



Letters from the Dead

Steve Robinson

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From acclaimed author Steve Robinson comes a thrilling new Jefferson Tayte mystery.

When genealogist Jefferson Tayte is hired to prove the identity of a black sheep in his client's family tree, he unwillingly finds himself drawn into a murder investigation with nothing more to go on than a 150-year-old letter and a connection to a legendary ruby that has been missing for generations.

As more letters are mysteriously left for him, Tayte becomes immersed in a centuries-old tale of greed, murder and forbidden love that takes his research from the wilds of the Scottish Highlands to the colour and heat of colonial India.

A dark secret is buried in Jaipur, steeped in treachery and scandal. But why is it having such deadly repercussions in the present? Can Tayte find the ruby and prevent the past from repeating itself before it's too late?

This is the seventh book in the Jefferson Tayte Genealogical Mystery series but it can be enjoyed as a stand-alone story.

Letters from the Dead Details

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Author : Steve Robinson

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From Reader Review Letters from the Dead for online ebook

Mrs Chris Wilson says

I slated the previous book in the series for having too much violence, so I started reading this with trepidation. I needn't have worried; this is an excellent book. The story is well-crafted, well-researched with lots of twists and turns along the way. I liked the use of the letters to develop the story and enjoyed the description of colonial India. Well done, Steve! I'm now eagerly awaiting the next Jefferson Tayte book.

Bev Priest says

Excellent read.

These are the best set of genealogy detective novels available and this one is an excellent read. I would highly recommend it.

Gill says

Steve Robinson has set his latest book up in the wilds of Scotland with a brief that involves not only tracing a forebear but also a gemstone...which hails from the later years of the East India Company and Rajputana (now known as Rajasthan). Jefferson Tayte's expertise has been hired by Damian Sinclair the last owner of Drumarthen, a fairly ancient Scottish pile set in Comrie in the southern highlands. He is the descendant of the illegitimate son of a Scottish land-owner who wishes to prove the identity of his forebear and to find out about the existence of a legendary ruby that is connected to the family's misfortunes.

Over the course of Tayte's short stay we are treated to the unfolding plot with a number of murders as the members of a syndicate dedicated to finding the gem are found dead in an Agatha Christie style investigation, with the crumbling Drumarthen and its environs playing a central role in the unfolding drama in the present. Supporting Tayte's research we travel through flashbacks to Rajputana, seen through the eyes of Jane Hardwick, a close friend of the family of Sir John Christie, the East India Company's Resident at that time and a series of letters she wrote to another member of the Christie family.

The family tragedy back in the 1800s is the genesis of the events in the present and Steve Robinson weaves a complex tale of love, family honour, betrayal, cruelty and mystery in a thoroughly engaging book.

Kath Middleton says

In another genealogical puzzle, Jefferson Tayte journeys to a crumbling mansion in Scotland. The owner is keen to trace his great (times four) grandfather and suspects there's illegitimacy in the line. There's also the mystery of a disappearing ruby, as big as a fist, which was seen by some ancestors along the way. Tayte is concerned this may turn into a treasure hunt, and when members of the family are murdered, he fears he's right.

Much of the story is featured in letters home from India in the early 1800s and the subcontinent back then is atmospherically depicted. The author highlights the poverty of some, contrasting it with the immense wealth of the maharajas and the British East India Company. These parts are especially exciting. The end of the Scottish adventure is a white-knuckle ride and, as always, I thoroughly enjoyed this story. Steve Robinson carefully strands his stories together and they are a joy to unpick.

Amanda Williams says

A very interesting story and well worth the read. Will definitely be looking forward to reading more from this author.

Beth Davidson says

That's it! I am up to date and thoroughly unimpressed about it. What am I going to do without a dose of JT for another year? It's taken me just over a month to get through the seven books in Steve Robinson's genealogical mystery series. Steve, may I call you Steve? It's been a great adventure.

As always JT's adventures as a genealogist enthrall me. Steve Robinson's presentation of the multiple stories within the book is brilliant.

