



The Blind Side

Patricia Wentworth

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Ross Craddock was just the type to be murdered. The new landlord of Craddock house, he begins by giving eviction notice to his aunt Lucy. He threatens the doorman with dismissal. He makes a violent and unwelcome pass to his cousin Mavis. He is vindictive and spiteful and ends up dead. The suspects include Lee who may have walked in her sleep and killed him out of unconscious fear. Or Peter who may have found Ross' advances to Mavis unbearable. Or aunt Lucy who unexpectedly came back. Or possibly Bobby who was still in love with Mavis and furious that she was seen with Ross. The answer is yet another Wentworth twist.

The Blind Side Details

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Author : Patricia Wentworth

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Abbey says

A tremendous relief to have an intelligent book after the last frightful piece of dross I read. This isn't the best mystery story in the world, but it's well and engagingly written with a fairly decent plot which has some nice mysteries in it. The characters are pretty good - it's supposed to be the first in a series about the police inspector, but I personally found the other characters more interesting. Nothing very startling in this book, but it's well done. (I suspect I might have given it three stars if the book I read before it hadn't been so awful but as it is I simply can't help giving it a solid four!)

Ann says

This is an early Patricia Wentworth book, and not one of her best. A totally obnoxious man got himself murdered, and it seems that during the night of the murder his flat had been busier than Piccadilly Circus, with about half a dozen people traipsing in and out. What little tension the novel has seems to center on the fact that Lee, one of the main characters, fears that she might have committed the murder while sleepwalking. This implausible premise is made even more implausible by the idea that this bout of sleepwalking would have been triggered by Lee's disgust at hearing how the deceased "got fresh" with another girl.

This is one of those stories where there are plenty of people with opportunity, but not with motive. The murder victim was almost too obnoxious to be credible - a cad with women? check. Stingy? check. Rude to his relatives? check. About to turn his old aunt of her home? check. Bullying towards his neighbors? check. Clearly, this man was a jerk in many ways, but not really to the point of making people want to shoot him.

All in all, not more than two stars.

All in all

Margaret says

Craddock House was so full of squabblers, gossips, feuding family, and eavesdroppers that Ross Craddock's killer must have felt quite a home. There was Lee Fenton, Ross's first cousin, heard calling Ross "a swine" and subsequently sleepwalking (so she claimed) into the victim's flat. There was the lovable spinster aunt who Ross was cruelly evicting and who just happened to enter the house at 2:00 AM - in time to see a figure fleeing. And there was the beautiful blood-smudged Mavis Grey, quite capable of looking after herself: and Bobby Foster, Mavis's enraged suitor, who managed to leave his fingerprints all through the house.

Indeed, with so many clues and suspects throwing themselves at Inspector Lamb, how could he possible notice the deadliest one of all?

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Read this quite some time ago before joining Bookcrossing - enjoyable :D

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### **Ann says**

Written and set in the 20s or 30s in London, it definitely has the flavor and tone of books of the time. Including some language/descriptors that would be considered derogatory nowadays. The mystery was well crafted, but the characters were a bit predictable without a lot of depth. This is the first of a series; not sure I'll continue.

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### **John says**

In my teens I read *The Gazebo*, one of Wentworth's Miss Silver mysteries, and didn't get on with it. The result has been that I've missed decades of reading Wentworth's work, as I discovered on reading her *Danger Point* a year or so ago. At some point I really must have a blitz on her books, because if anything I enjoyed *The Blind Side* even more than *Danger Point*.

(I'm confused by one thing, though. Here and elsewhere the novel's referred to as "Ernest Lamb #1." In fact, Inspector Lamb, although the top cop in charge of the case, is very much a subsidiary character in this novel -- yer actual detecting is done by the civilians. Is this just another example of series-mania, the relatively modern habit of trying to thrust books into series even if the connections are a bit tenuous?)

