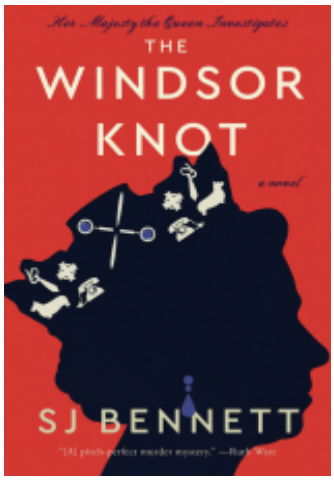
The Windsor Knot

by SJ Bennett



About the Book

The first book in a highly original and delightfully clever crime series in which Queen Elizabeth II secretly solves crimes while carrying out her royal duties.

It is the early spring of 2016, and Queen Elizabeth is at Windsor Castle in advance of her 90th birthday celebrations. But the preparations are interrupted when a guest is found dead in one of the Castle bedrooms. The scene suggests the young Russian pianist strangled himself, but a badly tied knot leads MI5 to suspect foul play was involved. The Queen leaves the investigation to the professionals --- until their suspicions point them in the wrong direction.

Unhappy at the mishandling of the case and concerned for her staff?s morale, the monarch decides to discreetly take matters into her own hands. With help from her Assistant Private Secretary, Rozie Oshodi, a British Nigerian and recent officer in the Royal Horse Artillery, the Queen secretly begins making inquiries. As she carries out her royal duties with her usual aplomb, no one in the Royal Household, the government or the public knows that the resolute Elizabeth will use her keen eye, quick mind and steady nerve to bring a murderer to justice.

SJ Bennett captures Queen Elizabeth?s voice with skill, nuance, wit and genuine charm in this imaginative and engaging mystery that portrays Her Majesty as she?s rarely seen: kind yet worldly, decisive, shrewd and, most importantly, a great judge of character.

Discussion Guide

1. Before beginning any discussion of Queen Elizabeth II, the character in THE WINDSOR KNOT or the real woman, it?s helpful to understand her legacy and where she comes from. Discuss how she has carried on her family name from her father, King George VI, and how that has influenced the woman she is in the novel.

2. Having an 89-year-old main character presents both advantages and disadvantages, even for a queen. Discuss both as they relate to a protagonist who is attempting to solve a crime.

3. What qualities does the Queen bring to the role that make her a good investigator? Would she be good at solving mysteries outside her royal palaces?

4. The ?dine and sleep? event held at one of the Queen's favorite palaces, Windsor Castle, is a unique and very civilized occasion. What role does the Russian soirée play at Windsor, and how might this have factored into the murder of the young Russian pianist Maksim Brodsky?

5. What was it about Brodsky that fascinated Queen Elizabeth? What did he remind her of?

6. Both Brodsky and his father decades earlier died suspiciously. Are their deaths connected, and what role did international relations play in each event?

7. One of the Queen's assistants, Rozie Oshodi, plays a pivotal role in the novel. Why is it that she seems unaffected by the Queen and her royal position? What is it about her personal background that makes her such an ideal investigator? What kind of relationship does she have with the Queen?

8. It is obvious that the title, THE WINDSOR KNOT, has multiple meanings. Discuss both the physical and symbolic interpretations.

9. Those holding the highest royal positions are often looked at as merely figureheads. How does this make Queen Elizabeth feel? How do you feel about the royals?

10. THE WINDSOR KNOT is set in the year 2016. Why do you think author SJ Bennett chose this timeframe?

11. Queen Elizabeth fondly recalls one of her all-time favorite films, *Brief Encounter*. Discuss the irony of Bennett?s decision to name the final part of the novel ?A Brief Encounter.?

12. How does Rachel Stiles fit into the story? Did her eventual death make it more or less likely, do you think, that the Queen would solve the crime?

13. Which of the following do you think was the ultimate driving force that led Queen Elizabeth to involve herself in the murder case: lack of faith in the investigators assigned to the case, the involvement of MI6, the effect on the morale of her household, the potential for it to be part of an international incident involving Vladimir Putin, or something else?

Author Bio

SJ Bennett is the author of the international mystery series featuring Queen Elizabeth II as a secret solver of crimes. She has written

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