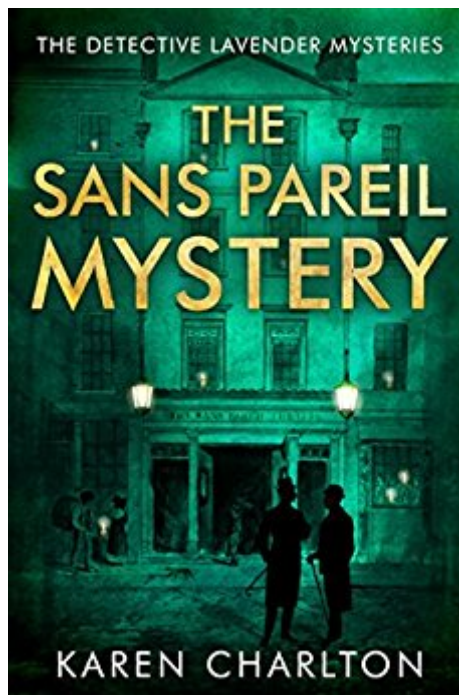




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The Sans Pareil Mystery (The Detective Lavender Mysteries Book 2)



Synopsis

On a cold February night in Regency London, a dark curtain falls on the Sans Pareil Theatre following the death of April Clare, a promising young actress, whose body is found in mysterious circumstances. Detective Stephen Lavender and his dependable deputy, Constable Woods, quickly discover that nothing is quite as it seems. As successive mysteries unfold, they soon realise that it is not only the actors from the Sans Pareil who are playing a part. With the Napoleonic War looming dangerously across the Channel, this is a time of suspicion and treachery. Following the clues from the seedy back streets of Covent Garden up through the echelons of society, Lavender and Woods begin to fear that the case is much bigger than they could dare imagine and worse, that they are at risk of becoming mere players in a master criminal's shadowy drama. It will take all of Lavender's skill and wit, and help from the beautiful Magdalena, to bring the mystery of the Sans Pareil Theatre to a dramatic conclusion in the final act.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I liked this second full-length novel in the Lavender-Woods Regency detective duo series even better than the first (*The Heiress of Linn Hagh* (*The Detective Lavender Mysteries Book 1*)). It moved faster, was more interesting and I'm finally getting to know Lavender and Woods better as people, not just as Bow Street detectives. (There are, BTW, two short stories in the series also: *The Mystery of the Skelton Diamonds: A Detective Lavender Short Story* and *The Piccadilly Pickpocket: A Detective Lavender Short Story* (Kindle Single).) In general, if you give me a novel with history, mystery and some romance in it, I'm a happy reader, and this one had all that. This story set in 1810 London immersed me in the sights and sounds and even smells of various parts of London and introduced me to characters from various socioeconomic levels of society and offers tidbits of what's happening in England at the time. It seems to be well researched, at least to me with my relatively limited knowledge of history. Lavender and Woods have a new mystery to solve. A woman's dead body is discovered in a building set for demolition in the slums. Who is she? How did she die? When the body is taken for autopsy, we learn that she's a semi-well-known actress at the Sans Pareil Theatre. Now the investigation begins in earnest. There's lots to learn about the dead woman and her family and about the theatre she was working in and...could there be some ties to criminal activities or even spying for the French? Well, let's let Lavender and Woods do their best to find out. In addition to the crime, we have the personal stories of the two, learning more about Lavender's past and also about Magdalena, the somewhat mysterious Spanish widow he's been falling for over the course of the series. All in all, this is a pretty complete tale. The mystery has enough plot twists and suspicious characters to hold your interest and the personal stories keep you sympathetic to the main characters. So, please bring on the next installment, *Ms Charlton*. I'm already waiting for it.

This is my first book by this author; but it will not be my last. The writing is much better than many who get a great deal more attention, her characters are well-developed and interesting, and the mystery kept my interest to the very end, even though I was suspicious of the villain early on. I do have one question, though. Do none of these authors know about the pronoun "me"? They will invariably say, "She went to the theatre with Woods and I"? She didn't go with "I"--she went with "me"! But they will say, "She is as good at it as me". "Me" is not good at it--"I" am! Evidently the rules of grammar have changed since I learned them, since most authors these days seem to use "I" when I think it should be "me", etc. Regardless, if you like a good mystery, I do not hesitate to recommend this author.

I am more happy than in my review of the first of these Detective Lavender books. I love book series where the characters are so well defined that I start to feel for them as if they're real. Karen Charlton has created such an engaging world and characters who are human and loveable such I'm sorry when the stories are over. I also like her technique of writing short chapters which make it easy to set down when I have to go do grown-up stuff then pick back up 5 minutes later (I'm a grandpa so there isn't much call for me to be a grownup). Also, I love a good denouement at the end; some writers like to leave all of that to the reader's imagination but I prefer to have it spelled out. In fact, that is the part of the story that gives the characters their finishing touches so I want to start the next book ASAP to see what they get up to next. Read Ms. Charlton's books, they are delightful

Book two in the Lavender mystery series. Another great addition to the series."Me Ma says 'Send a Constable'! Quick! They're murdering a woman at Raleigh Close on 'Art Street." So begins the mystery. In the remains of a dilapidated building, they find the body of a beautiful young woman concealed beneath the floorboards. She's been dead for two or three days -- and -- her shoes don't fit. The young woman is soon identified as an actress from the local theater. Lavender and Woods investigate and their investigations soon take strange turns -- misidentification, spies, murder and general mayhem. I like the interplay between Lavender and Woods -- they play off each other really well. I don't care for Don't care for Don't care for Magdalena, who is Lavender's love interest. Maybe she'll grow on me through other books in the series, but so far I don't like her.

I am enjoying books by Karen Charlton. Reading stories that are set in the 1800s is good for my imagination, as the clothes were so beautiful. Her characters are well-developed as we travel through one book after another, too. The plot thickens, as they say, as you continue to read & follow Detective Lavender & Woods. There are excellent twists and turns to keep you reading.

I am officially hooked on this series. I am a fan of 19th century English mysteries. I grew up with my nose in Agatha Christie books and have found this series as intriguing.

I love the Detective Lavender series! The writing is clear, direct, and so evocative of the times in which the stories take place. The plot is well done, the characters well developed, and frankly, I think this book as well as the first in the series, are just charming as well as exciting to read. I hope Karen Charlton continues to give us more of Detective Lavender!

I've now completed the first two books of detective lavender. Lavender and Wood's are a very complimentary pair searching for a young girl's killers only to stumble into international intrigue. While searching for the truth Lavender's love Magdalene is drawn into danger. A good story with enough twists and turns to keep you turning pages. I am looking forward to reading the next few stories in the series.

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