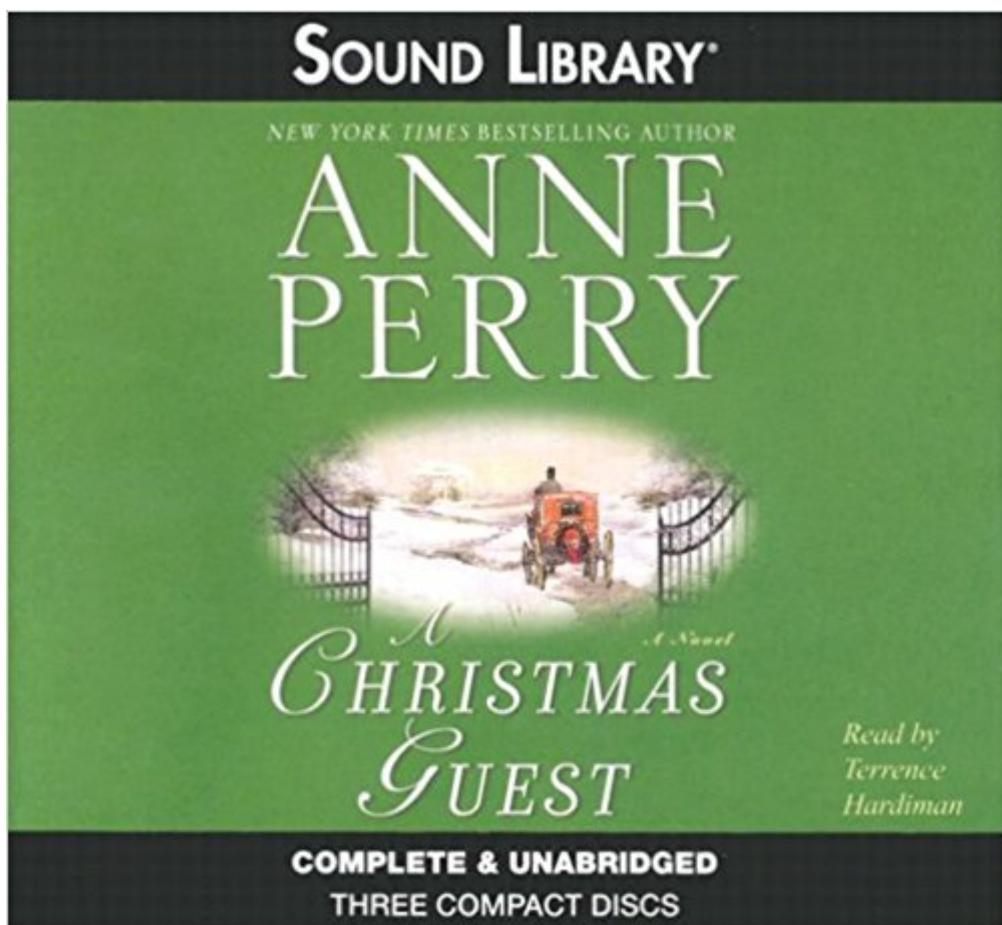


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# A Christmas Guest (Christmas Novellas)



## **Synopsis**

Cantankerous and vinegar-tongued Grandmama, from Anne Perry's Charlotte and Thomas Pitt series, is the leading character in this Christmas novel, which unfolds in the chilly, windswept Romney Marshes off the English Channel. Grandmama arrives on a holiday visit to the home of Charlotte's parents, where a fellow guest--an outcast from her own family--is subsequently murdered. Like the heroes before her in Anne Perry's Christmas novels, Grandmama is called upon to play the role of amateur detective.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Charlotte's tetchy Grandmama from Perry's Charlotte and Thomas Pitt mysteries does a bit of sleuthing on her own (and learns the true meaning of Christmas) in the author's latest holiday treat (A Christmas Visitor). When the London lady finds herself banished to the Romney Marshes home of her former daughter-in-law, Caroline (now marriedâ•scandalously, in Grandmama's opinionâ•to a younger actor), she is more than indignant. As if it isn't bad enough to be exiled to "some bog by the sea" at Christmastime, another guest soon arrives: "pointlessly joyous" Maud Barrington, the middle daughter of an old local family who has returned after 40 years of travel in Muslim Africa. Maude's family won't have her; they think she'll be an embarrassment to a visiting peer. Grandmama doesn't take to brash, vivid Maude, eitherâ•but as soon as Maude is discovered, suddenly and suspiciously dead in her bedroom, Grandmama regrets her coldness and vows to uncover the truth. When she imparts the sad news to Maude's family in the nearby town,

she finds the reaction of Maude's two sisters strange. Their husbands, too, seem odd. Who might be the guilty party? Grandmama digs deep into family secrets and betrayals and becomes a whole new person along the way in this quick and enjoyable read. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

What was supposed to be another proper English holiday spent in her granddaughter's home turns out to be anything but for Mariah Ellison, in the latest installment of the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt Christmas series. Against her wishes, the already cantankerous Mariah, called Grandmama throughout, is shoved off to spend the holiday with Caroline, the wife of her late son, and Joshua, Caroline's new husband, in the nippy shore town of Romney Marshes. Grandmama decides not to let anything please her--not the lovely home, not the excellent help, and especially not a surprise visit by Joshua's Aunt Maude, present only because no one else would have her. Maude regales her hosts with tales of her travels, but Grandmama, though secretly fascinated by the stories, abhors Maude's clumsy appearance and abrupt nature. Even when Grandmama finds Maude's body cold and dead, she is incensed that her holiday should be ruined by an unseemly upset. Nonetheless, Grandmama takes to solving the case herself and, predictably though no less charmingly, undergoes a Grinch-like transformation in the process, finding the meaning of Christmas after all. Lightweight fare, certainly, but ably constructed by genre veteran Perry and sure to please those who enjoy holiday-season mysteries. Mary Frances WilkensCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

