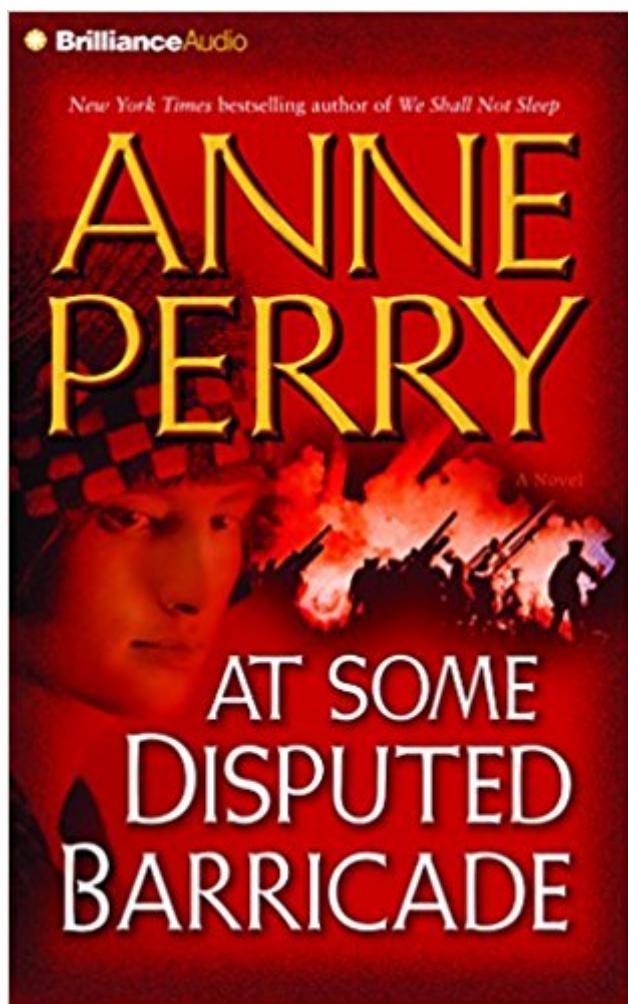


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At Some Disputed Barricade (World War One Series)



Synopsis

July 1917: Joseph Reavley, a chaplain, and his sister Judith, an ambulance driver, are bone-weary as they approach the fourth year of the conflict; the peace of the English countryside seems a world away. On the Western Front, the Battle of Passchendaele has begun, and among the many fatalities from Joseph's regiment is the trusted commanding officer, who is replaced by a young major whose pompous incompetence virtually guarantees that many good soldiers will die needlessly. But soon he, too, is dead—killed by his own men. Although Joseph would like to turn a blind eye, he knows that he must not. Judith, however, anguished at the prospect of courts-martial and executions for the twelve men arrested for the crime, has no such inhibitions and, risking her own life, helps all but one of the prisoners to escape. Back in England, Joseph and Judith's brother, Matthew, continues his desperate pursuit to unmask the sinister figure known as the Peacemaker—an obsessed genius who has committed murder and treason in an attempt to stop Britain from winning the war. As Matthew trails the Peacemaker, Joseph tracks his escaped comrades through Switzerland and into enemy territory. His search will lead to a reckoning pitting courage and honor against the blind machinery of military justice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fans of the first three books in this WWI series from Perry, best known for her Victorian police procedurals, will eagerly pick up this fourth volume to learn more of the ongoing saga of the three

Reavley siblings: Joseph, a chaplain working with soldiers on the front line in France; Matthew, a British intelligence officer; and Judith, an ambulance driver. (Newcomers may struggle to understand the backstory.) Matthew continues his search for the traitorous mastermind—the "Peacemaker"—plotting to align Britain with Germany to end the war, while Joseph is working on a smaller mystery: was British officer Howard Northrop killed by one of his own men? Exposition slows down the pace in places, but the author vividly captures the unspeakable horrors of the Great War. Readers won't have long to wait for the fifth and final entry in the series, *We Shall Not Sleep* (Reviews, Feb. 5). (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The fourth entry in Perry's World War I series finds chaplain Joseph Reavley three years into his service in the trenches of Ypres on the western front. The British army has suffered appalling losses, and the men are exhausted, hungry, and afraid. Now an incompetent officer, the son of a general, unwilling to take advice from more experienced soldiers, is sending his men to certain death by making wrongheaded, uninformed decisions. When the officer's body is discovered, it falls to Joseph to determine whether he was killed by his own men. The investigation is complicated when Joseph's sister, Judith, a fearless ambulance driver, is drawn into the dispute. Meanwhile, their brother, Matthew, who works for British intelligence, is seeing indications of the work of the Peacemaker, who, under the guise of seeking an end to the conflict, is sabotaging Britain's war effort. Perry explores the shifting nature of loyalty, conscience, and honor when set against the backdrop of a blood-soaked battlefield, and her grisly descriptions of that battlefield are heartrending. Joanne WilkinsonCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Britain fought "The Great War" long before the U.S. entered the fight. Ms. Perry graphically shows the horrors of trench warfare. As an English and history teacher, I wish I had had a book like this available to enable me to awake in my students an interest in this part of the early 20th century. The author puts you right there with the soldiers and captures the attitudes -- the glue -- that held that country together. World War I was the tough-to-endure preparation that gave English men and women the stamina to withstand the continual bombings of World War II. You may feel that aspects of the book are romanticized, but no one who reads this book will fail to learn more about how the first 20 years of the last century shaped the 80 years that followed -- and continues even today. This series has been an education for me. Some may find parts of it slow moving, but I have relished

every word.

