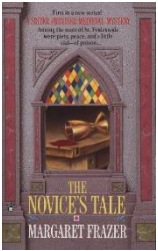


# The Novel Series of Margaret Frazer

## The Dame Frevisse series [1992-2008]



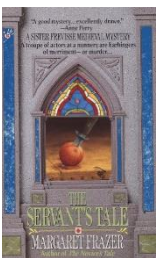
### The Novice's Tale (1992) ◆○

In the fair autumn of Our Lord's grace 1431, the nuns of England's St. Frideswide's prepare for the simply ceremonies in which the saintly novice Thomasine will take her holy vows. But their quiet lives of beauty and prayer are thrown into chaos by the merciless arrival of Lady Ermentrude Fenner and her retinue of lusty men, sinful women, and baying hounds. The hard-drinking dowager even keeps a pet monkey for her amusement. She demands wine, a feast...And her niece, the angelic Thomasine.

The lady desires to enrich herself and her reputation by arranging a marriage for the devout novice. She cares nothing for the panic and despair she leaves behind her. But all her cruel and cunning schemes are brought to a sudden end with strange and most unnatural murder.

As suspicious eyes turn on the pious Thomasine, it falls to Sister Frevisse, hosteler of the priory and amateur detective, to unravel the webs of unholy passion and dark intrigue that entangle the novice and prove her innocence... or condemn her.

### The Servant's Tale (1993) ◆○

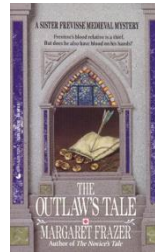


The Christmas season brings strange guests to the medieval nunnery of St. Frideswide's when a troupe of penniless players comes knocking at the gate. They bear with them the badly mangled body of a villager, swearing they found the drunken fool lying in a ditch. But Meg, the victim's wife and a scullery maid of the cloister, thinks there are far fouler deeds afoot.

As the players rehearse for the nativity, ancient scandals lick at their heels and dark desperation haunts Meg's steps as she finds cruel feudal laws threatening to strip away the lands that would support both her and her sons in the wake of her husband's death.

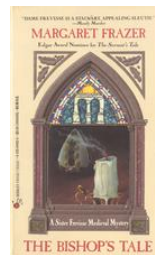
Dame Frevisse must thrust herself between these violent feuds, awakening dreams of her youth that she had believed long buried. Her very faith may be threatened, but Frevisse knows she must unravel a path to true salvation... before false raptures of lust bring ruination upon them all.

## NOMINATED FOR THE 1994 EDGAR AWARD



### The Outlaw's Tale (1994)

Leaving the safety of her nunnery walls behind, Dame Frevisse is drawn into an unholy web of treachery and deceit. Waylaid on the King's Highway by a band of outlaws, Frevisse is shocked to discover that their leader is her long-lost cousin Nicholas. When he pleads with her to help him obtain a pardon for his crimes, she finds herself trapped between the harsh edicts of the law and the mercy of her vows.

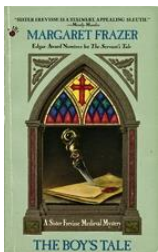


### The Bishop's Tale (1994) ◆

To the guests at the mourning feast for Thomas Chaucer, the last words of Sir Clement Sharpe had been enough to damn him in the eyes of God. Detested by all who knew him, his final blasphemy had turned even God's anger against him and his death would be a lesson well-remembered. None among them would ever forget the sight of God striking down a sinning man, and each would keep in their heart the need to honor God's charity and love in all the hours of their lives.

But the crafty Dame Frevisse and cunning Bishop Beaufort suspect that there may be an all-too-mortal hand at work in Sir Clement's death. If their suspicions can be proved, then the only lesson to be learned is the bleakest secret of the blackest heart.

#### **NOMINATED FOR A 1995 MINNESOTA BOOK AWARD**



#### **The Boy's Tale (1995)**

*"Sanctuary! In God's name you must give it!"*

A dark lady rides back into the life of Dame Frevisse, bearing with her two small boys haunted by the touch of death and scandal. Nine men lie dead on the road behind them, victims of the grim fate which relentlessly pursues them. Some seek to turn them away, but when they request sanctuary Frevisse is bound by her holy oaths to grant it.

But in welcoming them within the walls of St. Frideswide, has Dame Frevisse allowed death to stalk the nunnery's halls? When she begins to untangle the mystery of these strange guests, the truth she discovers may be enough to doom them all. Forced to keep secrets better left untold even from the nuns of her own order, Frevisse is caught in a crucible between faith and duty.

