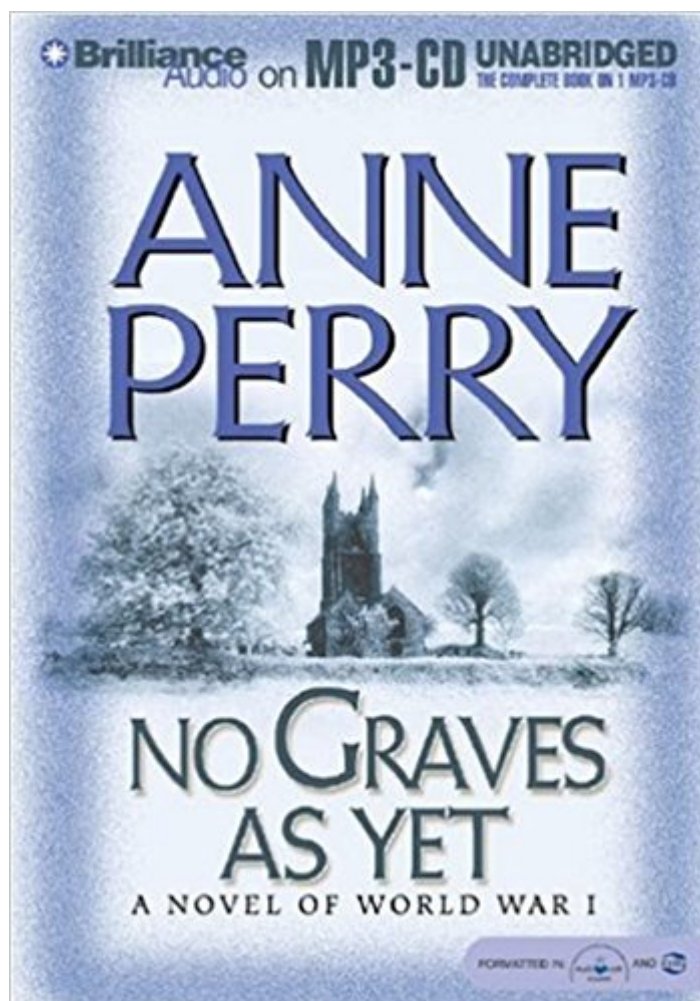


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No Graves As Yet: A Novel Of World War One (World War One Series)



Synopsis

On a sunny afternoon in late June, Cambridge professor Joseph Reavley is summoned from a student cricket match to learn that his parents have died in an automobile crash. Joseph's brother, Matthew, an officer in the Intelligence Service, reveals that their father had been en route to London to turn over to him a mysterious secret document—allegedly with the power to disgrace England forever and destroy the civilized world. A paper so damning that Joseph and Matthew dared mention it only to their restless sister. Now it has vanished. What has happened to this explosive document, if indeed it ever existed? How had it fallen into the hands of their father, a quiet countryman? Not even Matthew, with his Intelligence connections, can answer these questions. And Joseph is soon burdened with a second tragedy: the shocking murder of his most gifted student, handsome Sebastian Allard, loved and admired by everyone. Or so it appeared. Meanwhile, England's seamless peace is cracking—as the distance between the murder of an Austrian archduke by a Serbian anarchist and the death of a brilliant university student by a bullet to the head becomes shorter with each day.

Book Information

Series: World War One Series (Book 1)

MP3 CD

Publisher: Brilliance Audio; MP3 Una edition (June 10, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1593352301

ISBN-13: 978-1593352301

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 6.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 130 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #6,112,707 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 in [Books > Books on CD](#)
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Customer Reviews

This absorbing mystery/spy thriller, set in tranquil Cambridge just before the onset of the Great War, marks a powerful start to bestseller Perry's much anticipated new series. In a lush and deceptively peaceful opening scene, college professor and chaplain Joseph Reavley is interrupted while

watching a cricket game by his intelligence officer brother, Matthew, who reports the sudden death of their parents in a car crash. This horrifying news sets off a long but compelling investigation by the brothers that takes them across verdant summertime England, looking for a secret document that their father was trying to deliver to Matthew at the time of his death. Against a backdrop of ominous news from the continent, Perry artfully weaves connections between pacifist students at Cambridge, one of whom is also murdered, and German agents who may be planning "a conspiracy to ruin England and everything we stand for." The intrigue is further complicated by jilted lovers and jealous spouses at the university, all with grudges against an alleged blackmailer in their midst who may also be privy to exam cribbing and other illicit goings-on. Perry's title, a quotation from G.K. Chesterton, is a portent of the carnage that soon awaits the youth of England, yet by the final resolution of this gripping case, many graves have regrettably already been filled in Cambridge's serene churchyards. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"SUSPENSEFUL, OFTEN HEARTBREAKING AND RIVETING . . . This is Perry's probing, brooding landscape of the soul, which she masters and makes her own." Providence Journal "Perry's melancholy evocation of the eternal afternoon that would soon turn to night all over England is lovely." The New York Times Book Review "[A] beautifully constructed book, the start of a new series of five novels about England's favorite obsession, World War I." Chicago Tribune --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This first installment of the 5-book series sets the stage for all that is to come in the subsequent books. The series gives the best descriptions of World War I experiences I have ever read. The series is the story of four adult siblings whose parents are killed in an auto accident while attempting to deliver a document to their son who is a member of the British Secret Service. The contents of that document are so horrifying that its implementation would forever destroy British honor. On the other hand, it might prevent the carnage of the war to come. The overriding theme of each of the books is the search for the author of the document and the attempt to stop him from continuing his efforts to bring about his vision of a world at peace. In addition, each book involves a murder mystery that may or may not be related to the "Peacemaker." This is Anne Perry, after all, so the reader must be prepared for a lot of words, dense internal dialogues, excruciating soul-searching,

and flights of philosophical thought - not bad things, but possibly off-putting to anyone not accustomed to this style of writing. In the end, though, it's all worth it. This is a wonderful series.

