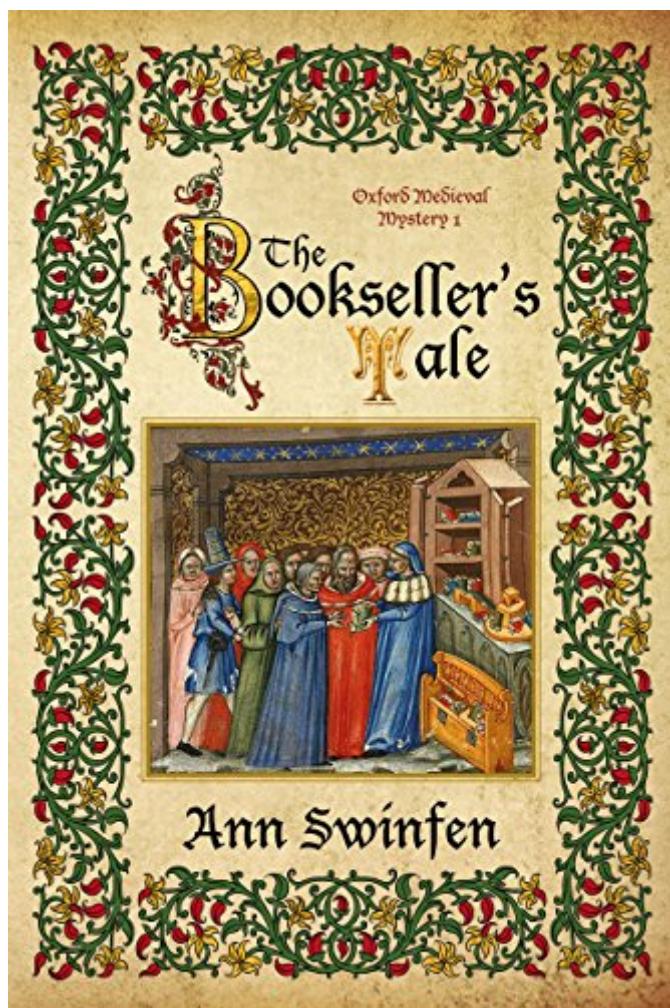


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The Bookseller's Tale (Oxford Medieval Mysteries Book 1)



Synopsis

Oxford, Spring 1353. When young bookseller Nicholas Elyot discovers the body of student William Farringdon floating in the river Cherwell, it looks like a drowning. Soon, however, Nicholas finds evidence of murder. Who could have wanted to kill this promising student? As Nicholas and his scholar friend Jordain try to unravel what lies behind William's death, they learn that he was innocently caught up in a criminal plot. When their investigations begin to involve town, university, and abbey, Nicholas takes a risky gamble and puts his family in terrible danger.

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Customer Reviews

I read a lot. So much, in fact, that I never post reviews; it takes away precious moments of my already limited reading time. The vast preponderance of my reading material is historical fiction, and of that majority, probably half are Medieval English mysteries. The other half are historically-accurate renderings of primarily Plantagenet England; I am a ridiculously devout fan of Elizabeth Chadwick and Sharon Kay Penman. Taking my usual taste into consideration ought to be

sufficient for many other historical fiction/mystery aficionados, so I will not go into the details of this book; suffice it to say, I agree with what another reviewer said: This book is a *gift*. I could not have been more raptly absorbed by any other historical fiction book I've read to date. I devoured this one in less than two days (no mean feat... I have seven children), then promptly downloaded the second book in this series, and finished it in a day. I was disappointed to the point of frustrated depression that there is not yet a third book available! (But slightly mollified to read at Ann Swinfen's website that book 3 will hopefully debut in March... I've waited longer for less worthy successive texts.). I cannot recommend this jewel enough. It's one that I intend to purchase the paperback copy of, to add to my hand-picked legion of Most Worthy books on my largest bookcase. If you're wavering, don't; I promise you will be drawn in and fall in love before the end of the first chapter.

I decided to try a new author based on the summary of this novel - so glad I did - I truly enjoyed Nicholas Elyot's tale and look forward to more mysteries solved by this interesting character and his family and friends in England during the time of Edward III. The history is quite interesting, and the detail given in the making of parchment and binding a great addition to the story.

I liked this book a great deal and plan to get the second book in the series to continue with it. Setting the stage for the characters and the location slowed down the reading of the book early on, but the history was excellent as was the characterization. The stage is set for an unusual historical era, Spring 1353 in Oxford is just past the plague or Black Death which took the lives of many. Nicholas Elyot, bookseller, scrivener and former scholar and University fellow is discussing with his motherless children the possibility of adopting a puppy. His sister Margaret, also bereaved and childless, who serves as his housekeeper was against the idea but they agree to give it a try. Later that day as he was coming from Yardleys farm for goosefeather quills for his business he passed over a bridge and came upon a young man floating and dead in the Cherwell River. Two lay brothers of St. John's Hospital help him pull out William Farringdon. Was he a suicide? Was it a murder? The crime would occupy his and his friend Jordain as well as his employees in a variety of ways. Nicholas children and sister, as well as family members of the deceased become at risk as the tale unravels. Recommended for Medieval mystery fans with fine period detail.

Not a bad medieval Ellis Peters lite, set in Oxford rather than Shrewsbury. Story has reasonable twists and an ongoing narrative arc is building, and the milieu is well presented. The language also avoids the worst anachronisms when trying to deal with medieval if not Middle English. My only real

quibble was the endless procession of walks up and down streets named and clearly significant to the writer, but with no map to tell the reader exactly how it all holds together. (Unless I missed ditto, which in an e-version is not difficult.)

Very well written and it was until the end before the end was clear. Kept me interested the whole book. Thoroughly enjoyed this book and will read more from this Arthur. John

I am a big fan of the Cadfael Chronicles. This book reminds me a bit of those. In 1353, Nicholas Elyot is a bookseller who solves the murder of a young student in Oxford. The tale begins on the heels of the Black Plague, and people have experienced such tremendous loss of life, that they are a bit uninterested in pursuing the culprits responsible for the student's death, so Nicholas and a friend take the matter in hand. I liked learning about the time period, how people lived, and the process of making books. It's a relatively short read, 247 pages, and the first in a series. Oxford Medieval Mysteries. A few times I expected things to happen which did not, but then there were times when there was a bit of a twist. I would like to see a certain relationship develop, and hopefully that will happen in future books!

Set in Oxford in the XIV century, I liked the way the author tells about how books and librarians were related to Oxford and how life was at that time. A bit of history, a bit of a plot, and a nice ending. Hope to read next one in the series.

Very nicely done! I enjoy mysteries set in the Medieval period, and The Bookseller's Tale did not disappoint. The book reminded me of the works of one of my favorite authors, Margaret Frazer, who sadly, has passed away. I confess I was slightly disappointed when St. Frideswide's was mentioned and Sister Frivesse did not make an appearance, but I got over it fairly quickly. The book moves along nicely, with a good twist at the end. Well worth the read, and I'm hoping the second in the series will be out soon.

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