Anyway, *The Blind Side* is a fine example of a traditional mystery story. Rich heir Ross Craddock is deservedly loathed by most who know him, and now someone has put a bullet through his brain. There's a goodish range of suspects, from family members to the dumped boyfriend of the young cousin Ross was trying to seduce, to the janitor of the building that's home to Ross and other family members.

The solution, when it comes, does so very beautifully out of left field. The possibility of that character being the baddie had actually flitted across my mind, but I thought, "Surely Wentworth wouldn't have the audacity to pull that one." Well, she did, and she did it so neatly that I didn't feel in the least cheated.

Much recommended to anyone who's fond of Golden Age detections. Really, Wentworth should be listed as one of the Crime Queens alongside Marsh, Christie, Sayers and Allingham.

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### **Nancy says**

Not my cup of tea. . . .

I am a great fan of classic mysteries, and also a fan of period fiction written in the 1920's-40's. So, it would seem that this re-issue of a 1939 mystery would be right up my alley, but it wasn't. This is my second attempt to read Patricia Wentworth and I think my lack of enthusiasm is more for how she crafts her story than anything else.

I like a novel that is character driven and she seems to write for the "puzzle solvers." Every teeny detail of her characters' movements and conversation is carefully presented; I suspect to give the reader a fair shot at

skillfully conducting themselves through the maze. All it did for me was put me in a foggy daze. I could care less where everyone is standing or sitting or sleeping at every minute of the day and night---so, it isn't Wentworth's fault, I am just not intent on solving the puzzle before the detective does.

Net galley provided me a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an unbiased review.

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### **Robyn says**

Early Bird Books Deal | Some women writers of the time really didn't have a high opinion of other women, and it shows. | Just awful female characters in this one, I had little patience for any of them. Lucy is too obvious with her 'I've got a secret' hints from the very start, and the field of suspects is small enough to limit the suspense. It is, then, in every way a standard Wentworth mystery. Fluff, but comforting fluff, when you want something that's not taxing to spend an evening on.

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### **Freya Gordon says**

This isn't one of my favourites - the detectives seem unnecessary to the story and it feels like the entire story was written as one of the standalone books and then reframed around these detectives as they have no real impact on the plot and don't seem to be all that useful at investigating the murder. When reading the book I ended up resenting the time spent on the detectives sitting around talking about what they think of what they've been told when I KNOW there's something more interesting going on with the other characters. The victim in this case is almost identical to the one in *Who Pays The Piper*, the first Ernest Lamb mystery, to the extent that it was a little insulting - did the author think we wouldn't notice? It has one of the more nonsensical endings as well with a long deathbed confession explaining the whole mystery and tying up the loose ends too neatly.

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### **Cate says**

Enjoyable light mystery read--great plot, good characters, very Agatha Christie--I will be reading more hopefully! Wish my library had these!

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### **Bryn (Plus Others) says**

This one was a mess! But then again, it's from 1939, which makes it one of her very first mysteries, and there's a reason I'm not bothering to reread the first few Miss Silver books. Not really recommended, and definitely not worth rereading. (Trust me on this, future self.)

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### **Linda Brue says**

This was one of Wentworth's Inspector Lamb series (I believe there were 3). It is a competent mystery, but

nothing special. Ross Craddock has taken over as landlord of Craddock House, an old mansion divided into apartments. He is a nasty, mean man and a user of women for his own advantage. When he is murdered, it doesn't come as a great surprise, but it does leave Inspector Lamb with an awful lot of suspects. And unfortunately, on the night the murder was done, it seems as if everyone inside the house and some from outside the house were wandering through the house in the dark. So who actually did the deed?

One thing that really spoiled the story for me was the female characters. One was a total idiot, another started out as an independent, outgoing woman but quickly became a neurotic mess, another the gossipy, nosy meddler--well, you get the idea. As much as I enjoy the "Golden Age" mysteries, for the most part the female characters are stereotypes, not one in the bunch to admire. Or perhaps I just haven't found her yet!

