CHAPTER-IV

THE NOVELS OF
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My dear woman, the girl’s dead. Dead! What does it matter where we leave the body! She can’t feel. She can’t know. For God’s sake don’t start being sentimental about death. The indignity is that we die at all, not what happens to our bodies. (James, P. D. *Shroud for a Nightingale*, 28)

Introduction


Over a period of four decades James has refined and polished her craft and skill of writing the novel. Her later phase literary work has become very powerful and displaces her from the police procedural to the full-fledged crime novel writer. It is the matter of time; she has plunged her novels into the mainstream of the popular fiction.

Her journey is the most exciting one which she gains her an attribute of very expert crime writer in her later phase. The four novels depict the central theme of crime and mystery and at the same time evoke thriller and insecurity of the contemporary Jamesian society. Even her writing has been praised for its sophisticated narrative techniques and its complex and multifaceted characters. She has added the Golden Age formula in her writing. It is also noted that since her early phase writing
to later phase writing she has never changed her literary track of crime, mystery, detective and thriller fiction.

*Death in Holy Orders* (2001) is the eleventh novel of the Adam Dalgliesh mystery series. The novel is a masterly exploration of an isolated community coping with the evil and disruption of a murder. This is the classical English detective story at its very best. The novel is mainly set in and around an Anglican Theological College, Saint Anselm’s on the windswept coast of East Anglia. The novel provides an insight into the structure of the Anglican Church, its intrigues, conflicts and dangerous secrets.

Like her several other novels, the present novel is a self-contained closed-community mystery slightly outside the mainstream of contemporary life. Dupayne Museum is reminiscent of the Anglican theological college of ‘*Death in Holy Orders*’, the Paddington Church, St. Matthews, in ‘*A Taste for Death*’ the Peverell Press Publishing House in ‘*Original Sin*’, Martingale House in ‘*Cover Her Face*’, and Steen Clinic in ‘*A Mind to Murder*’. The present novel also moves around the closed-community, of the Church of England Theological College.

James begins her novel providing murder and mystery in the early part of the novel. One day, on a desolate stretch of East Anglian coast, the dead body of one of the theology school’s young ordinands is found. Ronald Treeves, the boy who is found murdered on the shore. He dies in horrible fashion buried under sandfall and it seems like an accidental death, possibility of suicide and of course the murder. The seashore is known as ‘the killing sand’:

This windswept desolate headland with no village, no pub, no shop, is too remote for most people. I like it here but even
I can find it frightening and a little sinister. The sea is eating away the sandy cliffs year by year and sometimes I stand on the edge looking out to sea and can imagine a great tidal wave rearing up, white and glistening, racing towards the shore to crash over the turrets and towers, the church and the cottages, and wash us all away. (6-7)

This mystery unwinds around the suspicious accidental death of a rich man’s son. The victim is the son of Sir Alred Treeves, an enormously successful and rich businessman. He is not satisfied with the Suffolk police investigation. Hence, in his son’s accidental case, he demands Commander Adam Dalgliesh to investigate the death of his son but, “there is something strange about his death, Ronald Treeves death wasn’t an end but a beginning” (17). The murder mystery is very complex and difficult to find whether Ronald’s death is an accident, suicide or murder. The possibility of his death is that he could have been killed elsewhere and his body moved to the beach. Investigation team never find any strange or suspicious objects or clues close to the dead body. They find out only Ronald’s cloths, his brown clock and a long black garment. There is no weapon, no prints and no blood as a clue or evidence. The case is very strange for the investigation team. The murderer is very sharp and intelligent. The killer has not left single clue or physical evidence for the further investigation.

Ronald has no enemies and no one stands to gain by his death. There is one anonymous letter received by Sir Alred Treeves suggesting the foul play about his son’s death. Dr Emma Lavenham who visits once a term from Cambridge to introduce the students to the literary heritage of Anglicanism; Archdeacon Crampton, a trustee of the college; Dr. Clive Stannard who is using the library for the research provides some
information related to the death of Ronald to Adam Dalgliesh. Ronald is, “intelligent and hard-working but singularly lacking in charm, poor boy. He was curiously judgemental for someone young. I would have said he combined a certain insecurity with considerable self-satisfaction. He had no particular friends – nor that particular friendships are encouraged – and I think he may have been lonely” (97-98).

The death of Ronald Treeves is mysterious and complex. James’s mysteries trap the reader and readers are curious to know what happens next. The earlier case is still to be solved and here the story turns its track. The woman who has found Ronald’s dead body is herself dead. Margaret Munroe is found dead in her cottage by Mrs Pilbeam. There is so far no evidence of foul play. Most of the people provide help to Dalgliesh, in his investigation by telling that Ronald has killed himself but Dalgliesh is not ready to believe on them. The suicide of the young and healthy is always mysterious. He dies and no one knows the reason behind his death.

Here James continues to provide her fans sudden rush, excitement and twist. There is twist in the story Archdeacon Crampton who is the trustee of the Theological College is found horribly murdered before the altar of St. Anselm’s Church. Archdeacon has been killed and the novel becomes police procedural. One more death occurs, and this time it is clearly a murder; late one night in the chapel, somebody bashes in the head of Archdeacon Crampton. He is the second victim of the novel. Subsequently, two murders are committed and no one knows who has committed the crime and why. Dalgliesh has decided to call Chief Inspector Kate Miskin to assist him to find out the criminal.

*Death in Holy Orders* is written in four parts, mystery, suspense, puzzle and horror are resolved in three parts and remaining fourth part is
being merely a very brief post script. The first death is that of Ronald Treeves, a student of the theological college, the second victim is Margaret Munroe and the third death is Archdeacon Crampton. Father Martin has found his body in the church immediately after half-past five in the morning. Father Martin rings the church bell to raise the alarm and Dr. Lavenham comes first on the scene.

This is an excellent mystery and James sets up the setting and characters, the potential conflict and anxiety very well. The three victims one is the apparent suicide, the certified natural death and the brutal murder have been connected with each other. A mysterious death of Archdeacon Crampton takes place in the church. The detective Kate Miskin and Piers Tarrant with Sergeant Robbins are appointed for the murder investigation and within a short period they reach at the murder place by a car along with the supporting team, a photographer.

