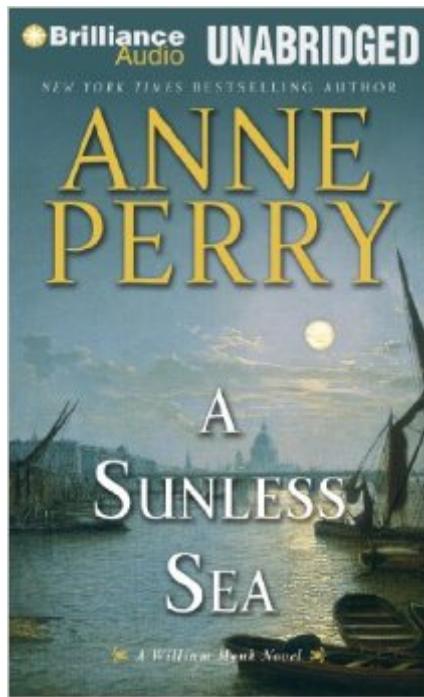


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# A Sunless Sea (William Monk Series)



## Synopsis

Anne Perry's spellbinding Victorian mysteries, especially those featuring William Monk, have enthralled listeners for a generation. The Plain Dealer calls Monk "a marvelously dark, brooding creation" and, true to form, this Perry masterpiece is as deceptively deep and twisty as the Thames. As commander of the River Police, Monk is accustomed to violent death, but the mutilated female body found on Limehouse Pier one chilly December morning moves him with horror and pity. The victim's name is Zenia Gadney. Her waterfront neighbors can tell him little but only that the same unknown gentleman had visited her once a month for many years. She must be a prostitute, but described as quiet and kempt she doesn't appear to be a fallen woman. What sinister secrets could have made poor Zenia worth killing? And why does the government keep interfering in Monk's investigation? While the public cries out for blood, Monk, his spirited wife, Hester, and their brilliant barrister friend, Oliver Rathbone, search for answers. From dank waterfront alleys to London's fabulously wealthy West End, the three trail an ice-blooded murderer toward the unbelievable, possibly unprovable truth and ultimately engage their adversaries in an electric courtroom duel. But unless they can work a miracle, a monumental evil will go unpunished and an innocent person will hang. Anne Perry has never worn her literary colors with greater distinction than in *A Sunless Sea*, a heart-pounding novel of intrigue and suspense in which Monk is driven to make the hardest decision of his life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I truly appreciate the title of this book for several reasons. First, it comes from Kublai Khan, a poem written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was a notorious opium eater and according to legend wrote this upon awakening from an opium dream. "In Xanadu did Kublai Khan A stately pleasure dome decree, Where Alph, the sacred river, ran Through caverns measureless to man, Down to a sunless sea." Second, one could visualize opium addicts as drowning in a sea without the sun of hope to guide them to shore. A new Monk novel is always a joy to receive. I find the trio of Monk, his wife Hester, and the eminent barrister Oliver Rathbone to be one of the best in all of detective fiction. The marriage of Monk and Hester is a partnership in every sense of the word; the deep love they feel for each other is obvious, and, although it would seem they are fated not to have a child of their own, their foster son Scruff adds a dimension to it that makes me happy for them. I did miss Sir Oliver's father, who is a voice of wisdom & reality for his son and is a very likeable character. Oliver is suffering the death of his marriage; I felt sad for him even while realizing that Margaret was not really the wife he needed. Inspector Runcorn, who was for a while Monk's friend & then his nemesis, is back; he has changed greatly, largely due to finding happiness with the lovely Melisande. He works with Monk and Rathbone while Hester goes off on her own investigation; this was reminiscent of many of the Pitt & Charlotte books. The heroine is a widow who is accused of a murder followed by a ghastly mutilation of the body. Her husband had died, supposedly a suicide, two months prior to this. She is a brave and gallant woman who is willing to sacrifice herself for the love of her husband.

A Sunless Sea once again involved our 3 main characters in another great murder mystery, along with the personal trials and tribulations of Oliver Rathbone involving his disintegrating marriage to Margaret Ballinger Rathbone. Like some of the other reviewers, it was not too difficult to figure out who the 'bad guys' were going to be, but I still enjoyed the process of getting there. And Hester did play a smaller role than what she normally does, but since no part of the murder mystery involved the Portpool Lane clinic, we only saw her do some minor investigating to help Monk, along with some brainstorming with Monk and Rathbone. And of course I liked seeing the domestic scenes inside the Monk household. Scuff appeared a few times and I liked the family dynamics between Monk, Hester and Scuff. I also enjoyed the portions of the book where Monk and Runcorn worked together again to help solve the case. And I was very happy when I found out about the changes in Runcorn's personal life. I did not know anything about the Opium Wars, so having that history repeated several times amongst the characters did not bother me at all. What made this book so interesting was the focus given to Rathbone, personally and professionally. His realization that his

and Margaret's marriage was completely broken, and how that affected his handling of his client's defense was fascinating. Oliver has become my favorite character over the last few books, his struggles with doing his duty to the law that he believes in, and his realization that Margaret was not who he thought she was, has made his character so much more compelling. Last but not least, the very difficult decision Rathbone made to turn the tide during the trial is a big one.

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