

The Lazarus Curse

Tessa Harris

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In 1780s London, American anatomist Dr. Thomas Silkstone is plunged into a swirling cauldron of sorcery, slavery, and cold-blooded murder . . . When the sole survivor of an ill-fated scientific expedition to Jamaica goes missing upon his return to London, Dr. Thomas Silkstone--entrusted with cataloging the expedition's New World specimens--feels compelled to investigate. There are rumors of a potion that has the power to raise the dead--and the formula is suspected to be in the private journal that has disappeared along with the young botanist.

As Dr. Silkstone searches for clues to the man's whereabouts, he is drawn deeper into a dark and dangerous world of vengeance, infidelity, murder, and the trafficking of corpses for profit. Without the support of his beloved Lady Lydia Farrell--from whom he has been forcibly separated by law--he must confront the horrors of slavery, as well the very depths of human wickedness. And after a headless corpse is discovered, Dr. Silkstone begins to uncover the sinister motives of those in power who would stop at nothing to possess the Lazarus potion. . .

Praise for *The Dead Shall Not Rest*

"Outstanding. . . well-rounded characters, cleverly concealed evidence and an assured prose style point to a long run for this historical series." --"Publishers Weekly "(starred review)

"Populated with real historical characters and admirably researched, Harris's novel features a complex and engrossing plot. A touch of romance makes this sophomore outing even more enticing. Savvy readers will also recall Hilary Mantel's "The Giant, O'Brien."" --"Library Journal"

Praise for *The Anatomist's Apprentice*

"Densely plotted. . . We await--indeed, demand--the sequel." --"The New York Times Book Review"

"An absorbing debut. . . Harris has more than a few tricks up her sleeve and even veteran armchair puzzle solvers are likely to be surprised." --"Publishers Weekly"

"Smart misdirection and time-period appropriate medical details make for a promising start to a new series. A strong choice for readers of Ariana Franklin and Caleb Carr." --"Library Journal"

The Lazarus Curse Details

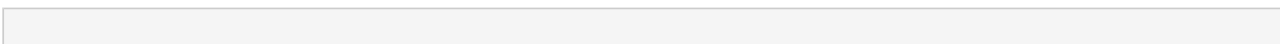
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From Reader Review The Lazarus Curse for online ebook

Linda Lou McCall says

PLEASE, HARRIS, DONT HURT 'EM!!!!

Wow! It was with much trepidation combined with excitement that I read this book about slavery in Britain. The fourth in the author's Dr. Thomas Silkstone series, this book won't be released until July, but I was lucky enough to get an Advanced Readers Copy directly from the publisher. As a black American, I was curious to learn more about a barely documented part of British history. About 8 pages in I was so taken aback by a certain scene that I was "thisclose" to abandoning this effort. But, just like passing a bad wreck on the highway, you don't want to look but can't turn away!

Much of the subject matter - black magic, voodoo, obeah, etc. was not new to me, especially as it pertains to enslaved Africans. But I knew nothing about the horrible conditions that existed among enslaved and free blacks in England during this era. However, the author manages to expertly present a sensitive and uncomfortable issue without interjecting "political correctness" - a habit among white authors that I find to be unnecessary when recounting actual historical facts to a present day audience. Who are you trying to protect? As blacks, we still feel the pain of oppression whether you say "n-word" or "nigger"! A rose by any other name.....etc.

Tessa Harris did a magnificent job here. As usual, the reader is educated on a little known part of history that had a major impact on a small amount of the English population. Yes, there were some parts that were very difficult for me as a black person and will be just as uncomfortable for ANY human being. But, the story is well-researched, shocking and plausible. Dr. Silkstone continues to be a respected and likable person with the returning characters still well-developed. The villains are despicable and the heroes sympathetic. Even the black characters are finely drawn with none of the disturbing stereotypes which often pollute such stories.

That said, all of the above goes right out the door in the cliff-hanger ending! I swear I didn't see it coming! I was left with my jaw in my lap, mad because now I have to wait another year for the next installment! I was so distraught that it took a double Black Jack with beer back to steady my nerves - and I don't even drink! Like the 1990 MC Hammer "Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em" tour, Tessa Harris "hurt" me with this book! But it HURT SO GOOD that I can't wait for more! I'm fortunate because I usually buy my books from Audible.com so I get to take another ride when the book is finally published. If master narrator Simon Vance is onboard as he is on "The Anatomist's Apprentice", "The Dead Shall Not Rest", and "The Devil's Breath", the audio version will be complete with the many layers and textures that make the Dr. Silkstone series so outstanding and addictive. Well played, Ms. Harris!