Archdeacon Crampton is recently appointed as a trustee of the college. Dalgliesh and his team examine the complicated motives of suspect’s resident at the college, mostly ordinands and priests. Dalgliesh realises that the crime must have been committed by one of the residents of the college. He has started to conduct the interviews of the college members. When he visits Mrs Crampton, who is the wife of victim, he comes to know something unexpected from her:

My husband was not welcome in this place, Commander, but I know that no one the members at St Anselm’s could possibly have killed him. I refuse to believe that a member of a Christian community could be capable of such evil.(309-10)
There is one tragic incident related to Archdeacon’s past. Some years ago Father Betterton is found guilty of sexual offences against some of his choirboys and is sentenced to prison. Archdeacon plays leading role in the trial as evidence. It is an old and rather tragic story in his life.

James builds a classic detective story which is gripping the psychological and emotional richness of the readers and her characters are gone through horror and shadow of suspense. In this religious thriller, holy and pious people come under suspicion. There could be a connection between the death of Ronald Treeves, Margaret and Archdeacon Crampton. Commander Adam Dalgliesh has to face with the complex investigation full of contradictory clues and motives. The series of murder takes place in St. Anselm’s Theological Collage. Miss Betterton has been killed in St. Mark’s Cottage. Reg and Ruby find out her dead body:

She was lying on her back, her head towards the bottom step. There was a single gash to her forehead, but only an oozing of dried blood and serum. She was wearing a faded dressing-gown in paisley wool and under it a white cotton night-dress. Her thin grey hair struck out from the side of her head in a plait, the wispy end held together by a twisted rubber band. Her eyes, fixed on the top of the stairs, were open and lifeless. (394)

This is a suspicious death; the earlier murder case remains unsolved and one more murder takes place in the story. Murderer has broken her neck in a brutal manner. One notable thing in James’s novel is her killer is very brutal and barbarian. They do not have mercy or sympathy towards victim.
George Gregory has to be the chief suspect of the murder mystery. He has an affair with Clara Arbuthnot. They have a child Raphael Arbuthnot. The matter has taken place twenty-five years ago. Agnes Arbuthnot is the owner of the theological college. According to her will George Gregory and his son Raphael Arbuthnot are the authentic heir of the theological college:

Agnes Arbuthnot wrote in her will if the college closed, all she had bequeathed to it should go to the legitimate heirs of her father, either in the male or female line, providing they were communicant members of Church of England. She didn’t write “born in wedlock”, she wrote “legitimate in English law”. (444)

The novel follows the tradition of crime and mystery fiction. James depicts sex, romance and love along with crime and mystery. Her novels depict the dark side of human being and also throw light on interpersonal relationship between man and woman.

Eric Surtee, Karen Surtee and Archdeacon Crampton are the chief trustees of the theological college. Slowly Archdeacon holds his position and he becomes the supreme authority of the college. The decline of the Arbuthnot estate is the central motive for the murder mystery of Archdeacon Crampton. With the help of clues and objects Adam Dalgliesh reaches his investigation. He uses forensic method, medical technology DNA to identify the murderer. For Dalgliesh detection has been a professional and intellectual commitment to the discovery of the truth. As a part of detection sometimes police procedural detective takes help of forensic technology and scientific methods to solve the crimes in combination with the brilliant logical mind and rationality.
George Gregory has explained in detail, how he is responsible for the murder of Archdeacon Crampton. Gregory and his son Raphael are the true owners of the college but Crampton behaves like an owner. Therefore he has killed Crampton so he can save his property. He confesses his crime, he has been sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Archdeacon Crampton. St. Anselm's has been officially closed now forever. The students find their places at other theological colleges.

This is an excellent country-house and closed-community mystery; centres on an isolated British town in which white collar entity and religious people pay their attention on greed and lust for money and of course conspiracy and revenge. This is classic whodunit with motive, means and puzzle. Her next closed community novel also provides the same kind of experience to the readers.

*The Murder Room* (2003) is one of the classic crime and detective novels, which is shortlisted for British Book Awards Crime Thriller of the year 2005. It takes place in London, closed community, particularly the ‘Dupayne Museum’ on the edge of Hampstead Health in the London Borough of Camden. It is a fascinating place dedicated to the inter-war years, 1919-1938. Like her earlier novels, this novel explores the theme of crime, mystery and detection.

The novel catches the attention of closed-community mystery readers. It moves around Dupayne Museum, its trustees, staff and visitors. It is a private museum devoted to the history of World War-II. The Murder Room itself features historical background; the room refers to a room in which victim or murders occurred during these years. James has given the fine touch of historical background to this story. The crime story is fine combination of mystery with history. The novel is divided into four sections or the criminal plot mingles in four chapters. The first
book covers the people and the place. The second book deals with the first victim. The books three and four deal with the second victim and the third victim. James, as a prominent crime writer develops the series of crime and murder.

As usual James begins the novel providing the information about the death, “On Friday 25 October, exactly one week before the first body was discovered at the Dupayne Museum” (3). Before the actual murder thriller James narrates one tragic incident, William Herbert Wallace, fifty-two-years old Prudential Company insurance agent has killed his wife Julia Wallace and after thirteen days from her death Wallace is arrested by the police. The style of James writing of the novel follows the tradition of crime and mystery fiction. The earlier murder is not the central theme of the novel, but the destruction of Max Dupayne family is the major motto of the present murder mystery.