I purchased this book because I enjoy reading WWI-era novels. The mysteries in the story were compelling, the descriptions of Cambridge effectively set the scene for time and place and I liked the characters. The dialogue could get a little tedious. I found myself skimming some of the conversations. I doubted a couple of the plot points, but I'm ok with suspending disbelief long enough to enjoy a story. I highlighted several passages in the book and appreciated the author's ability to put words and context to emotions I feel in my own life. I was not familiar with Anne Perry, so I "googled" her and was surprised to learn of her criminal past. From that point, I was distracted - always reading the words and wondering why in the world would she choose this genre for her career. As a believer in grace and second chances, I accepted that the author has a voice and something to say and the passages I highlighted are meaningful to me. I wish her the best, but I don't think I'll continue with the series.

I have always enjoyed Anne Perry's mysteries. This book seemed a little slow in grabbing my interest. However, the family dynamics of the central family (two adult brothers whose parents die suddenly in a mysterious auto accident, as well as the dynamics in the family of one of the suspects in the eventual murder) are quite interesting. This book takes place as WWI is about to start. There is a mystery to solve, of course, two of them, actually, and neither is straightforward. I knew little about the political climate in England, Europe and the world that led to the long and deadly war. This book piqued my interest to know more. It is a fairly quick read, and the character development is quite good as one has come to expect from Anne Perry. At the end one wonders if the war could have been postponed, lessened or avoided, if only the characters in the book had not met with foul play.

For a very long time, I read Anne Perry's ongoing series of mysteries set in Victorian England. It didn't matter if they were centered around the husband and wife team of Thomas and Charlotte Pitt, or the enigmatic William Monk. But after a while, they started to pale -- after all, the mystery genre fits into a formula of a body is found, an outsider is brought in to find the clues and the people associated with the killing, and eventually justice is served, usually to the delight of the reader who is assured that good will triumph. Read enough of these, and after a time, you can start to pick out what will be happening in the first hundred pages or so. And so, with a sigh of regret on my part, I stopped reading Anne Perry quite so much. But in 2002 or so, Ms. Perry started a new series of

mysteries that are more of historical novel than a set of ongoing whodunits. Set in and around the events of the First World War, and more specifically, one family's survival in the tragedy, there would be a definite beginning and end to the series. *No Graves As Yet* is the first novel of the five. It begins in the rich days of June 1914. Joseph Reavley is a teacher at Cambridge University, watching a match of cricket when news arrives of a terrible accident involving his parents, John and Alys, a prosperous middle-class couple. As his siblings gather for the funeral, Joseph realizes along with his brother Matthew that their parents' death may have actually been a murder -- but with little proof, and even less motive, the family has little to go on. Joseph returns to Cambridge, Matthew to London, both of them searching for something to make the horror of the deaths have some kind of sense. Further tragedy awaits Joseph when a brilliant student of his, Sebastian Allard, is found in his room with a bullet in his head, but without any clues or a weapon nearby to suggest who did it. Matthew has plenty of problems of his own -- for he is an intelligence officer, and tensions in Europe are rising with rumors of impending war everywhere. Indeed, war is on everyone's mind, and curiously enough, the death of the Reavleys occurred on the very same day that an Austrian Archduke was assassinated in a Serbian town. Both Joseph and Matthew find themselves questioning themselves and the unsettled times that they are living in. A great deal of the story is given over to Joseph's desperate melancholy, watching as those he has loved -- his deceased wife, his parents, Sebastian -- all vanish, and his deep psychological torment in reconciling his religious beliefs with a world that is getting ever more confusing. Over it all hangs the mysterious documents that it appears that their father had with him at the time of his death -- a secret that may prevent or accelerate a future war. What I liked about this one was that Anne Perry carefully weaves in strands of fact in with her fictional Reavley family. Too, she also gives plenty of little details about daily life in England in that hot summer of 1914, from food, automobiles, telephones, mourning customs, to the larger world of the time. I was also able to learn about some of the history of the time that I wasn't aware of, including the military mutiny at the Curragh, and the ongoing troubles of Ireland, then under British rule; the Suffragette movement to get women the vote, and the subtler tangles of adultery, pride, and the ruthless class structure of the time. The downside is that the novel is glacially paced through the first half of the story. I know that the author is laying down the groundwork for the next four books, and introducing the reader to the Reavley family, but it was very hard going and I was wondering if I should bother with the rest of the series. However, once I got past that halfway point, the story picked up the pace, and the plot starts to come together, building up to a conclusion that breaks at the start of the war, and Britain declares war on Germany. There are quite a few plot lines in this to be untangled, but for the careful, persevering reader, the story has a great deal of

depth and insight. Red herrings wiggle through here and there, but I also liked that Perry takes the time to let the investigation develop, having it spread out over two months, instead of having it be solved in a matter of days, allowing us to watch the three Reavley siblings questioning themselves and the world around them to great effect. Recommended, with four stars. I'll be certain to check out the next book in the series, *Shoulder the Sky*.

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