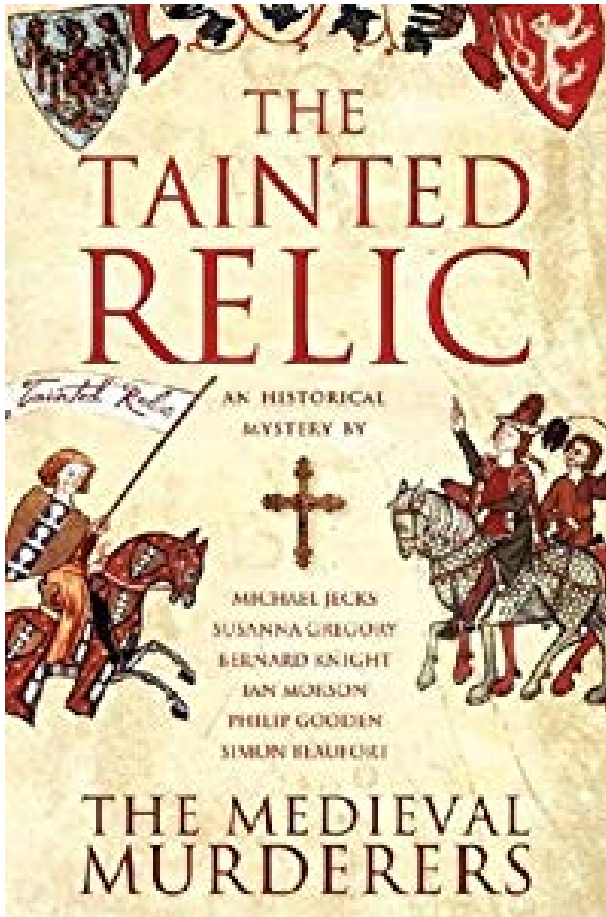


The Tainted Relic: An Historical Mystery



Pages:	502
Series	The Medieval Murderers
Language	English
Author:	The Medieval Murderers
ISBN10:	0743267958
Genre:	Historical
ISBN13:	9780743267953
Goodreads Rating:	3.73
Published:	May 1st 2005 by Simon & Schuster (UK)

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It was July, 1100. Jerusalem lies ransacked. Amidst the chaos, an English knight is entrusted with a valuable religious relic: a fragment of the True Cross, allegedly stained with the blood of Christ.

The relic is said to be cursed: anyone who touches it will meet an untimely and gruesome end. Several decades later, the Cross turns up in the possession of a dealer, robbed and murdered en route to Glastonbury. Investigating the death, Bernard Knight's protagonist, Crowner John learns of its dark history. In Oxford in 1269, the discovery of a decapitated monk leads Ian Morson's academic sleuth William Falconer to uncover a link to the relic. In 1323, in Exeter, Michael Jecks' Sir Baldwin has reason to suspect its involvement in at least five violent deaths. Thirty years later, several suspicious deaths occur in Cambridge - and, once again, the tainted relic has a crucial part to play. Finally, it's despatched to London, where Philip Gooden's Nick Revill will determine its ultimate fate.