Commander Adam Dalgliesh is acquainted with the Dupayne Museum in Hampstead. He is called to investigate the murder of one of the trustees. Here, James has made an attempt on the mentality of criminal and the psyche of the ruthless killer. The Dupayne Museum is the property of three siblings, who are in the midst of a family row over whether or not to renew the lease on the building that houses the museum. One of the trustees Neville Dupayne is killed in the Museum. The story moves around the series of crimes or murders in the Museum:

The Murder Room was large, at least thirty feet long and well lit by three pendant lights, but for Dalgliesh the immediate impression was darkly Claustrophobic, despite the two easterly and the single south-facing windows. To the right of the ornate fireplace was a second and plain door,
obviously permanently shut since it was without either door knob or handle. (28)

There was glass-fronted display cases along with each wall, above the cabinets are rows of sepia and black and white photographs, “the impression was of a collage of blood and blank dead faces, of murders and victims united now in death, staring into nothingness” (28). Dalgliesh and Ackroyd have made a tour of the room and illustrated and examined the most notorious murder cases of the inter-war years. The beautiful Marie-Marguerite Fahmy shoots her Egyptian playboy husband in the Savoy Hotel in 1923. One more example of a successful defence is the Brighton Trunk Murder in 1934. The actual trunk in which Tony Mancini, a twenty six-year old waiter and convicted thief, stuffed the body of his prostitute mistress, Violette Kaye:

This was the second Brighton trunk murder, the first body, a woman without head and legs had been found at Brighton railway station eleven days earlier. No one was ever arrested for that crime. Mancini was tried at Lewes Assize court in December and brilliantly defended by Norman Birkett saved his life. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty but in 1976 Mancini confessed. This trunk seems to exert a morbid fascination on visitors. (30)

The present novel describes a series of crimes taking place in the museum. The Blazing Car Murder happens in 1930. Alfred Arthur Rouse, a thirty-seven-years-old commercial traveller living in London is a compulsive womanizer. Apart from committing bigamy, he has raped near about eighty women during the course of his travels. The Murder Room is finely crafted example of James literary vision. The mystery has followed a classic “locked room” plot, with a limited number of suspects,
and restricted locale. All of whom have interlocking connections with the others.

The museum near Hampstead Heath is fictitious, but the cases featured in the “Murder Room” are actual historical crimes, and the novel often offers philosophical commentary about murder and the relationship between detective fiction and true crime (Kirkus Reviews 71). The setting of the novel also has a deeper significance. In Original Sin (1995), blood is spilled at a stuffy London publishing house, while A Certain Justice (1997) sees corpses at a venerable London law firm and Death in Holy Orders (2000) explores homicide in a monastery. The Murder Room, the architecturally interesting building to which homicide comes in the Dupayne Museum, a privately owned showcase for art and artefacts near Hampstead Heath.

The setting and locale of the novel throws light on specific historical span. The Museum contains the objects of years between the two world wars i.e. 1919-1939. The Murder Room proves to be an amazing modern book which reflects modernity of the world. As sex and romance is one of the important features of crime and mystery fiction, the present novel and the murders, which occur in the “Murder Room”, are motivated by sex and sexuality. In the present murder mystery, the image of vivid characters and their co-relation with past incidents are described. The Murder Room introduces several unhappy families for example the Dupayne siblings, Tally Clutton, Muriel Godby’s family and Neville Dupayne. These families represent the picture of contemporary society of James’s era and London society.

Conrad Ackroyd, an eccentric friend of Commander Adam Dalgliesh is researching into the high-profile murder cases. The Murder Room provides multiple murders that came with almost every new
chapter. The Dupayne Museum near London’s Hampstead Health is organised by three members of the Dupayne family, the Dupayne brothers, Neville Dupayne, Marcus Dupayne, and their sister Caroline Dupayne. They are the main trustees of the property of the museum.

The novel is divided into three books. The book one deals with the people and the place in which James has painted and introduced some major characters like Dupayne family, Conrad Ackroyd and his wife Nellie Ackroyd, Edith Thompson, Percy Thompson, Calder Hale, Roger Fry, Jim and Mavis. James has highlighted the physical, psychological and emotional life along with their passions, disappointments and prejudices. All of whom are possible suspects in the murder of Neville Dupayne. The readers know that one of them has committed the murder. The novel is the representative of Queen Anna’s Era and the London society of Jamesian world. The book second, third and fourth deal with the first victim, the second victim and the third victim.

Dr. Neville Dupayne who is dedicated psychiatrist is not ready to sign on their late father’s will. Caroline Dupayne is Neville’s wealthy and snobbish sister who wants to continue the museum. Marcus Dupayne who is pushed out of his firm and abandoned by his wife, himself wants to run the museum. Sara Dupayne who is the daughter of Neville is desperate for her share of the museum sale. Muriel Godby, who is the caretaker, sees to the everyday running of the museum; she will lose her job if museum is sold. James Calder-Hale has played the role of a curator and Tally Clutton is the housekeeper who discovers Neville’s dead body. Marie Strickland, volunteer calligraphist has a long relation with the Dupayne’s family and Ryan Archer who is handyman at museum. Along with vivid characters James depicts internal politics and conflict between
the people, those who are directly and indirectly associated to the criminal plot.

James is successful in generating the icon horror and fear in this tale. The mystery turns its track, Dr. Neville’s car and garage are on fire and there is a body. Someone’s been burnt to death. Neville Dupayne has been burnt to death in his Jag in a lock-up garage at the museum.

After the death of Neville Dupayne it becomes police procedural, Adam Dalgliesh with his team investigates the murder mystery of Neville. He is the first victim of the story who is burnt and has died very horribly. The murder is mysterious, it looks like accident but it is a cruel murder. Dalgleish starts his investigation he asks question to the concern people. Douglas Anderson provides him information about Neville’s death. He says:

It wasn't an accident; you can rule that one out. And I don't think it was suicide. In my experience suicides who kill themselves with petrol don't hurl the can away. You usually find it in the foot-well of the car. But if he had doused himself and chucked the can away, why isn't the cap close to it, or dropped on the floor of the car? It looks to me as if the cap was removed by someone standing in the far left-hand corner. (186)

The possibility of his death is that the murderer throws petrol on him, when Neville has entered in the garage and he is being caught by the fire. All authority members come under shadow of suspect. His death has been a terrible shock for people who know him and has worked with him.