This book continues to follow the Reavleys - Matthew, Judith, and Joseph. They are all involved in WWI - Matthew in Military Intelligence, Judith is an ambulance driver at the front, and Joseph is the chaplain for the troops also at the front. Their parents were murdered before the war, because they found a treaty that would make an alliance between England and Germany, creating a major world power from a mastermind called The Peacemaker, a man high up in the government. The first half of the book is a bit slow, but it has to, to explain the enormity of the war and the horror and slaughter. The story revolves around some troops who try to get their inept division leader who is causing more death and injury to his troops to stop. In an attempt to scare him into reality, these men hold a kangaroo court, but something goes awry. It is up to Joseph to find answers and get the men back to a semblance of normalcy. BUT the 2nd half of the book sparkles!! While Mrs. Perry shows the horror on the front, the filth and death and mustard gas, but she has yet to say anything about the flying aces of WWI - She vividly shows us dogfights and even has Joseph take part in one - he even crosses paths with the Red Baron! The brilliance of writing takes us there on the front and we feel the pain of war. There is one more book to this series, and although I am a fan of the Monk and Pitt series, I will miss this series - Perry creates a vivid picture of war.

In this gripping WWI series, Anne Perry builds the stories by alternating chapters that follow Joseph and Judith Reavley's travails on and near the battlefield, with other chapters about brother Matthew's efforts in London to track down the mysterious Peacemaker. One would expect that an abridgement would consist of judicious removal of unnecessary or repetitive text from both threads of the story. As other reviewers have mentioned, there is a fair amount of this repetitive material that could, indeed, be trimmed. Instead, this audio "abridgement" has been accomplished by simply deleting all the chapters having to do with Matthew. You wouldn't know this by reading the blurb on the back of the box, because it mentions Matthew and the Peacemaker (I presume it's the identical blurb to the one that appears on the book cover). I will have to get the book or an unabridged audio version to catch up on the Matthew thread before I can go on to the last book in the series. I could kick myself for not noticing that this CD set was an "abridged" version, but the manner of "abridgement" made my oversight that much worse.

I read this series to understand more of what my ancestors and relatives (and perhaps yours) endured in WWI. We hear so much about WWII; have we forgotten about WWI?

This series is superb, not only as a member of the murder mystery genre, but as fiction itself. The characters are real, the venue believable, the plot engulfing. I was told by a teacher a generation younger than I that he had not had social sciences stressed during his own primary education. When people spoke of the "Depression" and the "Dust Bowl Years," he really drew a blank. It's a shame that so little emphasis is placed today on the experiences of the past. Little wonder that there are those who deny the holocaust and other sad events in human history. Unfortunately as some great mind once said, "If we do not learn from history, we are condemned to repeat it." Much of human history is just that, repeats of past mistakes made in ignorance of the fact that "we tried that before." Historical fiction like Anne Perry's makes up for that deficit in our education. Certainly with her WWI series, the intense events of the time and the tragic consequences of them are made abundantly apparent and very real for the reader. I have often enjoyed the classical murder mysteries from the 1920's, 30's, 40's and 50's for their nostalgic portrait of the cultures of those decades, but much of what comes across in these books is an unconscious transmission of the quality of the time. The author of that time period was more interested in their contemporary readers than in what the future reader might think and feel about the work. With the historical fiction of Anne Perry mysteries, the full bloom of a culture and its attitudes comes across with precise awareness. The author, with 20-20 hindsight, is able to capture details of her periods--here WWI era France and England--that writers of the time were probably not even aware were or would be significant. For the reader who wants to "experience" a time period, Ms Perry has very successfully provided a peak into the past. The amount of research that must have been necessary to do it must have been major, but it was certainly worth it. In *At Some Disputed Barricade*, Ms Perry returns to the lives and experiences of the Reavely family, Joseph, a minister confronted with the limits of religion to explain a world in senseless conflict, his brother Mathew, a secret agent facing the complexities of loyalty, family, and nation, and their sister Judith, an ambulance driver faced with staggering reality near the front lines. The characters must face the unique demands of war on commanders and their soldiers, and on the conscience of the individual in confusing, extreme and conflicting circumstances. A wonderful read. Human conscience in a crucible.

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