Kent Keifer says

A good solid mystery novel with some actual historical detail mixed in and a some voodoo as well. This one really focuses on the cruelty of slavery and the shocking way some slave owners treated human beings worse than property. The main characters aren't anything memorable, but the historical setting and complicated mystery plot are worth the read. The book was good enough that I'll likely try another in this series.

K.S. Marsden says

Dr Silkstone is caught up in a fellow academic's murder, and the murky world of slave freedom in London.

I received a free copy from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

First of all, I would like to state that I DID NOT KNOW THIS WAS PART OF A SERIES.

When I requested this from Netgalley, nowhere did it mention that this was not the first book - it just said that it was *a* Dr Silkstone book.

Nowhere on the cover or introductory pages in my ecopy did it mention the rest of the series or a series order.

Perhaps if I had known this was an established world I might have been a bit more forgiving, and the things that annoyed me might not have... as much.

I don't know, maybe Harris wants her books to be read as stand-alones as well as part of a series. And you *can* read it as a stand-alone; it is easy to follow and you quickly learn the characters and their place in the world.

I just... didn't care.

I have come into this story in a place where Thomas and Lydia are in love but are not permitted to marry. They lead very separate lives (Thomas, a busy doctor in London; Lydia managing her estate and young son in the country); they keep in touch by letter, but these are highly edited and keep major facts hidden from each other (that Thomas is investigating a murder; and that Lydia has employed a new estate manager that her son adores).

Aside from the letters, there are no connections or intersecting storylines between these two. The chapters that focus on Thomas are a murder mystery and questioning of the slave trade. Lydia's chapters could well be scenes from a Jane Austen novel. Both are good in their own way, but feel shoved together unnaturally in this book.

I did like the plot - that earned the stars for me.

A voyage to collect newly discovered plants seems to be cursed as two of the senior scientists died on the return trip; and the third, a young illustrator, is murdered in London. There seems to be something about the innocent, purely academic trip that has caught the attention of some very dark characters.

At the same time, Thomas gets drawn into the woes of black slaves. Slavery has been made illegal in England, but visiting American slaves are still at the mercy of their masters, and are seeking any way out.

Both were good, but again - very disconnected. The only thing that linked the two was the fact that they involved Thomas, and he just wasn't a strong enough character to pull it off.

So, Thomas.

He was very bland. He was a good scientific narrator, he took you along the story logically, but with only a sniff of emotion and no personality.

I didn't care about him.

He is a good guy, acts like a gentleman to everyone he meets, and always does the right and moral thing. He isn't preachy, he isn't entitled, he isn't... anything.

I questioned quite a few things that he did. Why is this doctor investigating a murder? I found it bizarre that this man of medicine took it upon himself to look into the murder, and why his colleagues didn't raise any objections, and weren't the least bit surprised (again, this could be something established in the rest of the series, but at the time I didn't know it was the 4th book).

Why is he investigating? He isn't tenacious or driven by curiosity. He isn't excited when it goes right, or frustrated when it goes wrong. He is just this blank space that drifts from one scene to the next.

The clues felt like some sort of game. Have you spoken to the prostitute? YES. You have unlocked the next clue. Have you spoken to the widow? NO. Go back to the widow to unlock your next clue.

Information was drip fed to Thomas to keep him going in the right direction, and I got annoyed when certain characters decide that they will unveil something now, when they could have before, it was all just a little clunky.

Thomas treats each person as an individual, regardless of the colour of their skin, or their gender. That is nice and all written believably.

That this simpering and soft Dr Silkstone who shows no physical merit throughout the book, is suddenly able to fend off a couple of brutes long enough for a nightwatchman to come by? Sure.

So overall, an interesting array of historical stories, even if they didn't mesh. I don't think I'll be reading the rest of the series.

Tess says

I agree with several other reviewers who are tired of the Lydia/Thomas dynamic. Not so much the romance, but the nonstop hurdles to the romance. Plus, Lydia started the series with the promise of being woman finding her strength (interesting!) but has since turned into the heroine tied to the railroad tracks waiting for a man to save her (boring). Also, does Dr. Silkstone HAVE any flaws? Let's see a little more depth from this do-gooder.

Despite my criticisms, of course I'll read the next book since young American anatomist + pet rat named Franklin + Georgian England = cool

And, as I have mentioned before, I'd listen to audiobook performer Simon Vance read the phonebook.

Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says

This book is a case of I should have checked before listening to it.

When I saw this book while browsing through my library's catalogue of downloadable audiobooks, I had no idea it was the fourth book in the series. The title sounded interesting so I decided I wanted to give it a go. Why not? Sounded interesting enough.

I started it without problem. Not confusing or hard to follow. Harris does a great job of backtracking to remind people what happened without making it awkward. It felt natural and I was caught up with everything without feeling as if earlier books were spoiled if I chose to go back to them. And, I liked the side characters better. Harris focused on them and they were good, but the titular character? Ugh, nope. I can't tell you anything about him besides that he's really good at everything and is a genuinely nice man who is also rather anachronistic with beliefs.