Scotland Yard squad Dalgliesh, Detective Kate Miskin, Inspector Pieres and Sergeant Benton-Smith have inspected and cross-checked the
suspected people. But they never find suitable motive for Neville Dupayne’s murder mystery. The present case is still unsolved, and within a week another death takes place at approximately the same time. Celia Mellock, who is a young model, has an affair with Lord Martlesham has been lying dead with lifeless eye. Dr. Kynaston, a pathologist examines the dead body:

Cause of death obvious, she was strangled. The killer was wearing gloves and was right handed. There are no fingernail impressions and no scratching, and no signs of the victim trying to loosen the grip. Unconsciousness may have supervened very quickly. The main grip was made by the right hand from the front. You can see a thumb impression high up under the lower jaw over the cornu of the thyroid. There are finger-marks on the left side of the neck from the pressure of the opposing fingers. As you can see, these are a little low down along the side of the thyroid cartilage. (380)

Celia Mellock is the second victim of the story. She has died shortly before or soon after the Dupayne’s murder. She has been throttled in the museum. This death is terrible shock and it is also a tragedy for the girl, for her family and for the museum. Here, James has described the world around her, and The Murder Room pays tribute to this. Dalgliesh and his team suspect Tally Clutton and other members of Dupayne family who have a prime motive for murder. As the plot proceeds, it is possible to guess about the killer. The museum provides key to find out the murderer. Neville is found burned to death in a car lock-up and the body of second victim a young model is discovered in tin trunk inside the museum.
Dalgliesh has been thinking about the post-mortem report. Dr. Kynaston’s post-mortem report clears the young woman’s murder mystery, which featured a “classic who-dun-it”. The pathologist report confirmed that the actual examination:

The pathologist's report confirmed that he had found on his first examination. The main pressure had been from the right hand squeezing the voice box and fracturing the superior cornu of the thyroid at its base. There was a small bruise at the back of the head suggesting that the girl had been forced back against the wall during strangulation, but no evidence of physical contact between the assailant and the victim, and no evidence under the nails to suggest that the girl had fought of the attack with her hands. An interesting finding was that Celia Mellock had been two months pregnant. (448)

Here, James clearly intends that as far as clue is concerned, the murders in the novel are motivated by lust and sexual feeling. James’s characters are often engage in romance, sex, homosexuality and lesbian activities. Their behaviour is always like an upper class white-collar entity. Such immoral and illegal things are trivial for them. They are involved in it as a part of their day to day life or as a passion.

James combines the criminal plot into three victims. The last part of the novel has disclosed the mystery of third victim. Pregnancy is the major motive for Celia Mellock’s murder and Lord Martlesham is the chief suspect for her death. When Dalgliesh conducts interview with him, he asks several questions regarding the death of Celia and their relationship:
‘What were your relations with Miss Mellock?’
‘We had briefly been lovers. I wanted to break off the association and she didn't. It was as brutal as that. But she seemed to accept that it had to end. It should never have begun. But she asked me to meet her for the last time at the museum. It was our usual place of assignation, in the car-park. It’s utterly deserted there at night. We’d never felt at risk of discovery. Even if we'd been seen, we weren't doing anything illegal.’ (470)

The mystery become very complex, findings and clues never match with the suspects, and still murderer is free. Dalgliesh suffers a lot and he is in full pain. He is not able to link between the two deaths. Dupayne’s death is being suicide and Celia Mellock’s death can be a sexually motivated murder or manslaughter.

Tally Clutton wants to say something about the murder to Dalgliesh. She knows something secret about the murder mystery. She has some information that she wishes to give to Dalgliesh but not over the phone. She is anxious to see him personally. But she says it is not urgent; the next day would do. James is very expert to create mysterious atmosphere, a moment of loneliness, fear and regret in her novel, which create curiosity and horror in the mind of readers:

Somewhere in that stretch of silence and darkness lonely people might be walking, some in search of sex, companionship, perhaps of love. A hundred and fifty years ago a maidservant in the house had crept down the same path, passed through the same gate, to meet her love and her appalling death. That mystery had never been solved, and the victim, like the victims of those murderers whose faces
looked down from the walls of the Murder Room, had become one of the great army of the amorphous dead. Tally could think of her with transitory pity but her shade had no power to disturb the peace of the night, and it could not make her afraid. She armoured herself with the blessed assurance that she wasn’t in thrall to terror, that the horror of the two murders couldn’t keep her captive in her cottage or spoil this solitary excursion under the night sky. (486-87)

James’s use of language is appropriate to the tradition of crime and mystery fiction. In the novels of Christie and Sayers the tool of language is fine and they present cinematic picture before the readers. The same phenomenon has been used by James in her literary craft.

Tally Clutton is an important clue or evidence of the murder mystery but the killer is very alert. The killer knows that Tally is going to say something to Dalgliesh so he has brutally killed her. She is the third victim of the story. A surprising ending is one more feature of James’s novel. At the middle of the story the reader thinks that the Tally Clutton has a motive or is responsible for the murder. There is an unexpected result that comes out in this tale. Dalgliesh finds out the actual murderer and that all three murders take place in the full force of revenge. Muriel Godby is found guilty; she commits crime, the confession is comprehensive but purely factual, making no excuses, showing no remorse. The murder has been planned by her in advance:

On the Friday of the murder Godby had come equipped with the bucket, protective overall, gloves, shower cap and long matches in the car boot, together with a large plastic bag into which she could thrust them after the deed. She hadn’t gone home . . . She had waited in the darkness of the garage until
Neville Dupayne was seated in the Jaguar, then had stepped forward calling his name. Surprised, but recognizing her voice, he had turned his face towards her and had received the full force of the petrol. She had needed only seconds to light and throw the match. The last human sound he heard had been her voice. (508)

James’s criminals are very alert and sharp; they commit crimes by using their plan. Even, they never left motives and clues remain back. The whole investigation process takes place before them; they are the part of the investigation process.

