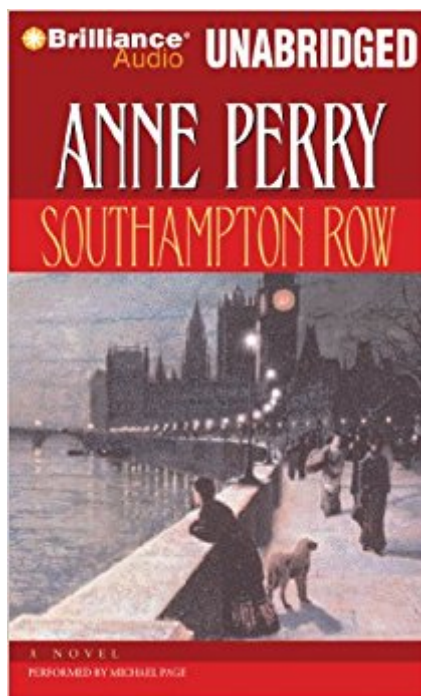


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Southampton Row (Charlotte And Thomas Pitt)



Synopsis

A riveting new Thomas and Charlotte Pitt novel, in which Anne Perry again proves her mastery of the people, the mores, and the politics of the Victorian era she has made her own. A general election is approaching and Thomas is called to monitor the bitter struggle for one crucial London seat. The Tory candidate is Charles Voisey, ruthless Number One of the Inner Circle and old enemy of Pitt. His Liberal opponent is Aubrey Serracold, whose wife, Rose, is passionately committed to a socialist agenda and a liability to Serracold as she is immersed in spiritualism. Rose is one of the three participants in a late-night seance held by clairvoyant Maude Lamont, which becomes notorious when Madame Lamont's brutally murdered body is found the next morning. To Pitt's heavy burdens is now added the investigation of this baffling crime. "You can count on a Perry tale to be superior." —San Diego Union-Tribune

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thomas Pitt prefers the grim routine of murder investigations to the riskier probing of Victorian governmental intrigues. Yet Anne Perry's Southampton Row again finds him displaced from his police command, this time to foil the political ambitions of a ruthless republican. Charles Voisey, leader of a powerful secret society known as the Inner Circle, was defeated by Pitt when he tried (in *The Whitechapel Conspiracy*) to abolish the British monarchy. Only months later, though, he's back on top, running for a seat in Parliament. Under the auspices of the newly created Special Branch, Pitt is charged with learning whether Voisey has any "unguarded vulnerabilities." The odds against

Pitt succeeding are high; Voisey may be "shallow, self-important [and] condescending," but he impresses voters as more charismatic and less controversial than his opponent, Aubrey Serracold, who's also hobbled by his connection to the recent slaying of a popular spiritualist. While Pitt's wife, Charlotte, and their family are safely out of London on vacation, Pitt, aided by the gruff but dogged Inspector Samuel Tellman, his politically astute sister-in law, and Charlotte's resourceful great-aunt Vespasia, seeks to solve the medium's murder before it can derail Aubrey Serracold's campaign. Perry expertly portrays the volatile British political climate of the 1890s, and by making Pitt and Tellman rivals in their investigation, she further illuminates both men's characters. However, Southampton Row reduces the usually intrepid Charlotte to a hand-wringing irrelevance, and the novel feels too much like an intermediate and inconclusive chapter in a longer story arc. Like Holmes and Moriarty, Thomas Pitt and Charles Voisey appear destined to grapple once more. --J. Kingston Pierce --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

HN
Newcomers to Perry's series about Victorian police officer Thomas Pitt might be baffled by all the backstory from 2001's *The Whitechapel Conspiracy* in this 22nd entry, but loyal fans should hit the ground reading. Bounced from his beloved job as superintendent at the Bow Street cop shop in the political backlash of the plot against Queen Victoria that he and his aristocratic wife, Charlotte, uncovered in that last book, Pitt not only has to work for the sneaky Victor Narraway of Special Branch but must also give up a much-deserved vacation with his family to look into the murder of a society spiritualist in London's Southampton Row. It seems that Charles Voisey, head of a secret society called the Inner Circle and the man whom the Pitts stopped from coming this close to turning England into a republic (with himself as president), is now running for Parliament as a Tory against a promising Liberal candidate, Aubrey Serracold. Voisey shouldn't stand a chance unless Serracold's wife, one of the murdered medium's clients, really did knock her off. Since Charlotte spends virtually all of the book on Dartmoor, her place in the investigation is ably filled by her sister, Emily, married to another up-and-coming Liberal. As ever, excellent craftsmanship sets this series in the front rank of historical mysteries. (Mar. 1)
Forecast: A 15-city author tour, national print and radio advertising as well as a sample chapter in the mass market edition of *The Whitechapel Conspiracy* (Jan.) should help ensure another run up bestseller lists.
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I was disappointed by the number of mistakes in the book. Among them were things not appropriate for the 1890s such as Emily & Jack's daughter apparently being raised as a modern child, allowed

to whine a series of 'why' questions without being told she'd understand when she was older, 'because I said so', etc. And I doubt the phrase 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend.' was around in the 1890s. Then there was the conversation Pitt had with someone where the latter suddenly knew of circumstances that he didn't know at the beginning of the conversation two pages previously.