I may listen to the first book to see if my opinion changes, but it wasn't a great book. I liked the plot, but

when I took a step back to think about the characters who have been developed over a book or more, it wasn't impressive.

paulfusillo says

It is almost unbelievable that a book is written with no ending. It appears that this offer wrote this book with the intention of you buying a following book. It wasn't a great book but to leave it with the love interest in an asylum and not follow up is disgraceful. I am surprised and disappointed that good reads would encourage an author like this. People that bought this book should be given a refund.

Chelsea says

This series is wearing a little thin. I think it could become enjoyable again if she would just drop the dead weight that goes by the name Lady Lydia Farrell. Here's a hint: If Lydia likes someone, you can bet that they're going to be a total dillweed (with the exception of Thomas, of course.) I just no longer give a crap about her and I want Thomas to find someone less Mary Sue. I'm rooting for the newly widowed Miss Perrick. She seems clever and could be a suitable partner for a man of intelligence like Silkstone.

Martina Sartor says

Molto interessante la parte storica sulla schiavitù e il movimento abolizionista in Gran Bretagna. La figura di Thomas Silkstone e i suoi metodi d'indagine diventano sempre più interessanti. Ora però sono ansiosa di sapere cosa succederà a Lydia!!!
Serie da leggere preferibilmente in ordine cronologico.

Albert says

Title - The Lazarus Curse

Author - Tessa Harris

Summary -

In 1782, London, England, an expedition to Jamaica returns home. Its journey to collect plants and fauna of the island claims the lives of its two scientists. Dr. Thomas Silkstone is entrusted to catalog the specimens. But Silkstone is not British and is of the recently independent new country of the Americas and finds himself under constant scrutiny. To complicate the issue, Silkstone also finds the deaths of the two scientists suspicious and in his investigation finds that what the ship was truly bringing back from the island was more than plants and specimens for study. What is was truly returning with was a potion used by the native islanders. A potion that can raise the dead.

"...It did not happen quickly. Another hour, maybe two, elapsed until it came to pass. And when it did, the crowd watched in stunned silence as slowly the boy's eyes opened. Another few moments and his fingers moved, then his toes, until finally the priest took his hand and he rose from his reed mat. The youth had been raised from the dead by the magic man.

'Like Lazarus,' muttered Dr. Perrick, his eyes wide in awe.

'Fascinating,' said Dr. Welton, looking up from his journal. He was recording everything he saw in detail, his pencil moving furiously across the page. Turning to the young man at his side he asked, 'Mr. Bartlett, you have a sketch of this remarkable plant...'

Beyond the deadly and miraculous plant, Silkstone is thrown into a world of where though many Africans in England were considered free, many more still lived in bondage and treated as slaves. Silkstone must determine the truth of the Lazarus Curse as he battles to the prevailing notion of slavery and freedom.

Review -

Tessa Harris writes incredible historical mysteries. Her control and research of the setting and the times is impeccable. The Lazarus is keenly plotted, with several subplots revolving around the main theme, the only issue being is the main theme the plant which can raise the dead, or the enslavement of African men and women in what purports to be a free society in the England of 1782. Harris weaves them together well until they seem seamless in their delivery.

Silkstone, an 18th century anatomist, a forerunner of what we would look at today as a forensic scientist, is adrift as an American in a country so recently at war with his homeland. His nationality immediately making him suspect in all he says and does. The English, primarily the aristocratic class are painted as selfish and self serving, considering all about them beneath them despite their noble and liberal words. Something that has not changed in two hundred plus years on either side of the ocean.

The Lazarus potion itself is something of a let down. Primarily sought after not for its medicinal properties but what it might do in the field of battle. For when it raises the dead, it also makes them compliant and susceptible to influence. As you can guess, it makes them controllable zombies. This plot is somewhat fanciful and might have lost the book had Harris not kept the tale grounded in the pain and suffering of the slaves still being kept in a free England.

The Lazarus Curse is a well plotted and paced Historical mystery. A welcome addition to an already well stocked field. For that reason I hope it does not get lost in the volume of such mysteries out there and gets its due audience.

An excellent read.

Jenny Boyce says

A fantastic mystery set in London that masterfully blends natural science, the cruelties of slavery, and voodoo into a heart pounding adventure that will leave the reader chilled to the bone.

The Lazarus Curse follows Dr. Thomas Silkstone as he finds himself smack in the middle of a deadly adventure when he asked to catalogue the specimens brought back by an ill fated expedition to the new world. When an important journal disappears and the only remaining member of the expedition party is

murdered, Silkstone is thrown into a mystery that will expose him to the cruelties of slavery and the cruelties of people that spans the world.