Muriel Godby who is a murderer for her, “the killing has been pleasure as well as a necessity” (509) is under arrest and sent to prison, for ten years. She has killed innocent Celia and Tally along with Dr. Neville Dupayne to avenge on him, because of his negligence, her sister lost her life. She confesses her crime:

‘I don’t know why you’re here, commander. You and I have finished with each other. I know I’ll go to prison for ten years. I’ve served a longer sentence than that. And I’ve succeeded in what I wanted, haven’t I? The Dupaynes won’t close the museum to honour their brother’s memory. Every day it’s open, every visitor who arrives, every success will be due to me. And they’ll know it. But leave my life alone. You’re entitled to know what I did and how I did it. You know anyway, you worked it all out. That’s your job and you’re said to be good at it. You’re not even entitled to know why I did it, but I didn’t mind giving a reason if it made everyone happier. I’ve written it down and it’s quite simple. Dr Neville Dupayne killed my sister through his negligence."
She phoned him and he didn’t come. She threw petrol over herself and set it alight. Because of him she lost her life. I wasn’t going to let him lose my job.’ (509)

At last the Dupayne Museum is on the map. Adam Dalgliesh has been appreciated by the Minister and Scotland Yard Police Department for his great achievement.

The novel is supposed to be a ‘classic whodunit’ or ‘closed-community mystery’. Like her earlier novels this novel explores the theme of crime, mystery and detection. The novel is a classic piece of crime fiction in which white-collar crime is highlighted. It is rightly said that the present novel can be compared with her debut novel Cover Her Face in which the detective solves a locked-room mystery of Sally Jupp.

Adam Dalgliesh is the most conservative detective of James’s detective fiction. He respects the police force that he works for. He is confident that the crime or case or a dead body awaiting his attention. There is one more murder mystery, known as “The Lighthouse Mystery” which is set in Combe Island that occurs in the novel The Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse (2005) is the thirteenth novel in the Adam Dalgliesh mystery series. Like her earlier coastal mystery novel Unnatural Causes, the present novel is set around the beauty of the coast of Cornwall. The title of James’s novel indicates the symbol of death. The Black Tower, The Murder Room and The Lighthouse symbolises death. Death is one fundamental concern in James’s novels. In every murder mystery there is a terrible death:

Death is seen not only as the ultimate indignity but as the ultimate separator of people. When a body is robbed of its
life, it is robbed of all that makes it human and individual; it becomes not a person but a flesh. (Siebenheller 95)

Death shatters the readers and they lament over the death of the victims. It catches the attention of the lover of crime and mystery fiction or the classic puzzle. As usual, the present novel opens marvelously with a Jamesian thought-provoking beginning:

Murder would be the most embarrassing for us, suicide hardly less so in the circumstances. Accidental death we could probably live with. Given the victim, there’s bound to be publicity whichever it is, but it should be manageable unless this is murder.(4)

The story centers on the Combe Island off the Cornish Coast. It is often visited by visitors as a heaven or the place of rest, especially rich and powerful white-collar people. Here, James has given the fine touch of historical background as the root of The Lighthouse is found in the past. The owner of the coast is the Holcombe family. They decide to use the Combe coast as a place of rest and seclusion for men, gentlemen who are in position of responsibility like ministers, politicians, writers, white-collar and elite class people etc. The Combe Island is referred as ‘Combe House’ by its family members and servants and it is operated by a private trust. There are restricted characters; they have played an important role in this murder mystery. This is fine ‘country-house mystery’ in which writer has thrown light on closed circle of guests, visitors, famous novelist Nathan Oliver, his daughter Miranda Oliver and his copy-editor, Dennis Tremlett. Other people like the manager of the Combe Island trust, Rupert Maycroft, Anglican priest Adrian Boyd, scientist Dr. Mark Yelland, Jago Tamlyn, the boatman and Daniel Padgett, a handyman.
The Lighthouse also provides to the readers a limited number of suspects and restricted setting. One notable thing is that all James’s novels move around closed community or a particular restricted setting. In her novels, setting, place and the buildings where the murder takes place play an important part. Her every novel and its crime or murder occurs in a specific building or in an island. Nathan Oliver along with his daughter Miranda and his copy-editor, Dennis Tremlett visit Combe House. James depicts love and sex as a major part in the criminal plot. Her most of the characters are engaged in romance and sex. Miranda and Dennis Tremlett have a love affair. They gave an erotic edge to their lovemaking:

Now they lay bodily close but distanced in thought, their faces upheld to the blue tranquility of the sky and a tumble of white clouds. The unusual strength of the autumn sun had warmed the enclosing boulders and they were both naked to their waists. Dennis had pulled up his jeans, still unzipped, and Miranda’s corduroy skirt was crumpled over her thighs. Her other clothes lay in a tumbled heap beside her, her binoculars thrown over them. Now, with the most urgent physical need satisfied, all his other senses were preternaturally acute, his ears—as always on the island—throbbed with a cacophony of sound: the pounding of the sea, the crash and swirl of the waves and the occasional wild shriek of a seagull. He could smell the crushed turf and the stronger earth, a faint unrecognized smell, half-sweet, half-sour, from the clump of bulbous-leaved plants brightly green against the silver of the granite, the sea smell and the pungent sweat of warm flesh and sex. (48-49)
Sexual fulfillment and physical love are the need of human being. James has given prime concern to love and sex in her crime and mystery novels. She handles secret love, luxurious lifestyle, internal politics and conflicts throughout this novel. Even, it is seen that love and lust is the major motives for every murder mystery in her novels.

