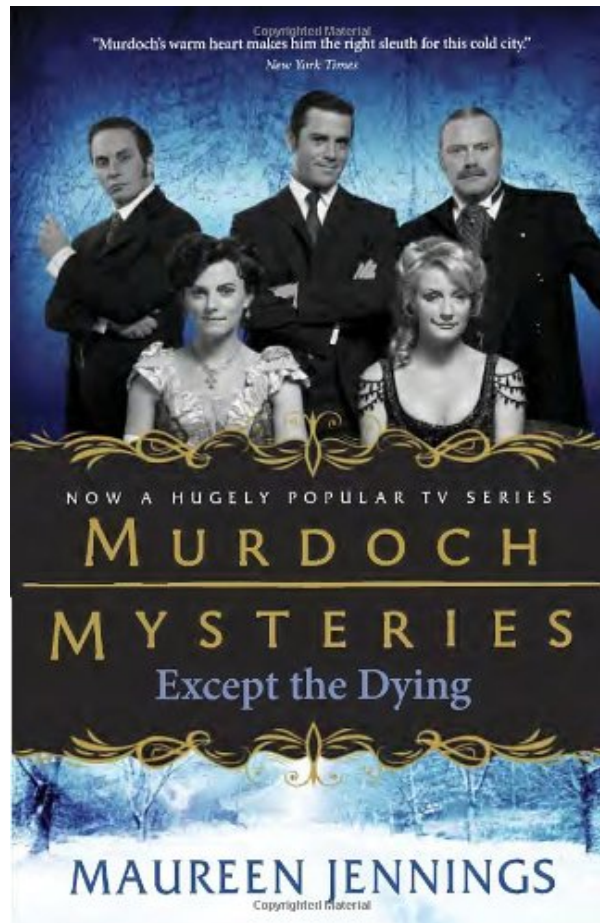
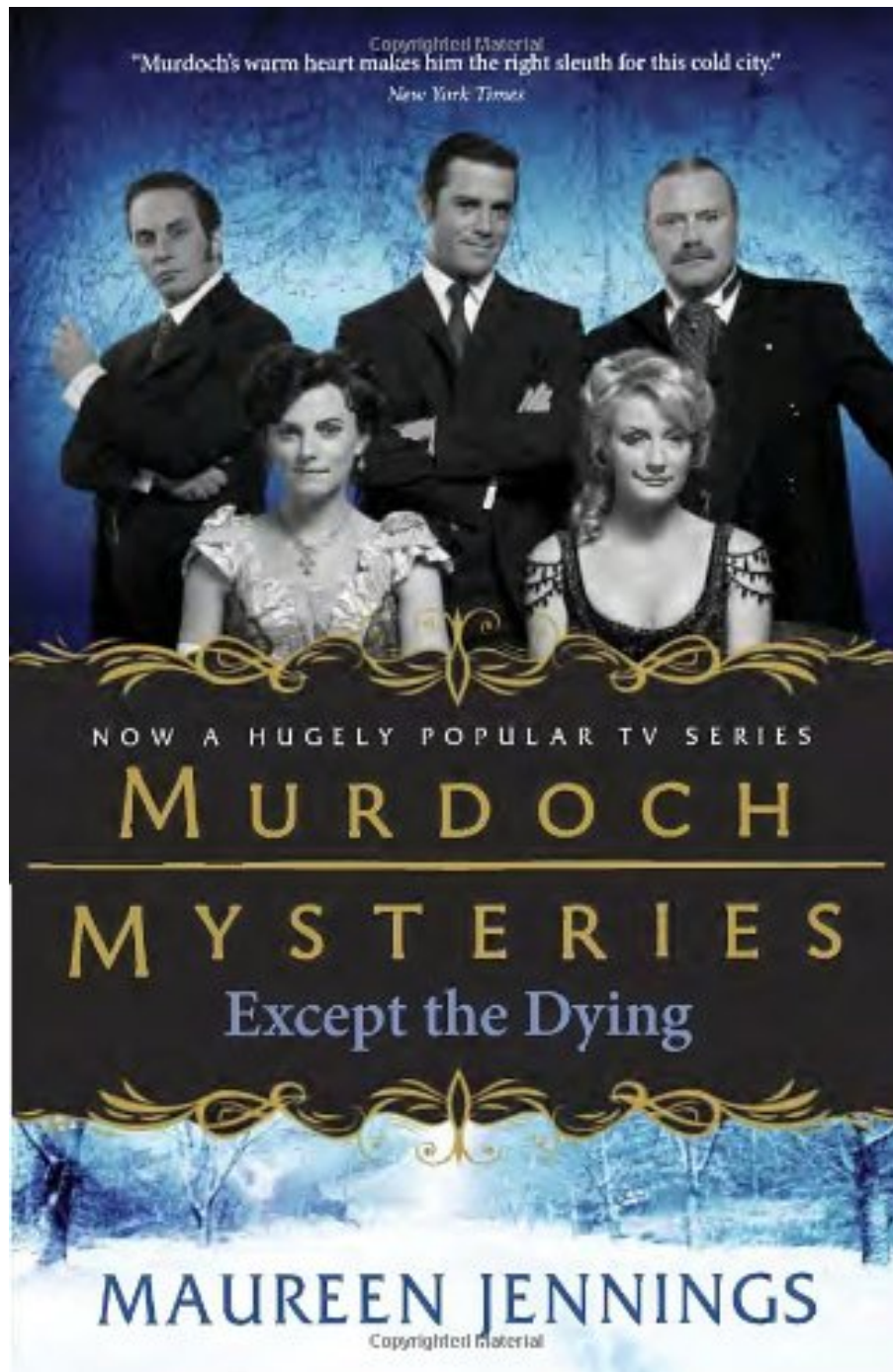


