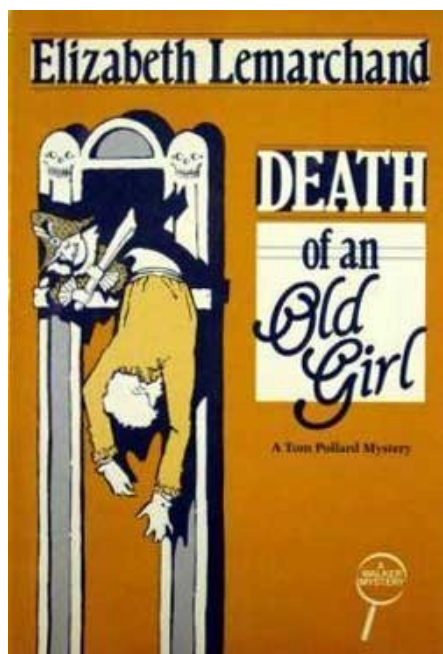




Death of an Old Girl

Elizabeth Lemarchand

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Death Wish

Beatrice Baynes was the sort of interfering, overbearing, hateful woman a lot of people wished dead. The god-daughter she tormented wished it. The nephew she could disinherit too easily wished it. The young teacher she had disgraced wished it. A host of old Meldon School classmates wished it. But since wishing couldn't make it so, someone picked up a blunt instrument and bashed her head in.

Death of an Old Girl Details

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From Reader Review Death of an Old Girl for online ebook

Cindy says

During the end of the year ceremonies at Meldon School for Girls, one of the former students (the "old girl" from the title) criticizes the new administration, the new teaching staff, the new curriculum. But the headmaster is used to Beatrice Baynes' objections and takes no notice. But someone must take notice when her dead body is found in the art building.

There are lots of suspects: the headmaster herself, the art teacher and her patron, the goddaughter and the nephew of the victim. Scotland Yard, in the form of Inspector Pollard and Sergeant Toye, must untangle all the motives and see who the real murderer is.

I enjoyed this book. I like the English mysteries. The setting is completely foreign to me, since I know nothing about private (or as they call it, Public) school. But I liked it anyway.

Susan says

This would have been a 3-and-one-half star book, if that rating were possible. I liked the map, time charts, and genealogical diagram.

Sue K says

Vintage Crime Novel

This book was written in 1967 and heralded the start of the Pollard and Toye partnership from Scotland Yard.

The crime itself is fairly straightforward – a murder at the end of the year at a Girls' School in a village somewhere outside London. The local constabulary call in Scotland Yard and our two detectives start to disseminate the information and slowly unravel the mystery. Without the help of modern technology, fairly basic forensics, no CCTV, mobile phones or GPS tracking etc, it is interesting to see how good old fashioned police work was doggedly used in bringing the criminal to justice.

True, the book is slow in places and it does seem quite dated in parts (some sentences were a tad clumsy) but overall I enjoyed this book and liked DCI Pollard and his wife Jane, who reminded me of the wise Madame Maigret at times.

Many thanks to Sapere Books for an ARC of this book.

Christine says

The annual festival at Meldon School should be about celebrating the end of the term and former students,

"old girls", returning for a fun reunion with friends. One of the old girls, the elderly Beatrice Baynes, lives right across the street and is outspoken with her criticism of Meldon's current staff and administration. Although she was hard to get along with, everyone is still shocked when her dead body is discovered on the grounds and it's determined to be murder. Chief Detective Inspector Pollard and Detective Sergeant Toye are called in by Scotland Yard to investigate.

This book was written in 1967 and has been released this year. It's the first of the long-running "Pollard & Toye" series, but the first time I've read anything by this author. The book started a bit slowly, mainly because there are quite a few characters introduced at the beginning. Once the investigation gets going, it's easier to keep track of who is who and therefore, concentrate on the story itself. Beatrice has no shortage of enemies, so there are plenty of suspects for Pollard and Toye to question, which keeps the story moving.

I enjoy the scenes with Pollard at home with his wife, Jane, which add to the story and help the reader to get to know Pollard. Pollard is kind, organized, determined to get to the truth, and devoted to his wife. I love that Jane was able to provide a key clue that helps her husband solve the case. Toye is likable, putting witnesses at ease, but not enough personal information is given about him to really get to know him.

Overall, this is a well-written police procedural. The investigation is logical and makes the book entertaining. I like the timelines of the crime that Pollard and Toye use to investigate the crime. It helped me get a clearer view of what had happened, too. The identity of the murderer wasn't a huge shock, but the motive was interesting and surprising. I enjoyed the plot and especially the main character of Tom Pollard.

I received this book through the courtesy of Sapere Books. The book was provided to me in exchange for an honest review.

Beata says

Many thanks to Sapere Books and Netgalley for providing me with ARC in exchange for my honest review.