To learn the boy's name is to be drawn into a conspiracy of shame. To hear the boy's tale is to face death.



#### **The Murderer's Tale (1996)**

Caught under the tyrannical thumb of her new prioress, Dame Frevisse finds welcome relief in leaving St. Frideswide nunnery on pilgrimage. But the road brings with it unwelcome company: The wealthy Lionel Knyvet has been possessed by a foul demon. Seeking relief from the horrific terrors visited upon his body each fortnight, Lionel has dragged his entire

household on an endless pilgrimage across the breadth and length of England. Frevisse wants nothing more than the peaceful bliss of travel, but must instead endure the incessant chattering of a mob.

Lionel's possession, however, may only mask a darker sin. When the pilgrims make their way to the manor house at Minster Lovell, Frevisse begins to unwind the bitter poisons of jealousy and betrayal eating at the hearts of both Lionel and his brother Giles. Against her will, the innocent nun is drawn into the vilest depths of the human soul and there she unlocks the mysteries of a blackened heart. But even when the truth comes out, can justice be done? The pure of heart will find no peace when murder and death come knocking at the manor's door...



#### **The Prioress' Tale (1997) ◆**

Under the harsh hand of its newly elected prioress, St. Frideswide's has become a place of deadly sin. The corruption has grown subtly and slowly, but it has found fertile soil in the rage and greed of Domina Alys, who has turned the priory into a boarding house for her relatives, the Godfreys. Dame Frevisse is horrified to discover that the modest stores of the priory - desperately needed if the nuns are to survive the coming winter - are being completely consumed by the rapacious Godfrey clan.

But the Godfreys bring with them more immediate terrors: Torture. Madness. Kidnapping. Murder. The sanctuary of the cloister has been violated and even the holy rites of the nuns have been ripped apart.

Despite the growing crisis, Frevisse's best efforts to save the nunnery from itself are met with scorn and torment as bitter hatreds and old rivalries turn nun against nun. Suspicion, paranoia, and despair clutch the cloister's heart. If Frevisse cannot unlock the riddles of penitence for her prioress and for herself, then St. Frideswide's may be no more...

**NOMINATED FOR THE 1998 EDGAR AWARD**



### **The Maiden's Tale (1998)**

It is an hour of desperate need for St. Frideswide's. Thrust into financial ruin by the incompetence and corruption of their former prioress, the nuns have become trapped under the thumb of Abbott Gilbert as he pries into every possible corner of the priory's life.

In an effort to escape their desperate straits, Dame Frevisse is forced to journey to London in order to seek both a new prioress and financial aid for her beleaguered sisters. Once there, she turns to her wealthy cousin Alice, lady wife of the influential earl of Suffolk. But with a new Parliament warming to its arguments, Frevisse discovers that Alice's need may be even greater than her own. Caught between the powerful Gloucester, the Machiavellian Bishop Beaufort, and the darkly handsome Duke of Orleans, Alice is torn by the broken loyalties of those she loves the most.

Before she can unravel the twisted turns of romance and deception, Frevisse herself is caught up in the intrigue, carrying secret messages which will determine England's future. But the mystery deepens when one of the other messengers is killed, and Frevisse must solve the murder in order to save not only herself, but Alice's immortal soul.



### **The Reeve's Tale (1999) ◆**

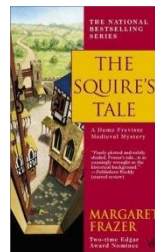
The village of Prior Byfield is blighted with famine, devastated by plague, and cursed with ill-fortune. Simon Perryn, the poor reeve of the village, is driven to distraction by the petty rivalries and hopeless troubles of his neighbors. His adulterous sister and her dolt of a husband have entangled their affairs with Gilbert Dunn, the richest man of the village, and Elena, the beautiful and seductive woman that he calls his wife. With wealth on the line and lives at the stake, old quarrels and ancient angers are boiling over into the once-quiet streets of the village. That's

when things get even worse for Simon: A horrid scandal curses him with a pair of nuns, sent from the nearby nunnery of St. Frideswide's to make sure all is kept right in the village.

Dame Frevisse, however, suspects that the scandal which has drawn her and the innocent Sister Thomasine from the safety of the priory is but the tip of a terrible intrigue which threatens both nunnery and village alike: The good, kind, and honest Master Naylor stands accused of a crime which threatens to strip him and his entire family of their freedom. Who could stand to profit from his loss? Is it the same silent killer who stalks the village youth? Or are they all being played like fools?

