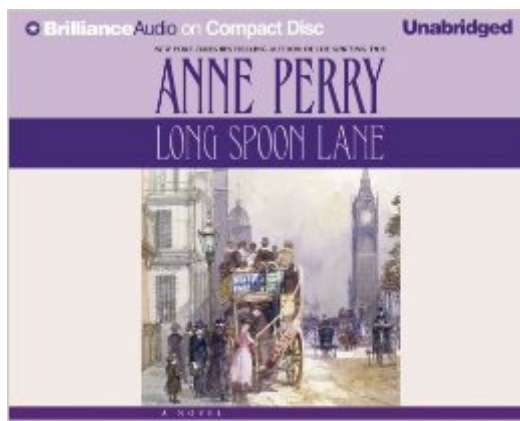


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Long Spoon Lane (Charlotte And Thomas Pitt)



Synopsis

Anne Perry's bestselling Victorian novels offer readers an elixir as addictively rich as Devonshire cream and English ale - enticing millions into a literary world almost as real as the original. While flower sellers, costermongers, shopkeepers, and hansom drivers ply their trades, the London police watch over all. Or so people believe. . . . Early one morning, Thomas Pitt, dauntless mainstay of the Special Branch, is summoned to Long Spoon Lane, where anarchists are plotting an attack. Bombs explode, destroying the homes of many poor people. After a chase, two of the culprits are captured and the leader is shot . . . but by whom? As Pitt delves into the case, he finds that there is more to the terrorism than the destructive gestures of misguided idealists. The police are running a lucrative protection racket, and clues suggest that Inspector Wetron of Bow Street is the mastermind. As the shadowy leader of the Inner Circle, Wetron is using his influence with the press to whip up fears of more attacks - and to rush a bill through Parliament that would severely curtail civil liberties. This would make him the most powerful man in the country. To defeat Wetron, Pitt finds that he must run in harness with his old enemy, Sir Charles Voisey, and the unlikely allies are joined by Pitt's clever wife, Charlotte, and her great aunt, Lady Vespasia Cumming-Gould. Can they prevail? As they strive to prevent future destruction, nothing less than the fate of the British Empire hangs in precarious balance.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was another one of those books which I couldn't put down- to use the cliché. But I admit that this latest Charlotte and Thomas Pitt mystery had me hooked. Like the other books in this series, the plot centers on the historical and political climate of 1893. The city of London, from the highest people in society, are brought to life here, and often, unexpectedly, rub shoulders (for instance, grand dame Lady Vespasia Cumming-Gould eating in the kitchen at the Pitt house). What I found truly amazing was the way in which Perry, yet again, was able to make these interactions seem ordinary. The action of this story begins in Myrdle Street, where a row of houses is blown up. The police, including Special Branch and Thomas Pitt, follow a group of men to a house in Long Spoon Lane, where a shoot out commences- ending with one dead body and an injured constable. The dead man, the son of a figure in society, appears to have been deeply involved in an anarchy plot. However, as Perry constantly proves to her readers, nothing is ever as it seems, and soon it becomes apparent that the bomb was intended for a police officer who had been involved in some localized police corruption. Pitt investigates and finds that this corruption stretches to all levels of the police force- all the way up to Commander Wetron of the Bow Street Police Force, where Pitt worked for a time. Wetron is angling to make himself the most powerful man in England by passing several reform bills in parliament which will give police the right to search people's houses and question their servants- with their permission. If this bill is passed, it will mean the end of personal freedom.

One early summer night in 1893, Victor Narraway, the head of Special Branch, awakens Thomas Pitt with an urgent message: There is a bomb threat from unknown anarchists. Racing to the scene, they find people being evacuated and explosions tearing buildings apart. Narraway and Pitt chase after fleeing suspects and end up in the tenements at Long Spoon Lane. Pitt, new to the Special Branch, feels clumsy. He finds himself in a huge gunfight and shooting at a fellow human for the very first time. Inside the building they find two live anarchists and one dead man, Lord Landsborough's only son, Magnus. It's obvious to Pitt that because of the dead man's position, the police couldn't have shot Magnus Landsborough. Did his fellow anarchists kill him? Or was it an escaping murderer who was neither a policeman nor an anarchist? When Pitt questions one of the imprisoned anarchists about the motive for the bombing, he exclaims --- with great passion and terror --- that it was in protest over the corrupt police force. His accusations of evil, vicious, greedy policemen encompass the region covered by Pitt's old station. Surely things have not gone so wrong in the year since he left? The anarchist's claim eats away at Pitt. The morality of the organization he has spent his adult life serving is at stake. While the anarchists accuse a policeman

of shooting Landsborough, the police believe that a fellow anarchist was the murderer. Pitt puts himself in mortal danger in order to delve into this mystery as well as the distressing question of the corrupt police.

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