# EXCEPT THE DYING (MURDOCH MYSTERIES) BY MAUREEN JENNINGS



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In the cold Toronto winter of 1895, the unclad body of a servant girl is found frozen in a deserted laneway. The young victim was pregnant when she died. Was her death an attempt to cover up a scandal in one of the city's influential families? Detective William Murdoch quickly finds out that more than one person connected with the girl's simple life has something to hide.

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45 of 45 people found the following review helpful.

A Welcome Debut in the Historical Mystery Genre

By P. Bigelow

In Jennings' debut, it is winter in 1895 Toronto and the police have discovered the nude body of a young woman. Initially believing that she was a woman of the streets who froze to death on her way home, the police are disposed to dismiss the death as accidental. However, they soon discover that while there was no alcohol in her bloodstream there was opium and other indicators that have them believing that she was murdered. Detective William Murdoch is assigned the task of not only finding out who murdered her, but who she is as well.

This is a police procedural in the truest sense. We watch as Murdoch painstakingly follows one tidbit to the next. For each question he thinks he's answered two more arise in his mind. As we go along, we are introduced to many players any one of whom could be the murderer.

Jennings was very clever in her writing of this procedural. While the reader quickly suspects various characters, Murdoch remains an innocent - willing to suspect someone, but not willing to believe with no proof. The bits of proof are doled out slowly - as slowly as it takes Murdoch to discover them. When all the puzzle pieces finally come together, the furtiveness of several characters is adequately explained, the choice of murderer makes sense, and there is relief that that the book has finally ended. The book moves slowly, sometimes bordering on tediousness, and the temptation is to set it aside for a faster read, but resist that temptation. As Murdoch pieces the puzzle together, the book picks up speed so that it may seem like Jennings has rushed the ending, but the way she has handled it, it makes sense for this book.

32 of 32 people found the following review helpful.

Good, but different to the TV series

By N. L. Passmore

I read this book because I recently started watching the Murdoch Mysteries TV series and absolutely love it. (Okay, I know it's been going for six years, but I just discovered it on a recent trip to Canada). I was a bit disappointed when I started reading the book because it was quite different to the TV series. Murdoch is okay, but not as dishy and charming as the TV Murdoch. There was also no sign of the sassy Dr Ogden or any love interest for that matter. The interesting inventions and forensics of the TV show were also missing. However, once I forgot about the TV Murdoch and just started treating it like a separate murder mystery, I started to enjoy it a lot more.

Maureen Jennings evokes the era really well. Her interesting descriptions and snappy dialogue make you feel like you really are in 1890s Toronto. The characterisations were good and historical elements were expertly

woven into the story. She handled the class differences really well and brought the seedier side of the city to life. The pace picked up towards the end and the resolution of the mystery was satisfying. There was also a hint that there could be a love interest for Murdoch in Book 2. I would possibly read more books in the series.

In summary, if you pick up this book because you like the TV series, you might be a little disappointed. But if you treat it as a separate Whodunnit, it's quite good.

20 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

Intense mystery with great effects

By Brenda

I considered *Except the Dying* a dark mystery. It takes place in Toronto in 1895. The townspeople come across as cold as the Canadian winter it occurs in. Detective Murdoch is trying to solve the crime of a young maid found frozen to death and he doesn't seem to be getting much help.

Maureen Jennings is a gifted writer. Her characters conversations made me feel a part of the story. The author has an ability to shock her readers at some points in her story and there was a couple of points in the first three of four chapters in which I was ready to bail. But, I stayed with it to try and solve the mystery. I would consider it a mature theme mystery.

Ms. Jennings has given us an interesting series. Can't wait to see it on film.

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