When Oliver discovers both Miranda and Dennis at the time of making physical love, he reacts with anger and orders them to leave the island the next day. The story turns suddenly and it takes twist, Oliver has gone missing; he has been at the surgery at nine o’clock to give blood but does not turn back. Here, James has been succeeded to create the mysterious atmosphere:

And high against the whiteness of the lighthouse a hanging body: the blue and red thread of the climbing rope taut to the railing, the neck mottled and stretched like the neck of a bald turkey, the head, grotesquely large, dropped to one side, the hands, palms outward, as if in a parody of benediction. The body was wearing shoes, and yet for one disorientated second he seemed to see the feet drooping side by side in a pathetic nakedness. (76)

Nathan Oliver is hanging on the historical lighthouse. When the residents know about the death of Oliver, they feel remorse and become confuse. This is a mysterious death and the question remains before the fans of murder mystery who has hanged the Oliver and why someone hangs him. At first the death seems like accidental death or suicide. After his death the novel become police procedural, Adam Dalgliesh and his team paired with Benton-Smith and Kate Miskin arrive to investigate the murder case of Nathan Oliver. This is an interesting psychological phenomenon in which Dalgliesh follows the detection style of Dorothy
Leigh Sayers’s icon Lord Peter Wimsey. Dalgliesh begins to collect the information of the visitors and resident staff; he has warned that they are needed for questioning. James describes the Combe House as “the place of horror”. The pathologist, Dr. Edith Glenister has examined the dead body and is in puzzle:

The question is: is this death by hanging or by manual strangulation? We’ll get nothing useful from the right-hand knot on the neck. The bruise is extensive, suggesting a large, fairly rigid knot. The interesting side of his neck is here on the left, where we have two distinct circular bruises, probably both from fingers. I would expect a thumb mark on the right, but that’s obscured by the mark of the knot. The assumption is that the assailant is right-handed. As for the cause of death, you hardly need my opinion, Commander. He was strangled. The hanging came later. There’s a distinct surface mark from the ligature itself which looks like a regular and repeated pattern. It’s more precise and different than I would expect from an ordinary rope. It could be a rope with a strong core, probably of nylon, and a patterned outer cover. A climbing rope for example. (103)

The death of Nathan creates horror and it has shocked the island residents. Once again, James has used the fine fusion of mystery with history. The Lighthouse has a violent history and it is linked with the past episodes. Dalgliesh comes to know that there has been a visitor from Germany, Dr. Raimund Speidel, who has died under tragic conditions at the lighthouse during World War II. The novel has historical references but the story is not set in that period. It centres only the brutal death of Nathan and one more death of Adrian Boyde. As usual James explores the
saga of characters of the classic locked room setting. The story is merely a well-written ‘who-dun-it’ and readers are curious to know what happens next. Miranda and Dennis have come under the prime suspect because without Oliver’s permission they decide to marry. The Combe House and its residents have been questioned by the investigation squad. At the time of detection their privacy is violated, the effect of murder harms once life, “Murder destroys privacy—the privacy of the suspects, of the victim’s family, of everyone who comes into contact with the death” (191).

Crime and criminality have spread in the world because of materialism, greed for money and, of course, the way of luxurious lifestyle. It has social and hereditary touch and psychological nourishment of the society. It is rightly said that, “the letter ‘L’ could cover all motives for murder: Lust, Lucre, Loathing and Love” (194). Dalgliesh suspects four residents of Combe House who could have a motive for murder: Adrian Boyde, Jo Staveley, Jago and Daniel Padgett. At first glance the murder seems like suicide but the post-mortem report declares that the reason of death is of asphyxiation caused by manual strangulation. The puzzle of Oliver’s death becomes very complicated. Dalgliesh decides to re-examine the history of Combe House and its relation with Oliver Nathan. He comes to know the authentic truth, and then Dalgliesh says:

I think that this murder has its root in the past, but not in the distant past. We have to ask ourselves the same question. Did something happen between Nathan Oliver’s last visit in July of this year and his arrival last week? What caused one or more people on this island to decide that Oliver must die? I don’t think we can get any further tonight. I want you to go and speak to Jago first thing tomorrow morning, then come and report to me. It may be distressing for him but I think
we’ve got to learn the truth about the suicide of his sister. And there’s another thing. Why was he so anxious that Millie shouldn’t join in the search for Oliver? Why shouldn’t she help? Was he trying to protect her from seeing that hanging body? When he was called to help search did he already know what they were going to find? (244)

The story moves from one cottage to another cottage. Cottages play an important role in the investigation. For example Chapel cottage, Puffin cottage, Atlantic cottage, Seal cottage, and Murrelet cottage. It is the story of psychological exploration of small society (Combe House society) along with their strains, disappointments and moral ambiguity. The story turns its excitement; there is one more murder, which creates twist puzzle and shock among the readers and to the investigation team. The first case is still remaining to be solve and there is shocking news of a murder of Father Adrian Boyde:

He was on the stone floor a foot from the improvised altar, his left hand protruding from the edge of the cope, the white-fingers stiffly curved as if beckoning him forward. The cope had been thrown or placed over the whole of the rest of the body and through the green silk he could see the stains of blood. (253)

Murderer without any mercy has killed Adrian Boyde. By using stone as a weapon, killer has been destroyed Boyde’s face. The whole island comes under suspicion, they are confused and for the reason that of the fear of death and killer everyone wants to leave the island. “There’s only one person on this island who can feel safe from being murdered and that’s the murderer himself” (266). The mystery covers the forensic
investigation method including DNA, pathology, and the reports of fingerprints etc.

Adam Dalgliesh realises that Dan Padgett is the major motive of the both murders. He orders Kate and Francis to search Padgett’s cottage, where they find the glass bottle of Oliver’s blood sample, a lock of Martha Padgett’s hair, his birth certificate, and Oliver Nathan’s book as evidence. Martha Padgett who is the mother of Dan Padgett before her death has confined her secret to the Father Adrian Boyde, that Dan is the son of Nathan Oliver. Whenever Nathan Oliver visits Combe Island he has kept an immoral relationship with Martha and as a result she becomes pregnant. Dan Padgett collects Oliver’s blood for a DNA test to confirm his paternity. Oliver rejects his responsibility and fatherhood and would not acknowledge his name to her child. Therefore, Dan Padgett has killed Oliver Nathan in a fit of anger after confirming Oliver is his father and he has victimised his mother for his lust. After the murder of Oliver Nathan, he has killed Adrian Boyde because the priest suspects on him. Hence, Dan has killed Boyde too, so that he can destroy the clue or evidence.

