chief Inspector Fletcher,

arrives to join them hoping for some peaceful family time but before long he stumbles on a body at the foot of the cliff and is dragged into an investigation.

3.5 stars really, but rounded up for the charming descriptions of a 1920s seaside holiday - making sandcastles on the beach, walking along the cliff, writing postcards home and eating ice cream - a lovely touch of nostalgia. It was also fun to see Alec taking charge, although Daisy still manages some of her kind-hearted meddling!

Undemanding and amusing read that put a smile on my face.

George says

#14 in the Honorable Daisy Dalrymple (and her husband Scotland Yard Detective chief Inspector Alec Fletcher), magazine writer and heiress (no inheritance due to British entailed system) mystery series. It is Summer (August?), 1924, Daisy is now 3 months pregnant and the family is on a 2 week seaside vacation when they discover a body at the base of a cliff.

Lori McD says

A bit better than the last Daisy D book, if only because there aren't quite so many characters, so there's more depth to each character and more story. This book takes place just a month after the previous book (which was to be Lucy's June wedding), and Daisy has her step-daughter Belinda and Belinda's friend, Deva, with her at a small ocean community. Alec is expected in a day or so, and they're to have some much needed vacation time to themselves.

But almost immediately, Daisy encounters two interesting characters: Sid, a mute (called "dumb" in those days), who lives somewhere near the beach and has a cart full of interesting, but raggedy items; and Mr. George Enderby, the co-owner of the local pub and inn, who gives her the creeps. While Daisy is cautious of Sid until she gets to know him a bit better, she's downright avoiding Mr. Enderby, a known philanderer who, despite being married himself, has no qualms about pursuing any female in the area, whether she's married or not. To Daisy's delight, having the two girls with her puts Enderby off just enough to allow her to give him a wide berth. And an encounter between the two men provides valuable clues as to what's to come.

In this little town, everyone knows everyone else's business. Most try to ignore it, but a Mrs. Hammett is not only a busy-body, but she makes sure that her opinions are heard, loud and clear, and she hasn't any scruples about making sure everyone else knows what she knows.

When Daisy's landlady, Mrs. Anstruthers, warns her about Enderby, Daisy gets the feeling that Mrs. A is speaking from personal experience. Mrs. A's husband, Peter, is a navy man and is often gone for several months at a time; in an unguarded moment, Mrs. A confides to Daisy that she did have an affair with Enderby - one that she bitterly regrets. But there isn't much time for more confidences when another visitor shows up: a schoolteacher, Mr. Baskin. Baskin says he's there to hike as much as possible, but there's something more to it. Baskin is asking too many questions about Enderby - questions such as the placement of possible scars on his body. Daisy overhears him mutter to himself that Enderby needs to be stopped.

After a public airing of a quarrel between Enderby and his wife, Daisy is more sure than ever that the philanderer is no good. And when Mrs. A's husband, Peter, comes home the same day that Alec arrives, and they witness a brawl in the pub after Peter's mate, Stubbins, tells him that his wife had an affair with Enderby... Alec, Daisy, and Baskin all follow Peter home to prevent him from domestic violence. But Peter doesn't beat his wife; instead, they talk (she obviously confesses), and the two make up... while Baskin, Alec, and Daisy awkwardly crouch nearby, unable to move without being seen or heard.

The next day, on a picnic hike with the girls, Alec discovers the body of Mr. Enderby. It looks as if it was badly beaten before being thrown off the cliff. Of course, despite his resolve to stay out of it, Alec is called in as the DCI in charge from by Scotland Yard. An Inspector Mallow is a nearby local man, but Daisy witnesses his sly, deceptive ways of dropping "bombs" on his suspects - he even forces Daisy into admitting that Alec is a DCI. So Alec, unwilling to keep his own men from their vacations, uses the local police force as much as possible - keeping Mallow away from most of the questioning.

Did Peter Anstruthers murder Enderby in a jealous rage? What is Baskin's business with Enderby and why did he seem to relieved to learn that Enderby was dead? Which town woman did Enderby move to after Mrs. A? And which farm girl was his latest victim? Was she the one who left a dazzling but cheap earring at the cliffside? And will Alec be able to wrap up this mystery and still have some time to spend with his wife and daughter?

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In the last book, there were too many characters. In this book, there are too many possible suspects - everyone in this little town hated Enderby and most had a reason to want him dead or out of the way. Despite knowing his reputation and despite knowing even his victim's names, why did someone not act before? Why choose to act now? Which is why Peter Anstruther and Baskin are the prime suspects - they're the "new" factor.

And while Baskin's motives remain a mystery until the end of the book, for whatever reason Alec and Daisy trust him enough to allow him to take Belinda and Deva on hikes - huh? The man is nice and all, but he's a SUSPECT! With unknown motives! And because most of the crime solving takes place over a weekend, it's tough to get too much information about Baskin from Scotland Yard. So WHY are Daisy and Alec trusting this man with Belinda's and Deva's lives?

Once again, the author proves she knows nothing about pregnancy or pregnant women. She remarks that Daisy's waist is growing by inches... and that Daisy might be "front heavy"... and that Daisy needs to be extra cautious walking, and yet she has no qualms about carrying a heavy deck chair down to the beach. HUH? Daisy is 3 months pregnant! At that stage of pregnancy, she probably has a baby bump, but unless she's been chowing down everything in sight, she likely doesn't even look pregnant! In fact, Enderby obviously doesn't notice her "extra inches" when he makes his passes at her. And no one else, not even Belinda, suspects the pregnancy until Daisy lets on. Remember the way women dressed in this time? The long, straight, hip-hugging dresses?

Again, the plot is good, but there are too many details that get in the way. It's OK to lead the reader on a merry chase with all the possible suspects and motives. But it seems that this author has a tendency to wander too long or get overly dramatic when she has a good plot, but a thin one. In this case, Mallow and the local police fill a few pages with their antics, as does the local colorful beat-em-up farmer, who should have been pulled in for domestic violence long ago. But this was another age - an age where domestic violence wasn't reported often and was often overlooked.

Ah well... not quite the satisfying demise that it could have been, but a sufficient overall story. I was just sad that Alec missed most of his vacation. I realize that these are mystery books, but it seems as Daisy and Alec could catch a break for longer than a few pages.