I am always left wondering how one genealogist can walk into so many life changing situations.

The details appear to be well researched and the part of the story taking place in India are certainly believable. Although, I know little about Indian history and must take many of the details at face Value.

I have enjoyed JT's adventures greatly, and it's good to see that despite settling down with his family, he still has a sense of adventure.

I am very much looking forward to the next Jefferson Tayte adventure.

Review will be published on BethinaBox.com on 11th September 2018.

Mary says

Oh, Steve Robinson, you sly dog!

I tripped down the path of your plot (littered with dead bodies) and smugly thought I had solved the mystery...pages and pages ahead of old Jefferson Tayte. And then you double crossed me. Totally didn't see that one coming! Finished the book in 24 hours and now I have to go back and re-read it to see where I was led astray.

Love your writing, but you always outwit me and I can almost hear you chortling as you do so.

Dear readers,

DON'T START THIS BOOK UNLESS YOU HAVE A LOT OF FREE TIME IN WHICH TO FINISH IT!

There. You stand warned.

It's excellent.

Five easy stars.

Joyce says

4 stars

Jefferson Tayte receives an invitation to come to Scotland to investigate the ancestry of Damian Sinclair. He wants to learn who his four times great-grandfather was. When he gets to Scotland, Sinclair's motives for the investigation become more clear. He also wants Tayte to find the whereabouts of a centuries-old ruby that has disappeared into history.

It all begins with a letter written in the 1820's by Jane and sent to a member of her family. It tells of her journey to India with a young friend named Arabella. The letters are left for Tayte to find in the old manor house he is currently sharing with Sinclair. Sinclair's brother Jamie, who was something of a wastrel, was killed a few weeks earlier than Tayte's visit. Sinclair believes it was murder, but DI Ross thinks it to be a suicide.

Jamie borrowed a considerable sum of money from the family syndicate to travel to India to locate the ruby and never paid it back. One by one, the members of the syndicate are being murdered- Each time a murder occurs, another one of Jane's letters turns up mysteriously. Each time, Tayte learns a little more of Jane and Arabella's story. She tells of an ill-fated love affair in which Arabella was involved. It also speaks of the mysterious ruby. Is the ruby the reason people are being killed?

As Tayte pours through Jane's letters and more people die, suspicion for the murders falls on everyone, including Sinclair and Murray, his trusted man-of-all trades and live-in companion. Tayte shares all of his research results with Sinclair. They ponder the puzzle together.

In a surprising and exciting conclusion, all is revealed.

This is a great book. It has drama, a huge puzzle, tension and the main characters are likeable and engaging. I liked Sinclair and Murray especially, never mind that they were suspects in the murders. I liked DI Ross as well. This book was both well written and plotted. There were a couple of weak points in the story, but they weren't huge. I have read all of the Jefferson Tayte novels and all in all it is an excellent addition to the Jefferson Tayte series.

I want to thank NetGalley and Amazon Publishing USA and Thomas & Mercer for forwarding to me a copy of this great book for me to read, enjoy and review.

Steve Robinson says

It's my new Jefferson Tayte mystery. Yay! I hope you like it. :)

Cindy Lauren says

For a mild mannered genealogy guy, Jefferson seems to find himself in some dire situations. He is hired to research an ancestor to a Scottish family that may or may not be in possession of a fantastic jewel.

The story is told in 2 sections, one from the time of the theft of the jewel via a series of letters and the other about what is going on now.

Betrayal, murder, massacres and creaking old mansions really set the scene.

This is a fun story, and once you get a hold of the different characters the story is interesting and tragic. The bad guy was not who I suspected by any stretch,

Sarah says

Yet another gem by Steve Robinson! The setting of this 7th genealogical mystery is a dilapidated castle in rural Scotland, and the historical context is 19th century Rajputana (now known as Rajasthan), the East India Company and the Resident at Jaipur.

Jefferson Tayte's assignment is to find the Blood of Rajputana, an exceptionally large ruby stolen in 1823 from the Maharaja, and the cause of much bloodshed. Like "Midsomer Murders" or Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None", bodies turn up all the time, as Tayte tries to piece together the Fraser family's history and help the local detective find the murderer.