James uses cinematic end of this novel. Before Kate Miskin and Benton-Smith can arrest Dan Padgett, he kidnaps a young staff member, Millie Tranter. Dan threatens to throw her from the lighthouse:

Padgett had lifted Millie over the gallery rail so that she was standing on the outside ledge no more than six inches wide, clutching at the rail and shrieking while Padgett held her by the arm. He was shouting something but the words were lost in the breeze. Slowly he began edging Millie along the ledge
towards the seaward curve of the lighthouse. The little group below followed, hardly daring to look up. (301)

Kate Miskin and Benton-Smith unlock the door of lighthouse and climb to the top. Kate convinces and suggest him, “if you kill Millie you’ll get no sympathy from anyone. She’s done nothing to you. She’s innocent. You killed your father and you had to kill Adrian Boyde, that’s understandable. But not Millie. If you want to get your own back, now’s your chance” (308).

Dan Padgett kills his father Oliver Nathan because since his childhood he has suffered the pain of an illegitimate, ill-treated, resented, unwanted child. Hatred and pain of illegitimate child is the major cause of the murder mystery. The guilty must be punished. They should not get profit from their crimes. Dan Padgett commits suicide from the lighthouse. The murder mystery is solved by Kate Miskin and Francis-Benton Smith.

The Lighthouse is traditional who-dun-it and fine fusion of costal mystery, detective thriller and psychological thriller. James explores the saga of character of the classic closed community setting. The present story is a psychological exploration of a small society that is the Combe House society and their passion, disappointments, conflicts, pain etc. The canvas of London and contemporary life has been portrayed by James in the present murder mystery. Lust and excessive love is responsible motive behind the disaster of someone’s life. A Dalgliesh mystery series has been thrown light on various issues in the ‘Jamesian Era.’

James’s next murder mystery perhaps the last case in the life of Adam Dalgliesh appeared on the horizon of crime and mystery fiction exactly after forty-six years of her debut Cover Her Face (1962). James
introduces Adam Dalgliesh for her mystery series and within a short span of time the series become known as “Adam Dalgliesh Mystery Series”. He has been working as a Scotland Yard Police Commander in her fourteen novels and one of the great police detectives in the history of crime and mystery fiction. Through this novel the readers have to say goodbye to Adam Dalgliesh.

*The Private Patient* (2008) is a crime and mystery novel and the last in James’s popular Adam Dalgliesh mystery series. The setting of this novel is rural England in Dorset, Cheverell Manor house. Medical setting is the hallmark of James’s best mysteries like *A Mind to Murder* (1963), and *A Shroud for Nightingale* (1967) the present novel exposes medically oriented world and its thriller along with love and romance. The book introduces the tragic story of the private patient who is going to be killed.

James’s novels open with murder or something uncanny incidents. The first line of the book introduces the private patient Rhoda Gradwyn. The present novel opens with a magnificently Jamesian arrangement:

On November the 21st the day of her forty-seven birthday, and three weeks and two days before she was murdered, Rhoda Gradwyn went to Harley Street to keep a first appointment with her plastic surgeon, and there in a consulting room designed, so it appeared to inspire confidence and allay apprehension, made the decision which would lead inexorably to her death. (3)

James depicts strange world, the story moves from one place to another place that is Dorset, London, Midlands, and Cambridge. The murder mystery moves around George Chandler-Powell’s St. Angela’s Hospital
and its private patients. Chandler-Powell is famous plastic surgeon who treats some of his private patients.

The novel is a fine combination of mystery and supernatural elements, which evoke horror and terror in the minds of the readers. James in her last novel has experimented “supernatural horror” along with murder scene. The clinic is located in the pale circle of pre-historic Cheverell Stones, which is haunted by the long dead woman bound to this stone in 1654 and burnt alive as a witch. The mystery has a fine touch of historical past episodes:

A low wall, more landmark than barrier, separated the manor garden from the stone circle and he hauled himself over without difficulty. As usual after dark, the circle of twelve stones seemed to become paler, more mysterious and more impressive, even to take on a faint gleam from the moonlight or stars. Seeing them in daylight they were clumps of ordinary stones, as commonplace as any large boulder seen on a hillside, uneven in size and oddly shaped, their only distinction the highly coloured lichen creeping in the crevices. (62)

The stones are haunted by the ghost of Mary Keyte. She has tied to the middle stone in the premises of the clinic. She was just twenty years old and was condemned as a witch. The tallest central stone is standing as an evil omen in her memory. The Cheverell Stones are quite famous and they are over three thousand years old.

Rhoda Gradwyn is the investigative journalist and the private patient of the murder mystery. She wants to remove scar on her face, since childhood she has a wound mark and now through plastic surgery
she wants to eradicate it. She takes an appointment of the plastic surgeon George Chandler-Powell and has been admitted in his hospital. By eight o’clock on Friday 14 December, the operation of Rhoda Gradwyn has been satisfactorily completed. When she was hospitalised, during the time of her hospitalization she realizes the impact of supernatural horror and feels presence of someone in her room. She communicates with the unknown face or visitor, who are you? What are you doing? Who is it? There is no reply. And she knows with certainty that this is no friendly visitor that she is in the presence of someone or something whose purpose is malignant. Time is suspended and out of darkness she realises the fear of death:

She knew that this was death, and with the knowledge came an unsought peace, a letting go. And then the strong hand, skinless and inhuman, closed round her throat, forcing her head back against the pillow and the apparition flung its weight forward. She wouldn’t shut her eyes in the face of death, nor did she struggle. The darkness of the room closed in on her and became the final blackness in which all feeling ceased. (123)

James’s novel provides twist and sudden rush and change to the readers. The mysterious death of Rhoda Gradwyn at Cheverell Manor in Dorset takes place within a short span of her successful cosmetic surgery. She is brutally strangled in nursing home of George Chandler-Powell.

Adam Dalgliesh is paired with Kate Miskin and Francis Benton-Smith who lead the investigation of the murder mystery. They examine the dead body; the death has been unnatural. The staff comes under the scrutiny and suspicion including Chandler-Powell who owns the place,
his assistant Marcus Westhall, his sister Miss. Candace Westhall, Flavia Holland, the sister in charge Helena Cressett, and accountant Mrs Letitia Frensham.

