



The House Sitter

Peter Lovesey

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The corpse of a beautiful woman, clad in only a bathing suit, is found strangled to death on a popular Sussex beach. When she is finally identified, it turns out she was a top profiler for the National Crime Faculty, who was working on the case of a serial killer. And though she was a Bath resident, the authorities don't want Detective Superintendent Peter Diamond to investigate the murder. How strange. What could they be trying to hide?

The House Sitter Details

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From Reader Review The House Sitter for online ebook

Annabelle says

Thanks to Goodreads friend, Sue Wyatt, for alerting me through a review to author Lovesey. She always finds great mysteries from the Soho series. I liked this book a lot. It has some of the standard British mystery devices, i.e. a protagonist detective, Peter Diamond, who is crusty and has had a terrible wound, i.e. his wife murdered. But everyone tolerates since he is brilliant. However, the author breaks the mold, since the woman sidekick, Hen, isn't his underline, she is in charge of a police department herself. Although she is crusty. The setting near Bath is well drawn, and the murder victim, found strangled on the beach, Emma, is a profiler who was working on a secret potentially serial murder case. The plot is creative with twists, i.e. is Emma's murder related to the serial murder? and how are the serial murder victim's connected? and what about Emma's computer programmer boyfriend, Ken? Cross bows and has-been pop singers enliven the plot. A good read.

Shauna says

A very good and enjoyable read, one in the Peter Diamond police procedural series. The story centres around the murder of a criminal profiler and the serial killer she was attempting to profile. Excellent characterisation and a well-paced plot kept my interest to the end.

Minty McBunny says

This was by far the weakest book I have read in this series so far. There seemed like a lot of juvenile sniggering about sex, foolish characters, and plot lines that went nowhere. I'm glad this was not the first Peter Diamond book I'd read because it would have been the last.

Mrsgaskell says

It's been a long while since I read any of the Detective Superintendent Peter Diamond series of mysteries. I always enjoyed them. This one started out well but I didn't find it very satisfying ultimately. The two different plots tied in just a little too neatly. The novel begins with a murder on the beach; the victim is eventually identified as a psychologist who works occasionally as a profiler for the police. I still like the character of Diamond, who is often amusing.

Krista says

I spent this whole book wondering why it was titled the way it was; then, as soon as I figured it out, it ruined the ending.

I figured this one out, by the way, perhaps because I've read eight of Lovesey's books in a row and I've learned to always suspect the minor character who is beyond suspicion, even if connecting him/her to the crime requires convoluted somersaults of plot development.

Yep.

But still hella readable and fun. On to the next one.

Caroline says

In the middle of a crowded beach in Sussex, a woman is murdered without a single witness to the crime. In addition, her bag is missing and therefore anything that could identify her. When the Sussex police finally identify her, she is found to be a Bath resident and Peter Diamond is called in to be part of the joint investigation with Inspector Hen Mallin of the Sussex police.

The woman is identified as a professor at a University and also a consultant profiler for the police. The last case she was working on before she was murdered adds a complexity to the investigation into her own murder because she was profiling what appeared to be a serial killer. Could this serial killer have killed her too?

Identifying and finding the serial killer who seems to know where police safe houses are and codes to security systems, before the other 2 names on his list are murdered is a race against time without any obvious clues for Peter's and Hen's teams to work with.

The twists in this novel make it a page turner and the ending was a surprise.

Tony says

THE HOUSE SITTER. (2003). Peter Lovesey. ***1/2.

Here's another terrific mystery from Lovesey featuring his series detective, Peter Diamond. This episode devolves around what seems to be a serial killer who uses images from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as his calling cards. Whoever the killer is, he is arrogant enough to announce his future victims in advance. He is methodical and extremely careful in his plotting – able to reach his victims in the most protected places. His motives are initially unclear, but, once known, a concerted effort to catch him before his next target is selected goes underway. Diamond slowly gets into the investigation slowly, but once in he becomes obsessed with the criminal. At the end, the action takes place in his native Bath, where we have come to know him. This is an extremely well-plotted novel that showcases the Detective Diamond that we have come to know and love throughout this series. Any novel by Lovesey is a treat, but this one is Lovesey at his best.

Mark says

We ran into a friend at the library recently who said she had been under a lot of stress and "I just needed to read about people being killed," which was her jokey way of saying a good murder mystery is just the mind

candy we often want.

That's why I picked up this book, my first Lovesey mystery, and I would declare it as an enjoyable experience, but not one where I was awed by the characters or the plot.

This apparently was a transitional novel, where Lovesey was shifting from his well known detective, the brusque Peter Diamond, to a new character, detective Hen Mallin, a motherly, optimistic and equally blunt detective. In this book, a woman who is sunbathing on the beach is found dead, and Diamond and Mallin work the case together, because the death occurred in Mallin's patch but the woman was from Bath, where Diamond is based.

The case quickly morphs into much more spectacular territory, because it turns out the victim was a criminal profiler who had just been called in to help with the killing of a well known director -- by crossbow, no less -- and that the killer had predicted he would kill two other celebrities.