If you are into classic mystery murder story, then this book is for you. Written in 1967, it is the first in the series featuring CDI Tom Pollard and Sergeant Toye. The mystery revolves around death of a busybody, Beatrice Baynes, who is killed during the annual reunion at a school where she herself was a student many years ago. It seems that several people may have wished Beatrice to die and Pollard and Toye have to check several suspects' alibis. This is a solid novel of a good old school and it reads well. At times Pollard's internal monologues seem too long, and some readers may find the pace of the novel too slow. I enjoy discovering authors who were popular fifty, sixty years ago and I will definitely try at least one more book by Elizabeth Lemarchande.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Sapere Books for an advance copy of *Death of an Old Girl*, the first police procedural to feature Inspector Pollard and Sergeant Toye of Scotland Yard, originally published in 1967.

When the unpopular pensioner Beatrice Baynes goes missing no one is too worried until her murdered body is found in the art room of Meldon, a private school next to her house and her alma mater. Pollard and Toye are seconded to Upshire from Scotland Yard to investigate.

I enjoyed *Death of an Old Girl* which is an old fashioned police procedural with several suspects and no motive, leaving Pollard to speculate, theorise and investigate. Obviously it is a product of its time, the women wear "frocks" and there is a sort of repressed attitude to sex and morality, but no less enjoyable for it as it doesn't have the more knowing tone of modern fiction and it's pleasant to take a step back in time occasionally. The plotting is well conceived as, with no modern forensics, it relies on opportunity and who had it with the motive only coming in to play at the end. The novel, therefore, is mostly concerned with establishing opportunity, sorting through the lies and clearing suspects. Handily Pollard likes to summarise his discoveries on a regular basis.

Pollard is a benign policeman looking to put his interviewees at ease, rather than bullying them. I'm not sure that this approach reflects police procedure at the time but it makes for a very pleasant read. He is a very pleasant, middle class chap but that exterior hides a sharp mind, ambition and a strong desire to catch the murderer.

Death of an Old Girl is a good read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

Sandi says

A classic style British mystery with a girl's school setting. First book in the Inspector Pollard series.

Bev says

Death of an Old Girl is the first book in Elizabeth Lemarchand's series featuring Chief Detective Inspector Tom Pollard and Sergeant Toye. It is set at the Meldon School for girls. At the end of year Festival, Beatrice Baynes, one of the "old girls" who attended the school back in the day, does what she does best--stir up trouble. She is an interfering, overbearing, spiteful snoop who can't stand the changes that have been made to the school since her day. She's particularly displeased with the Head Mistress Helen Renshaw who has brought about the changes and the new art teacher Ann Cartmell who encourages the girls to paint all sorts of sordid pictures (bare backs, for goodness sake!). She creates quite a stir at the festival's assembly--criticizing Miss Cartmell, the new curriculum, other new staff members, and suggestion that money from the Old Meldonian's Society funds be used to help buy new "modern" pictures for the school.

There are others who displease her as well....her nephew who can't seem to hold down a job to save his life and who seems to depend too much on her good will as well as his expectations in her will; her god-daughter who can't seem to do anything right--according to Miss Baynes; and the gardener who has let the precious school's grounds go to wrack and ruin. Not to mention the Old Meldonians and new girls who aren't part of her "stick to the old ways" posse. So, it's no surprise that none of them seem terribly upset when Beatrice Baynes is found dead in the art studio--stuffed in a large puppet theater--after the Old Meldonian Society Festival is over. Sure, they're a bit upset that a murder has happened at all...for what will the parents of the girls and the public think? But there isn't much feeling for the victim.

Inspector Pollard has a job ahead of him and no mistake. Lots of suspects--folks who had their run-ins with the lady, but few with a real motive that would seem to warrant murder. And those with the strongest motive all seem to have an alibi. After several false starts and clearing out all the red herrings, Pollard finally sees the outline of the real motive. Lemarchand has crafted an excellent mystery. The clues are all there...not that

I think you'll catch them all or see them for what they are if you do. I've read other (later) Pollard and Toye books and it was very nice to see their beginnings. Even in this first book, their characters are well-defined and a real treat to read about. I thoroughly enjoyed this "old school" academic mystery--three and a half stars (rounded up to four here).

This was first posted on my blog My Reader's Block. Please request permission before reposting. Thanks.

Lel Budge says

First written and published in the 60's, This is the first in the Pollard and Toye series.

The rather unpopular Beatrice Baynes is missing but no one is too worried until her body is discovered in a classroom at the nearby private school.

Inspector Pollard and Seargeant Toye are sent to Upshire from Scotland Yard to investigate.

Death of an Old Girl is a classic police procedural with several suspects with seemingly no motive. There is some great writing in the vein of classic authors like Josephine Tey and George Bellairs, with great characters and intriguing mysteries.

thanks to the Publishers/NetGalley for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for a fair and honest review

Veronica ?? says

*<https://theburgeoningbookshelf.blogspot...>

3.5 Stars

Death of an Old Girl is the first cozy mystery in the Pollard and Toye crime series; an intricate police procedural set in rural England. Originally published in 1967 it has been rereleased by Sapere Books.