Yet even if Frevisse's keen wit can lay bare the ugliness in the hearts of men, she fears that no amount of prayer will serve to cleanse her own soul of that sickly hate. Can even God pardon one who has turned from a holy path?

### **NOMINATED FOR A 2000 MINNESOTA BOOK AWARD**

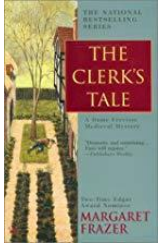


### **The Squire's Tale (2000)**

Years ago, young Robert Fenner was forced into marriage with Lady Blanche. Now, in 1442, he is being forced toward warfare over the property to which she wrongfully claims ownership. To make matters worse, a wealthy young heiress has captured hearts on both sides of the feud - including his - and it is up to Robert to decide whom she will marry.

Drawn from her nunnery's contemplative quiet by Lady Blanche's need, Dame Frevisse is caught up among the passions of a man desperate for what he cannot have; a powerful knight blocked from what is rightfully his; and a young woman trapped in the eye of the storm.

Who will see that justice is done after honest love and dishonest lust spawn anger, greed, and finally... murder?

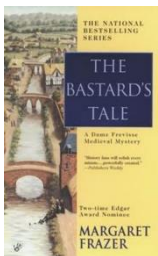


### **The Clerk's Tale (2002) ◆**

In Margaret Frazer's latest medieval mystery, the "pious and perceptive" Dame Frevisse accompanies her prioress on a visit of mercy to a nunnery. St. Mary's nunnery is a place of prayer and healing for women.

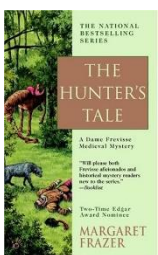
So it is surprising to see a man sprawled out in the cloister garden. Dead. Less surprising, to Dame Frevisse, was the identity of the victim: Master Montfort was not particularly liked by anyone in the town of Goring. Even his own wife and clerk despised him. And as royal escheator he was trying to settle a heated dispute between a wealthy woman and her supposed nephew.

Now Dame Frevisse must step in and untangle the fortunes and felonies in a rivalry of wealth, family, and politics. But the true challenge will be putting aside her own feelings and serving justice for the murder of an unjust man...



### **The Bastard's Tale (2003)**

The devout yet human nun Dame Frevisse, with her "common sense and humor", finds herself in the lavish world of England's royal court and high politics. There she learns that even the thickest of walls cannot keep out a threat against the royal family...



### **The Hunter's Tale (2004)**

In the summer of 1448, when Sir Ralph Woderove is found murdered near his estate, not even his family mourns. A hard, vicious man of many quarrels, Sir

Ralph could have been killed by almost anyone. And though the consensus is that his soul has surely gone to Hell, Sir Ralph will continue to infuriate his heirs in death through the grossly inadequate terms of his estate's settlement.

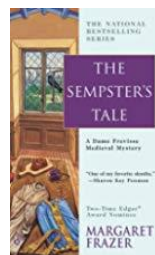
It falls to Dame Frevisse to escort Sir Ralph's widow and daughter back to their manor, when another death occurs under questionable circumstances - making it clear that not all grievances have been laid to rest. And as family secrets are dragged out into the light, Dame Frevisse realizes that there is a murderer among them who will not rest until the Woderove legacy has been settled once and for all...



### **The Widow's Tale (2005) ◆**

In the spring of 1449, widow Cristiana Helyngton has been kidnapped, defamed, and imprisoned in a nunnery - as her late husband's duplicitous relatives seek to obtain control over her lands and children. To secure her freedom and save her daughters, Cristiana must use a secret entrusted to her by her husband as he was dying - a secret that could bring down those lords nearest the king and destroy those most dear to her.

Dame Frevisse of St. Frideswide's nunnery must decide where her loyalties lies - to the crown, to the truth, or to England's peace. And whatever she chooses, in the end her help may be of little use against the ruthless men threatened by the secret on which all of Cristiana's hopes depend...



### **The Sempster's Tale (2006) ◆**

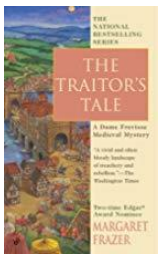
Since the death of her husband, Anne Blakhall has carried on their shared business as a tailor and embroiderer in the heart of London. Rather than remarry as prosperous London widows usually do, she has taken a lover - David Weir, a foreign merchant who is secretly a Jew and therefore in constant deadly peril so long as he remains in



England, where Jews have been banished for over a hundred years. Anne, sharing in his secrets, knows that both his life and hers would be forfeit if ever he is found out.