As a part of ‘Police Procedural’ Dalgliesh conducts the interviews of the medical staff, from surgical assistant to nurses and household staff. The murder mystery limits the number of suspects. Dalgliesh collects detailed information from Chandler-Powell as she is his patient. He asks questions to Rhoda’s mother regarding her daughter’s death. He comes to know that she is very successful, clever and private woman. She never disclosed her secrets, not telling anyone what she thinks. The possibility of the murderer of Rhoda can be one of her enemies. She has been killed either by someone who is already in the Manor that night, or a member of staff or someone from outside.

Death is allowed to interfere with life. Her death is a shock made more terrible by mystery and fear. All the partners in the firm are distressed and horrified by her death. Dalgliesh conducts the interview of Miss Candace Westhall; she is the prime suspect of Rhoda’s murder. Miss Westhall tells one tragic incidents of her friend novelist Annabel Skelton. In 2002 Rhoda Gradwyn has written an article for the Paternoster Review dealing with plagiarism in which she attacks a young writer Annabel Skelton. Annabel could not tolerate her humiliation and has hanged herself three days after the review appeared. Miss Westhall considers that Rhoda is responsible for her friend’s death. She has murdered her friend and destructed her life.

Death is a major concern in James’s novel. Her every murder mystery deals with death. Her victim pays the terrible price of death:
. . . death makes a person forever inaccessible to the living, it also puts that person on a special plane. If he was feared, he need be no longer; if he was loved, that love might now be acknowledged. Since the dead can no longer react, the living can be open and honest about their feelings for them, whatever they are. (Siebenheller 96)

The earlier medical thriller remains to be unsolved, the Scotland team engage in finding clues and evidences of the earlier case. The criminal plot changes its track, Cheverell Manor faces one more death, the death of Robin Boyton. His body is found in Stone Cottage by George and Miss Candace. Killer has killed him and kept his dead body in the disused freezer.

The mysterious death of Rhoda Gradwyn and Mr Boyton are very complicated with enough puzzle and facts before Adam Dalgliesh. Two murders are connected with each other and the killer may be same, who is still in Cheverell Manor. The post-mortem report has been received by Dr. Glenister’s that the cause of the death of Rhoda is throttling by a right-handed killer wearing smooth gloves. Property matter is the major motive for the death of Robin Boyton, “The whole estate was divided into two parts. Robin Boyton was to receive half in recognition that his parents and he had been unfairly treated by the family; the remaining half to be divided equally between Marcus and Candace” (426). As a matter of money Marcus and Candace have the opportunity and means to commit the murder of Robin Boyton.

James builds her murder mystery with mysterious atmosphere which is an essential for crime and mystery fiction. The novel highlights mysterious and dark atmosphere throughout the story:
It was a cold night, the stars high, the air faintly luminous, and a few wispy clouds moved over the bright segment of the moon. And now the wind was rising, not steadily but in short gusts like an expelled breath. She moved like a ghost down the lime walk, flitting from trunk to concealing trunk. (433)

This is supposed to be a classic ‘who-dun-it’, a complex, plot driven detective story in which James has given more emphasis on puzzle and at the same time she has scattered clues to identify the criminal. The murder takes place under typical circumstances in the locked-room. The earlier example of this type of story is Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) and Wilkie Collins *The Moonstone* which appeared in 1868. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* contains the story of a woman and her daughter who are murdered in an inaccessible room, which is locked from the inside. The mother’s throat is brutally cut and head is separated from the body and her daughter is found strangled and stuffed into a chimney.

After the deep police investigation the team finds out Miss Candace Westhall is the enemy of Rhoda. Candace kills her in a cruel manner because she wants to avenge the death of her dear friend, Annabel Skelton. Rhoda investigates the matter of plagiarism by Skelton and has destroyed the young life and a great talent of the novelist. Robin Boyton might have suspected her and has known her secret therefore; she decides to kill him in brutal manner. As she herself admits:

He might have doubted but he had to look. We moved over to the freezer and when he lifted the lid I suddenly grasped him by the legs and toppled him in. I’m a swimmer with
strong shoulders and arms and he wasn’t a heavy man. I closed the lid and fastened the clasp. I felt an extraordinary exhaustion and was breathing hard, but I couldn’t have been tired. It was as easy as toppling a child. (451)

The psyche of the criminal is reflected in the present story. Candace Westhall has killed Robin Boyton and kept him inside the freezer. Horrible murder which is not expected but James crafts to handle such psyche of criminals which is a routine part of her crime writing. The murderer does not feel sorry or regret for her both crimes. She has recorded her confession in the tape recorder before her suicide:

I am speaking to Commander Adam Dalgliesh in the knowledge that this tape will be passed on to the coroner and anyone else with a legitimate interest in the truth. What I am speaking now is the truth, and I don’t think it will come as a surprise to you. I have known for over twenty-four hours that you were going to arrest me. My plan to burn Sharon at the witch’s stone was my last desperate attempt to save myself from a trial and life sentence, and all that would involve for those I care about. And if I had been able to kill Sharon I would have been safe, even if you had suspected the truth. Her burning would have looked like the suicide of a neurotic and obsessed murderer, a suicide which I hadn’t arrived in time to prevent. And how could you have charged me with Gradwyn’s murder with any hope of convection while Sharon, with her history, was among the suspects? (447-48)

After the analysis of the present novel it indicates that the guilty person or murderer always suffers imprisonment or accepts death. The criminal
Miss Candace Westhall commits suicide. James’s stories are deal with alienation, her men and women find themselves increasingly lonely, isolated and alienated. Criminals and murderers are alienated from the society or even themselves. Either they commit suicide or are punished by law and order.

The present novel *The Private Patient* is the combination of love, blackmail, sex, money and internal conflict etc. this is closed-room and locked-room mystery along with white-collar crime. As usual this is also police procedural detective novel, whose final destination is to reach ‘who-dun-it’, ‘how-dun-it’, and of course ‘why-dun-it’.

All above analysed novels are the fine fusion of crime, mystery, puzzle, suspense, thriller, romance, love and reality of the world. Without changing her literary track or style and not away from her major area of interest, James remains living legendary crime and mystery fiction writer and heir of “Golden Age Crime Fiction.”