I love stories like this, where a tangled web of clues gradually gets untangled by our favourite genealogist, with a few surprises at the end. The historical theme of India under British domination was extremely enlightening too. Altogether a well written and thoroughly captivating story!

Thanks to the author and to Netgalley for allowing me to read an advanced readers copy of "Letters From The Dead".

Kristen says

Fantastic! It's the best yet.

Pauline Mowbray says

Loved the book I did not want it to finish keep them coming Steve!

Cleo Bannister says

For the seventh outing of Jefferson Tayte, a genealogist now based in the UK with his wife Jean, JT as he is more fondly known, is asked to discover the four-times-Great-Grandfather of his client, Damian Sinclair. His trail takes him from a crumbling, literally, pile in the Southern Highlands of Scotland, Drumarthen, to Rajputana (now known as Rajasthan) with strong links to the East India Company.

If you have followed JT's previous adventures you will have learnt that genealogy can be a dangerous business, something JT himself seems to forget with a sense of abandon as soon as any juicy mystery comes along.

Damian Sinclair is unlike most of JT's clients, he and the wider family have done a massive amount of research into their family. It's soon revealed that this isn't out of simple curiosity about their family heritage but because wrapped into the history is a missing ruby, one that would significantly change the owner's life and there is no better motivation than a treasure hunt to help fill in those gaps on the family tree. Damian Sinclair assures JT he is not interested in the ruby and even though the reader can hear the audience hissing, JT puts his scepticism about the truth of this statement aside, and agrees to work on the case.

JT is introduced to the wider family and it is revealed that packet of letters were found that might hold the link to the jewel written in 1820s from a travelling companion in India back to the woman's brother. These seem to be missing, all apart from one. Do these letters hold the key to the mystery?

The characters are brilliantly portrayed, Steve Robinson has ensured you will be able to tell them all apart by making them distinct, if in the main, individuals that you don't need to waste a whole heap of sympathy on. After all you don't want feelings of sorrow for these fictional characters to slow the trail to finding the truth, do you?

While JT is seeking the truth from the past, there are disturbing events in the present with an 'Golden Age' type mystery involving a syndicate formed to find the ruby. We therefore have Detective Inspector Alastair Ross being kept busy with the odd dead body too.

As with the previous books in the series, not only are the stories incredibly informative showing the impeccable research carried out by the author, they also have a sense of fun too. The story as it unfolds by letter from life in Colonial India completely transported me to a very particular way of life. The historical part alone was a fabulous story while with the danger in the present and a mystery which seems to hinge on greed provides a puzzle which seems to confound the finest of minds. Steve Robinson created a thoroughly interesting, informative and entertaining read in *Letters from the Dead*.

This book is perfect for lovers of genealogy as the author manages to weave some actual resources into the book without overshadowing either the historical angle or the mystery playing out in the present it also caters for a wide range of interests from history to those who crave a damn good mystery!

Anam Cara says

Probably the best Jefferson Tayte mystery so far!

Jefferson is now married, has a son, and is living in England. He is asked to help find out who the great-great-great grandfather is of his new client. Damian Sinclair has reached a dead end in his research because it seems that his three-great grandfather was illegitimate. After Jefferson agrees, he learns that there is also a precious jewel from India tied up in the mystery. It is unknown how much of the legend of the jewel is true and what is myth. As he searches for the name of the missing ancestor, other family members are slowly and systematically being killed.

If he learns the name - and then finds out what happened to the gem - will he also be killed?

I found this very hard to put down. The characters are, as always, well developed. I could imagine each one. Their personalities rang true. And in the story of India in the 1800's I found more believable characters. Like Jefferson, I couldn't help but wonder what their later lives were like. Then I remembered that they never existed and I could make their lives be anything I wanted them to be. These people will be in my memory for a long time.

I look forward to more of Jefferson Tayte's adventures and hope he has a bit more time to work on his own family tree!