Dame Frevisse of St. Frideswide's nunnery is in London to arrange the funeral vestments for her cousin's murdered husband, the Duke of Suffolk. But she is also charged with secretly recovering - and then conveying to her cousin - the gold the late duke sent out of England shortly before his death. But her duty and their love become more dangerous a rebel army advances on London - and a murdered body is discovered in the crypt of a London church, mutilated with what a Franciscan friar of the Inquisition claims are Hebrew letters.

Frevisse must discover not only who is guilty... but whether anyone is innocent at all.



### **The Traitor's Tale (2007) ◆**

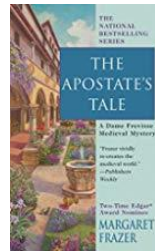
Rebellious factions, determined to unseat King Henry VI from the throne, have been staging uprisings throughout England. London has been under siege for three days and the populace is ready to repel the invading rebels and reclaim the city.

In the midst of this unrest, Dame Frevisse of St. Frideswide's nunnery has come to her cousin's side. Lady Alice, widowed duchess of Suffolk, needs Frevisse's support in burying her husband, as the late but not lamented duke was so hated that even being in the presence of his corpse is unsafe. And when men in Suffolk's employ start disappearing, Frevisse fears for her cousin's safety.

Wandering player Simon Joliffe has also come to London, filling the role of courier for the exiled duke of York and bringing vital information - a list bearing the names of the English noblemen who purportedly betrayed their King by conspiring with the French. Included on this list are several of Suffolk's men,

whom Joliffe has been seeking and finding dead at every turn...

If charges of treason are brought against Suffolk, Lady Alice fears her son will be disinherited. Joining Joliffe on his search for men on the list, Frevisse starts to wonder whether or not the list is real or part of an even greater conspiracy against the crown...



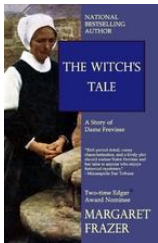
### **The Apostate's Tale (2008) ◆**

As the nuns of St. Frideswide's priory prepare for the welcome end of Lent, their peaceful expectations are upset by the sudden return of long-vanished Sister Cecely. Nine years ago she fled from the nunnery with a man. Now her lover is dead and she has come back, bringing her illegitimate son with her.

She claims she is penitent, that she wants only to redeem her sin and find a safe haven for her child. By the law of the Church, neither she nor the child can be turned away, but their presence begins to stir doubts and questions in the hearts of some of the nuns about their own faithfulness to the enclosed life they live. However, these doubts become the lease of the problems Dame Frevisse must confront when her worldly troubles follow Sister Cecely and her son into the nunnery, pursuing her out of the life she claims to have left behind.

Contrite Sister Cecely may be -- however much Frevisse may doubt it -- but truthful she is not, and as the apostate nun's lies begin to overtake her, dangers of more than one kind become an unwanted part of life in the priory.

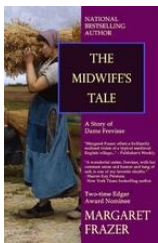
[The following entries are shorter novellas, only available in E-book formats]



### The Witch's Tale (2010)

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live...

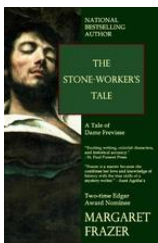
Witchcraft has come to the peaceful village near St. Frideswide, and its foul touch is striking down those closest to the church. Can Dame Frevisse thwart the servants of the devil before the hellfire of hysteria sears the souls of the faithful? Or is there more to this magic than meets the eye? The truth can only be found in the Witch's Tale.



### The Midwife's Tale (2010)

*"Sisters! Come back! Please don't leave us yet!"*

Cisily Fisher has died in childbirth and now the village of Priors Byfield is held in a grip of fear. Can Dame Frevisse find the root of misery behind a murderer's sin before the next lethal blow falls? Or will the village be lost in a hue and cry of terror? The gentling touch of the midwife may calm the tortured soul... or give birth to a bitter death.



### The Stone Worker's Tale (2011)

When Frevisse is given bishop-pardoned leave to visit her cousin Alice at Ewelme, she is enchanted by the work of the sculptor Simon Maye.