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## **Marie says**

Old fashioned murder story but satisfying in that it contains a usual Wentworth twist

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## **Sep says**

This is the first book involving Lamb and Abbot as policemen. They are almost stock characters in this book but are fleshed out in later volumes. Like all good mysteries, the jerk gets murdered but he is so dreadful everyone in the apartment house is suspect. Published in 1938 it reflects the effects of the Depression more than the likelihood of war.

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## **A.M. says**

Ross Craddock ought to be a good sort... but he's not. He frightens his elderly Cousin Lucy.

He looked as he always did , so very handsome and so masterful . It was ridiculous to feel afraid of someone she had seen christened , but there was something about Ross that made you feel as if you didn't matter at all . (Kindle Locations 168-169).

The old family house has been split into four levels of apartments, the third level is all Craddocks; Ross, his elderly Cousin Lucy and cousin Mary. But Mary dies and too quickly, Ross is handing Lucy a letter to quit after thirty years.

Mary's apartment has been taken over by another cousin, Peter who is executor of her estate.

Lucy heads off on a trip to Europe and lets another relative, Miss Lee stay in her apartment.

Peter sees Ross at a nightclub with their cousin Mavis, who is drunk and obviously out of her depth. Her boyfriend Robert isn't pleased, either. Some time late that night, Peter hears a noise and finds a distressed Mavis and a bleeding Ross in the stairwell. She hit him with the decanter when he came on too strong. Peter takes Mavis into his rooms and he sleeps on the couch.

“ The pleasure was far from mutual , ” said Peter , in his most disagreeable voice . “ Mavis , you really are an absolutely prize , champion idiot . Anybody could have told you what Ross was like . ”

“ They did tell me , ” said Mavis tearfully . “ That’s why I did it . ” (Kindle Locations 591-594).

Oh, Mavis. \*shake my head\*

Later that same night, Ross is shot and killed.

And pretty much everyone could have done it.

Cousin Lucy has come home again, too distressed for a holiday when she’s about to lose her home. Lee sleepwalks and wakes to find blood on her feet. Mavis goes back into Ross’ rooms to get her bag. Peter is ex-army and knows how to use a gun, and Rush the building manager was threatened with sacking by Ross recently, too.

Lamb’s assistant Det. Abbot was fag to Peter at boarding school. [Fagging. It’s a weird English boarding school thing where a young pupil would be required to act as personal servant to a senior boy. ] A change of circumstances has meant Abbot has switched from a legal career to the salaried police job.

“ I’ve taken a dislike to this place , Abbott , ” he said .

“ Did you say ‘ place , ’ or ‘ case , ’ sir ? ”

“ Both , ” said the Inspector succinctly .(Kindle Locations 1639-1640).

Inspector Lamb has too many suspects.

“ I’ll go down and have a word with Rush . Perhaps he’ll be easier to handle in his own quarters . And I’d rather like to see that wife of his . I suppose she is bedridden . ”

“ Haven’t you got enough suspects without her , sir ? ” said Detective Abbott . (Kindle Locations 1753-1756).

Snorts.

Lucy, Peter and Lee made me laugh... they’re so English...

There was a knock on the outer door . Peter got to his feet . “ If it’s a policeman , Lucy’s lying down , you are completely prostrated , and I am raving . I shall give an exhibition performance of biting the hall linoleum . ”

“ I can’t bear another policeman , ” said Lee — “ I really can’t — not even the Pet Lamb . ” (Kindle Locations 2400-2403).

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I hadn’t ever heard of Wentworth but she fits in the ‘golden age of mystery’ and it’s pretty good. I like the characters, all the details are here, the police aren’t silly or ignorant, and the solution was very clever indeed. I’ll be looking for more of these.

4 stars

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**4cats says**

Not a Miss Silver, this features Inspector's Lamb and Abbott both of whom appear in the Miss Silver books. My only complaint was that I worked out whodunnit!