Diamond and Mallin end up working on all these cases, even though a predictably priggish British special ops unit wants them to have no part of it.

Without giving anything away, I would simply say that as much as I enjoyed the characters and some of the twists and turns, the final solution was a little too neatly packaged and beggared belief just a bit. Still, enjoyable, and a writer I may return to, especially for more Mallin books.

Kathleen says

Sometimes what I most need after a long day at school is a hot bath and a mystery with a curmudgeonly old Brit solving crimes. Peter Lovesey's Detective Diamond is just my man. If you are longing for some dry British wit with murder on the side, I suggest curling up with one of these excellent novels from the Soho Crime Series.

Ann says

This is another one of those much-acclaimed mystery series that I can't understand the appeal of. There was cleverness in the puzzle, which involves the connection between the murder of a sunbathing woman who later turns out to be a criminal profiler, and a methodical killer intent on killing 3 specific people who leaves quotes from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* at the crime scene. Peter Diamond and various colleagues from various jurisdictions pursue this case from all angles and come up against false leads and red herrings at every junction. The man who found the dead body has reasons of his own to want to avoid the police. The two beach guards turn out to have given false names and disappear in the middle of the investigation - is this a matter of missing work permits or of a more serious guilt? But the end is completely unconvincing, since it relies on a totally unlikely coincidence. The psychology of the book felt like the author was phoning it in. Peter Diamond is described as a stubborn loner, a hard case, a non-respecter of authority. But it's all telling and no showing. We gather that he lost his wife a year or so before, and that he's not recovered from that loss - but again, we're told, not shown this.

Altogether a competent but formulaic mystery.

Susan says

The body of a criminal profiler is discovered on a crowded beach. DS Diamond co-leads the ever-more complicated case with another DS from a neighboring district, Henrietta "Hen" Mallin. 4 stars for an absorbing, surprising mystery with a dash of humor that I stayed up past midnight reading.

Wisconsin says

I could not resist, this is the third Lovesey book in a row, but I had to see what happened to the characters after a death in the last book. What I enjoy most about this author is his ability to keep his cast of regulars fresh and interesting, by rotating the old and bringing in new. He respects the intelligence of his reader and does not rehash previous books. Now I shall practice discipline and wait a few months before reading the next book, which is in my stack.

John Lee says

I think that Sherlock Holmes called them his 'Three Pipe 'problems when he meant his most intriguing cases. My reading time is late evening when I can settle down in my favourite armchair with a glass of whisky and relax and enjoy my read. I am usually very good and stick to just one glass but sometimes, very occasionally, reaching THAT place in the right book at the right time makes a second glass inevitable and that is why this book gets the '2nd Glass Award' as I just had to finish it off tonight.

Having just found out of the death ,earlier this year, of Stuart Pawson, who held the title of my favourite living crime author, I am promoting Peter Lovesy to that position.

It is such a personal thing, but I find Peter Diamond such a 'me-guy' in so many ways. He feels like one of us, but may be a bit cleverer and perhaps someone who we would want to be like.

Once again, a read that gets my top mark is one without the gratuitous sex and violence.

I haven't read one of Lovesey's novels for a year or so but I was pleased to 'come home' and as soon as I started reading, I knew I was going to enjoy it. The question was, How much? The everyday setting of the murder on the beach was so easy to imagine that you were already part of this crime scene and one of the witnesses. It kept me hooked through to the end.

A nicely complex case which nicely split into two separate elements and the person that I thought I had foreseen as the villain - totally wrong.

My type of read.

Bettie? says

Read by..... Steve Hodson
Total Runtime..... 12 Hours 33 Mins

Description: *The identification of the woman found murdered on Whiteview Sands poses more questions than it answers. Emma Tysoe was a respected psychologist and an official criminal profiler with several successful cases to her credit. Why was she sun-bathing alone so far from home? How did she get there? Who is the mysterious 'Ken' in her private life? What was the murder weapon? Why did the man who noticed she was dead then completely disappear from the scene? When Peter Diamond is brought into the investigation he sheds some light on these matters - most importantly by discovering that she had been seconded under the greatest secrecy to work on the profile of the person who has assassinated one celebrity and is threatening to kill more. Are these killings connected to Emma's death? Diamond thinks so, but he cannot persuade his colleagues to agree with him, and even he cannot make all the pieces fit the jigsaw he's envisaged.*

This is the one with the dead duracell (that's an Eveready™ with the copper coloured top), Laver and Emerson, a crossbow, and 'Ken'.

3* The Last Detective (Peter Diamond, #1)
2* Diamond Solitaire (Peter Diamond #2)
3* The Summons (Peter Diamond #3)
3* Bloodhounds (Peter Diamond, #4)
3.5* Upon A Dark Night (Peter Diamond #5)
3.5* The Vault (Peter Diamond, #6)
3* Diamond Dust (Peter Diamond, #7)
3.5* The House Sitter (Peter Diamond, #8)
CR The Secret Hangman

Debra says

Would have rated this classic english mystery higher except for (potential spoiler) no professional would mix personal and case notes in a single file. Made everything a little too accessible, and the killer a little bit of an afterthought in character development.