Charged with carving the angels upon Alice's tomb, Simon has been truly touched by God's gift - there was an otherworldliness to their stone features, an aliveness to the very feathers of their wings. He saw beauty that others could not, and brought it to life through his craft.

But Simon also saw the beauty of Elyn, one of Alice's ladies in waiting. Clandestine meetings have given way to sinful lust, and now the two lovers have

disappeared. The servants whisper that the lovers have eloped, and secretly pine for the passion to do the same. Lady Alice believes her sculptor has been stolen away by jealous rivals and rages at the injustice. But Frevisse alone suspects there may be some darker truth behind the midnight vanishing...



### Winter Heart (2011)

One man has been kidnapped. Another has been murdered.

In the bleakest depths of winter, Frevisse finds her soul chilled with the heavy burdens of duty and responsibility. Even the warmth of charity is in short supply as the villagers of Prior Byfield turn against each in bloody feuds of greed and rage, weaving knots of treachery which even the clever Frevisse may find hard to unwind.

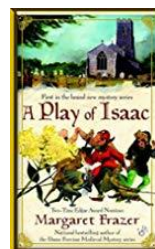
Award-winning author Margaret Frazer gathers shadows around the hearth to tell a tale of frigid winter and icy passion. Join Frevisse in her fervent prayers for a true peace of mind and body as she pits all her forceful will against the most cunning of evils. Fear for the lives which may be destroyed in unlocking the secrets of the winter heart...



### Sins of the Blood (2012)

This e-book is a collection of the three short works "The Witch's tale", "The Midwife's Tale" and "The Stone Worker's Tale", combined with a special new featurette, "A Guided Tour of St. Frideswide"

## The Player Joliffe series [2004-2011]



### A Play of Isaac (2004)

The year is 1434, and preparations are under way for the Corpus Christi festival in Oxford, England. Plays are a traditional part of the celebration, and Joliffe and the rest of his troupe are to perform Isaac

and Abraham. Until then, their theatrical antics are in demand by a wealthy merchant who offers them an opportunity to ply their trade for room and board.

But when the body of a murdered man is found outside the barn door where the troupe is lodging, Joliffe must raise the curtain on the merchant's mysterious past and uncover the startling truth behind a murder most foul...



### **A Play of Dux Moraud (2005) ◆**

It is the autumn of 1434, and the end-of-harvest reckoning during Michaelmas has been less than plentiful. Fortunately, Joliffe and his fellow players are surviving and thriving under the patronage of Lord Lovell. His grace is sending them to perform at Deneby Manor as a gift for the marriage of Sir Edmund Deneby's daughter, Mariena.

But Joliffe has been engaged to play two roles - that of a player and that of a spy. Deneby's daughter was betrothed once before, to a healthy man who fell ill and died before they married, and Lord Lovell fears a similar fate befalling Mariena's newly intended. And as Joliffe uncovers the secrets of the Denebys' sordid history, it becomes clear that this is a wedding celebration destined to end in tragedy...

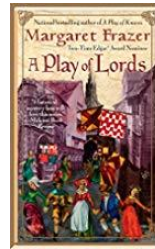


### **A Play of Knaves (2006)**

In the spring of 1435, Joliffe and his fellow players are sent to the village of Ashewell not only to stage plays, but to uncover some dark secrets about the town's three wealthy families: the Ashewells, the Medcotes, and the Gosyns. A rivalry has been brewing among the families, entangling the entire town in a web of seduction, deception, and blackmail.

Matters go beyond the breaking point when someone turns to murder to settle their grievances. And if one murder is good, why not another? If all the world is a stage, then it's up to

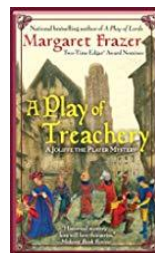
Joliffe to bring the curtain down on this tragedy—before another man takes his final curtain call...



### **A Play of Lords (2007)**

In the late autumn of 1435, Joliffe and his fellow players are in London to perform for the Bishop Beaufort. But his Eminence has other duties in mind for the company. With the Duke of Bedford's passing, ambitious lords and clergymen are plotting to assume his role as advisor to the young King Henry VI - and the Bishop needs to know what his rivals are planning.

Dispatched to entertain - and spy on - England's royals, Joliffe and company encounter intrigue from various factions both within and without the kingdom. And when men who know too much begin to die in violent ways, the players start to fear for their own lives...



### **A Play of Treachery (2009)**

In agreeing to serve the powerful Bishop Beaufort, Joliffe and his players have made what may be a deal with the devil. It surely seems so in the winter of 1436, when the Bishop sends Joliffe alone to France and into the middle of a war.