If there is one character in Anne Perry's Pitt & Charlotte books whom no one likes, it's Grandmama Ellison. She has a brutal tongue and a mean streak a yard wide. However, deep inside she is suffering from years of hidden abuse at the hands of her husband; widowhood brought her blessed relief, but she could share this with no one because of her obsession with keeping up appearances. And now, as her granddaughter Emily, husband Jack, and the children, along with all their servants, are going to the Loire Valley for the holidays, and she refuses to stay with her other granddaughter Charlotte and "that policeman" she lowered herself to marry, she must undertake a journey to stay near the sea with her late son's widow Caroline and her charming younger husband Joshua, who is an actor (horrors!) and a Jew (horrors!). When she arrives after an arduous all-day journey, she learns that Maude, a relative of Joshua's, will also be staying, as her family has a "very important" guest and cannot let her stay there. Although she is put off by Maude, who has spent over forty

years traveling and living in less civilized parts of the world, she cannot help but be impressed by the woman's joie de vivre. One morning Maude is dead in her bed, suddenly and seemingly of natural causes. But Mrs. Ellison suspects foul play and is surprised to realize how much she had liked Maude in spite of herself. So, on pretext of informing the family personally, she sets out to solve the crime. This book, like Anne Perry's other Christmas novels, is a gem. It brilliantly illustrates the customs and mores of the time while delving into the mind and heart of the protagonist and the very logical if reprehensible motive for the murder. By the time Grandmama has unmasked the killer, who cannot be prosecuted but will be ostracized for life, she has changed a great deal and learned that life can be enjoyed to the fullest if one allows herself to be. It took Scrooge Marley and three other ghosts to realize this; solving a crime did it for Granmama. I came to like and even admire her through the course of the novel, which I found impossible to put down. Enjoy this book; it is one of Perry's small masterpieces.

I love Anne Perry's books, and I have read most of them with great enjoyment. However, this one does not meet her standard. It is a good enough story if it had been written by someone else, but is not as good as her other Christmas novellas. The blossoming romance with the New York policeman does not ring true. Jemima should be destined for a more important man. The book reads as if it were written in haste, just to have a Christmas story this year.

Fearing another Christmas Journey mess and hoping for a book along the lines of Christmas Visitor, I had no idea what I'd find in A Christmas Guest. What I found was a great story excellently written. To be honest, I could not imagine Grandmother as a sympathetic character. I do not want to give away much of the surprise for anyone who hasn't read this, but we see another side of the cranky old lady and we come to understand her better. After seeing her in a different light, I'm curious as to how Perry portrays her in the upcoming Pitt novels. I hope she will allow Grandmother's character to grow- it would be a waste of great character if she doesn't. A Christmas Guest is one of Perry's best efforts. There's a seemingly unsolvable mystery, a full cast of suspects, humor, a moral, and a great feeling of satisfaction after you've turned the last page. A lovely book.

I love Anne Perry books. I am slowly working my way thru them all. She leaves you spell bound up until the end. Waiting for the new ones to come out.

No one writes more eloquently than Anne Perry - she is a gracious lady who is now juggling 3 series

- 4 including these lovely Christmas novels - and has done excellent stand alone works -The Christmas novels have taken us into Christmases with amazing 'supporting' characters from the Monk and Pitt series -This year's offering has Grandmama - from the Pitt series - Charlotte and Emily's grandmother, Caroline's former mother-in-law. She has never been a sympathetic character, even when we find out the horrid abuse she withstood by her husband - and the relief widowhood brought -Grandmama is shipped out to former daughter-in-law's care for Christmas after Emily (whom she is living with) states she and her husband will leave with ALL the servants and spend the holiday in France, and the invitation does NOT include Grandmama - Grandmama is a cranky son of a gun, but I don't think Emily would act so abruptly - and to my recollection, the Pitts were not asked to care for Grandmama, only mentioned that Thomas Pitt was a 'lowly' policeman - I think the Pitts would have made room for Grandmama - that's neither here nor there -Another lady has been rejected by her immediate family and shipped to Caroline's. Maude is a delightful lady who has had many adventures and fascinates her hosts and Grandmama (who wouldn't admit it at the time) with her stories - Maude is found dead and Grandmama thinks she was murdered - She goes to Maude's family's house not only to tell the family of her death, but to do some detecting ala Thomas Pitt - Maude and the lessons Grandmama learned transform her from the callous ungrateful woman to appreciating the world she is in -As always, Mrs. Perry is a delight - and her works are a joy to read. And a gift to her fans -

I think I was meant to read this story because I am so like mama-in-law! I am also like Bedelia, especially about holding a grudge!

I enjoyed this book thoroughly. The characters were of interest, the plot was unexpected and the setting was sublime. I would recommend this book to lovers of Anne Perry and the Victorian Era.

It is a good Christmas for Grandmama who proved to me you can teach an old dog new tricks. She was playing detective and ending up detecting her own approach to life.

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