This story is one that will haunt the reader long after the pages have finished turning. Exposing the reader to not only the cruelties of slavery in England, but to the wickedness of the human being, *The Lazarus Curse* is a book that will have the reader turning away from the story in horror and eagerly awaiting more in equal parts.

This is the first book that I have read by Tessa Harris and I have to say that I really enjoyed her style of writing. She writes in a manner that is descriptive, without being overly so. Her descriptions of London and the horrors that befell the characters were vivid and easily pictured, yet it was easy to imagine all of the extra pieces without her having to explicitly state what everything looked like exactly. Harris also writes passages of immense action in a smooth and easily followed manner. At no point during the story was I at a loss as to what was going on, the author definitely understands how to paint a clear picture with her words.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in fascinating stories that masterfully blend the world of natural science with that of slavery and voodoo. *The Lazarus Curse* is a fast paced story that will not disappoint.

I received this book for review purposes via NetGalley.

4cats says

The Lazarus Curse is the fourth outing for 18th century anatomist Dr. Thomas Silkstone, and the good Dr. has been invited by the president of the Royal Society to catalogue flora and fauna recently collected by three scientists on a research expedition to the West Indies. This trip has been rather ill fated as 2 of the 3 died on the journey home and the third, Matthew Bartlett has disappeared with a notebook which details the ships discoveries.

This is not just a mystery set in 18th century London, Tessa Harris deals with a period when forward thinking men in Britain were questioning and challenging the laws on slavery, eventually occurring in 1833, and it is the plight of the slaves at the centre of this novel. Amongst this, Harris also adds to the plot with vivid descriptions of voodoo and black magic, with a vivid description of an obdeah at work at the beginning of the book.

If you love historical mystery, this is worth checking out as Dr Silkstone is based upon a true life physician, Dr. William Shippen Jnr.

A Reader's Heaven says

(I received a free copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.)

In 1780s London, American anatomist Dr. Thomas Silkstone is plunged into a swirling cauldron of sorcery, slavery, and cold-blooded murder . . .

When the sole survivor of an ill-fated scientific expedition to Jamaica goes missing upon his return to

London, Dr. Thomas Silkstone--entrusted with cataloging the expedition's New World specimens--feels compelled to investigate. There are rumors of a potion that has the power to raise the dead--and the formula is suspected to be in the private journal that has disappeared along with the young botanist. As Dr. Silkstone searches for clues to the man's whereabouts, he is drawn deeper into a dark and dangerous world of vengeance, infidelity, murder, and the trafficking of corpses for profit. Without the support of his beloved Lady Lydia Farrell--from whom he has been forcibly separated by law--he must confront the horrors of slavery, as well the very depths of human wickedness. And after a headless corpse is discovered, Dr. Silkstone begins to uncover the sinister motives of those in power who would stop at nothing to possess the Lazarus potion...

This was, as it turns out, the fourth book in the Silkstone mystery series. I was unaware when I started that this was the case. And it is pretty important to know...

We pick up the story with some well-established characters and relationships, which makes it hard from the outset to get into. Thomas and Lydia are good characters but, without knowing their backstories, it is hard to gauge how their characters have developed over the course of this series, as well as how they grow in this book.

The mystery of the dead scientists is quite intriguing - however, I didn't go much on the plot revolving around the slavery. I just found it not to my tastes. I don't see the point of making it a plot point.

Overall, a decent enough read but I do recommend finding book 1 and starting there - it may make this one more enjoyable when you get to it.

Paul
ARH

Delta says

Lydia is getting boring; bogs down the story.

Carol Evans says

I could break The Lazarus Curse down into three parts: the mystery- what happened to Matthew Bartlett, the botanist/artist who disappeared upon returning from Jamaica; the background research and storyline on the plight of slaves who were brought to England by their masters; and what's going on with Lydia, Thomas' lover.

The mystery was okay. There's supposedly a Lazarus Potion that can bring people back from the dead, and the theory is that the expedition found the formula and someone killed Bartlett for the information. There were a couple of suspects but no good option.

The part of the plot centering around the slaves was the most engrossing. There were Americans currently staying in London. In England at the time, slavery was not legal, but the American's slaves are still more or

less considered property for all intents and purposes. At the same time, one of Thomas' fellow anatomists is getting very fresh, seemingly healthy, black corpses to dissect. Too many of them, which raises concerns for Thomas. I thought I knew what was going on, but I was wrong.

If the story had just consisted of those portions, my rating would have been much higher. I could have done without all of Thomas and Lydia's domestic issues.

Melanie says

The ending made me scream!!! Dastardly Montagu!!!