There, Joliffe is to act as a servant to the duchess Jacquetta of Bedford -- young, beautiful, and recently widowed. But his real mission is to train as a spy under the late duke's spymaster, and he soon finds that all the wealth of a widow's household is no defense against murder; a city's walls are no defense against enemies within; and not only mean can serve as spies...

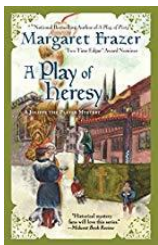


### **A Play of Piety (2010)**

While his troupe leader recovers from grievous injury, Joliffe is forced to find work in the treacherous world of a

medieval hospital. Plagued almost to despair by the endless complaints and imaginary ailments of the elderly widow Mistress Cisily Thorncoffyn, the erstwhile spy and theatrical player is almost relieved to discover that patients are dying from more than their illnesses. Care for the sick and elderly in both body and soul is a sacred and holy duty, but Death's cruel scythe can always use a helping hand...

Now, with Mistress Thorncoffyn loudly proclaiming that someone is trying to kill her and swearing her wrath on anyone who allows it to happen, Joliffe has no choice but to find the sickening anger which has claimed so many lives before more of the innocent ill are afflicted with a final rest.

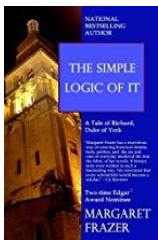


### **A Play of Heresy (2011)**

While performing in the theatrical and religious festival of Corpus Christi Day in Coventry, Joliffe is summoned by Bishop Beaufort to use his skills as a spy to uncover the mysteries of the town's elite. A merchant has gone missing, presumed dead-and members of Joliffe's company are implicated in the crime. To uncover the truth, Joliffe must unravel the devilish machinations of a secret sect of heretics bent on destroying the Church.

### **The Bishop Pecock Tales [2010-2011]**

[All of the following are shorter novels, only available in E-book formats]



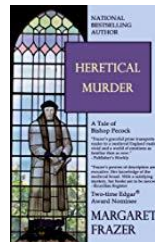
### **The Simple Logic of It: A Tale of Richard, Duke of York (2010)**

**CAUGHT IN A GAME OF KINGS...**

The bright sun of the Wars of the Roses is painting the eastern sky with a false dawn and in London the politicians are whetting their blades to claim the blood of Richard, Duke of York. Can the young noble -- a true prince of the realm -- clear his

name before the dark shadows of civil war settle over fair England's lands?

Margaret Frazer, the author of the Edgar-nominated and award-winning *Sister Frevisse* and *Player Joliffe* novels, weaves the hidden details of history into a taut thriller. A game of kings is being played, and the throne of England may be the prize!



### **Heretical Murder (2011)**

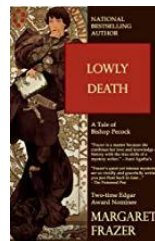
**BETWEEN DUTY AND BLOOD...**

Questionable matters? Strange deaths? Mysteries most foul? The cleverest man

in 15th century England lives at Master Whittington's Almshouse! Turn right off College Hill Street, go through the narrow Paternoster Passage, and knock on the third door on the left.

Dick Colop, student and scrivener, knows those directions well. They take him to the quiet study of Sire Pecock, priest of the Church and scholar of both man and book. A man has been cut down in the busy streets of London. The sheriff thinks it nothing more than a tavern brawl, but Colop knows that he never made it through the door.

A terrible accident or something worse? Sire Pecock will follow the dark and murderous ways of heresy to find the truth of sin.



### **Lowly Death (2011)**

**A CUNNING AND CLEVER GREED...**

Come down the Paternoster Passage, cross the church's yard, and knock on the doors of Master Whittington's Almshouse.

Master Pecock, a man of the cloth and the greatest detective of 15th century London, will answer your call.

Just as he answers Dick Colop's call. The mother of young Colop's friend has slipped, fallen, and died. But



something doesn't feel right about it. There's a strange uneasiness creeping at the back of Colop's mind.

And then there was the matter of the candle.

It was in the kitchen. A burned down stub of a candle. It had rolled under a table. And left a thick splattering of wax on the floor a foot or so away.

That was enough. Master Pecoek was on the scent. The scent of lies. The scent of wrongs. The scent of murder.

**The Official Margaret Frazer website:**

<https://www.margaretfrazer.com/>

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*Just Desserts Mystery Fiction Discussion Group***



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