Anne Perry is an excellent writer. The reader is taken right into 19th century London. We see, hear, smell, taste and feel what the characters experience. These mysteries usually involve a murder or murders, but the reader happens upon the scene after the violence is over. Grisly, but not overtly violent. The same with cases of rape. These are discussed but we are not subjected to the scene itself. In the case where the main characters are married, we see them hugging, kissing but no overt sex. Victorian in feel but open-minded. The writer brings philosophy and guides to appropriate behavior into her stories, sometimes as a mother answers her children's questions. We get a feel for the difference in expectations of the upper and lower classes, and especially the limitations women experienced in that time and place. I have 30 of the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt novels and will probably continue to acquire them.

Although this was not the last book in this series, it is in fact for me. I've read everyone and had to go back to this one that somehow I missed. Perhaps I can start to get my house ready for the winter to come. I have been held captive for the past couple weeks finishing the last 6 books in this series. I can't tell you how desolate I feel. I do hope that Ms. Perry is busy writing her little fingers to the bone. Southampton Row was as delectable as all of the rest of the books in the series and I am feeling quite empty knowing I will not be visiting with my friends for some time to come. That is what I have felt throughout the reading of all of these books. I started with the first book about 2 years ago and then got involved with another genre. I picked up my old friends a few months ago and have been busy finishing off the second half of their adventures. What I loved most about reuniting with them was the cozy feeling of catching up with family and friends that I've been away from for several years. What joy it was to find all of the changes in their lives. I never was particularly concerned with the actual mystery they were solving, even though they still had the ability to make my heart beat fast and wonder how my friends would get out of this fix they found themselves in. I had much more fun getting comfortable with the mores of the late 1800's London again and finding Pitt finally getting some respect that he always deserved. I loved following he and Charlotte's lives as they began their family and watching their children grow. I was happy that Emily married Jack

and was left well endowed by her first husband because I would comfort myself that they could save Charlotte and Pitt from total poverty since they have been dancing on the brink of it all along. My love for Aunt Vespasian has grown to the point I am quite nervous of her advancing age. The thought of her leaving is almost more than I can bear. She is the fairy god-mother that I've always wanted. I love how Ms. Perry paints so clearly the loyalty of their new friends. The hard won acceptance which always means so much more to us. The indomitable little Gracie who's love and respect is hard won but once given has the strength of steel. That fits the profile of her husband as well, the no nonsense Tellman who will never be comfortable with the caste system that was England for as long as he knew. I loved the fact that the brooding and hard to read Narraway fell so deeply in love with our Charlotte and the story could be told with such feeling even while our friends maintained their dignity and honor. Oh, how differently that would be written today! I hope that our dear author will continue to provide us with the ability to step back into a time when we knew the value of honor and recognized that sometimes the best things we did were those that denied us what we wanted but maintained our dignity. I hope everyone will get the opportunity to read this series from beginning to end. It is a pastime most worthy.

Absorbing! One gets caught up in the Victorian life and customs, and the lives of the Pitt family and their friends, as well as concerned for their safety, and outraged at the injustices. The "hot" political climate of the times is intriguing, and one finds oneself rooting for the party that will provide relief for the people, and the important issues of the day.

I am a regular reader of Ms. Perry and know her books well. I usually figure out who-did-it very early but I am an unusually good plotter according to my teachers...I enjoy the book and keep reading that's a good sign of a good mystery for me. Otherwise it is dumped or given away. Ms. Perry is very productive and I am glad of that. The history of her stories and the minor details at their best in keeping with the era she is writing about but don't believe her use of the word disinformation was a word used in 1800 and is not in keeping with her usual work.

This is a sequel to the previous novel, "The Whitechapel Conspiracy," which should be read first to fully understand the characters and background. The book possibly gets a little heavy into the position of women in society, etc., but otherwise is a good mystery. Charles Voisey was thwarted in his attempt to seize the government, but now is knighted and seeking a seat in the House of Commons. Thomas Pitt has been sent back to Special Branch, and the Inner Circle still exerts an

evil influence on events. Some people have a lust for power and are willing to commit crimes to gain their objectives. A spiritualist is murdered. Her death may be connected to the politics of the coming election. Pitt must send his wife and children off to the country on their own when his vacation is cancelled. Investigations lead to some surprising connections between individuals, and Pitt finds his reputation threatened before the case is finally resolved. Politics breed strange bedfellows, and Pitt's brother-in-law finds himself in an awkward position where he must decide between a friend and his own career in politics. It is better to deal with an enemy you know rather than one you don't know. Crimes sometimes go unpunished, even murder.

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