The story is set during the Meldon Girls School's annual festival and Old Girls reunion. A time of year when previous students (old girls) come together, reunite and catch up on the latest school developments.

After the weekend-long festivities are over and the school is about to be closed for the summer the body of an Old Girl is found hidden in the art room.

DCI Pollard and DS Toye from Scotland Yard are called in to help with the investigation. Pollard clearly sees this as a chance to impress his superiors.

Death of an Old Girl is a slow paced and lengthy police procedural as Pollard and Toye piece together snippets of information from numerous interviews to develop an intricate time line.

There are a few good twists as Pollard digs deeper, murder isn't the only crime being committed. He also uncovers one family's long held secret and an eavesdropping busy body causes the perfect crime to come asunder.

I found Pollard's sexist remarks a little grating but I suppose they were probably par for the course in the era the story was set.

The language of the characters came across as more 1930's than the late 1960's and it did take me a while to work out when the story was set. Also the old English slang was hard for me to understand so I was a bit lost there.

A classic cozy mystery from a master of the genre! Perfect for fans of Agatha Christie, M C Beaton, Sophie Hannah and Faith Martin.

Roshan says

Was quite caught by surprise at the solution to the crime :D
Excellent writing and nicely paced.

Matt says

First and foremost, a large thank you to Sapere Books for providing me with a copy of this publication, which allows me to provide you with an unbiased review.

Asked to read and review this first novel in a long police procedural series, I leapt at the chance to delve into the world of Elizabeth Lemarchand and her well-developed Scotland Yard duo, Inspector Pollard and Sergeant Toye. During a reunion week at the Meldon School for Girls, Beatrice Baynes appears on the scene with nothing but criticism. From the layout of the garden to the freedoms exercised by pupils through to the scandalous artwork being created, Baynes has gone on the warpath. While others around her try to hold their tongues, there is an obvious animosity towards this 'old girl' and her less than laudatory personality. When Baynes is found murdered, the list of suspects is long and the motives equally as lengthy. The crime brings Pollard and Toye on the scene, dispatched from Scotland Yard to catch the murderer before the case gets cold. The investigation pushes the cops in numerous directions, though it is the careful examination of clues and insight that leads them to discover more than first meets the eye. With the killer somewhere amongst the reunion attendees, will Pollard and Toye be willing to finger someone, with the victim's departure anything but a sorry loss to society? Lemarchand lays the groundwork for what surely became an interesting series with this debut novel. Some fans of police procedurals will enjoy it, though I found it hard to grip, even from the opening pages.

I have often said that first impressions of authors are hard to dispel, particularly when I have so many on my radar. Having this book put before me was likely the only way I would have read it, though I am sorry to say that I wish I had skipped the opportunity. I found the writing not to my liking and the story took too long to get going for me to thoroughly enjoy the end result. It was a tough read, peppered with my skimming at

times to get through the experience in order to pen this review. Lemarchand does develop her characters well, offering them life and vigour throughout, but I simply could not find myself latching onto them or wanting to dig deeper. Surely, there will be many who have loved this series and have much praise for Lemarchand. To those folks, I tip my hat and praise the fact that I am able to disagree without it being scandalous. I would recommend anyone who reads the dust jacket to give the series a try, for it is perhaps my jaded perspective that left me unsatisfied. That being said, I take my gut reaction seriously and think it bears some merit in the larger reviewing community as well.

Thank you, Madam Lemarchand, for your large contribution to the genre and the writing community. Alas, it just did nothing for me!

Love/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

A Book for All Seasons, a different sort of Book Challenge: <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/...>

Annarella says

This is a very good old-style mystery.
It was like travelling back in time and reading a pleasant and gentle mystery.
I'm not a fan of action packed thriller and I can say this book was right for me.
The style of writing is a bit old fashioned but pleasant.
The cast of characters is likeable and sometimes funny.
The plot was entertaining and engaging, full of red herrings. It kept me guessing till the end.
I'm happy I discovered this author and look forward to reading further instalments in this series.
Highly recommended to classic and cozy mystery lovers.
Many thanks to Sapere Books and Netgalley for this ARC

Lawrence says

DEATH OF AN OLD GIRL is one of Elizabeth Lemarchand's best oan most finely crafted mysteries, the many suspects will keep you unsure of the murderer until the last chapter.

Susan Angela Wallace says

Death of an old girl by Elizabeth lemarchand.
The death of Beatrice Baynes is not a surprise but who killed her and why? With lots of suspects including the tormented god-daughter Madge Thornton or her nephew George Baynes. There is more suspects to come. As detective inspector Pollard and detective sergeant Toye start to investigate they must narrow down the suspects if they are to get the murderer. Will they get their man/lady?
An absolutely fantastic read. I loved the story and the characters. Although I didn't like Torrance at all. He was dodgy. I had no clue who it could be. I wasn't expecting that. A shocker of a surprise there. Highly recommended. 5*.
