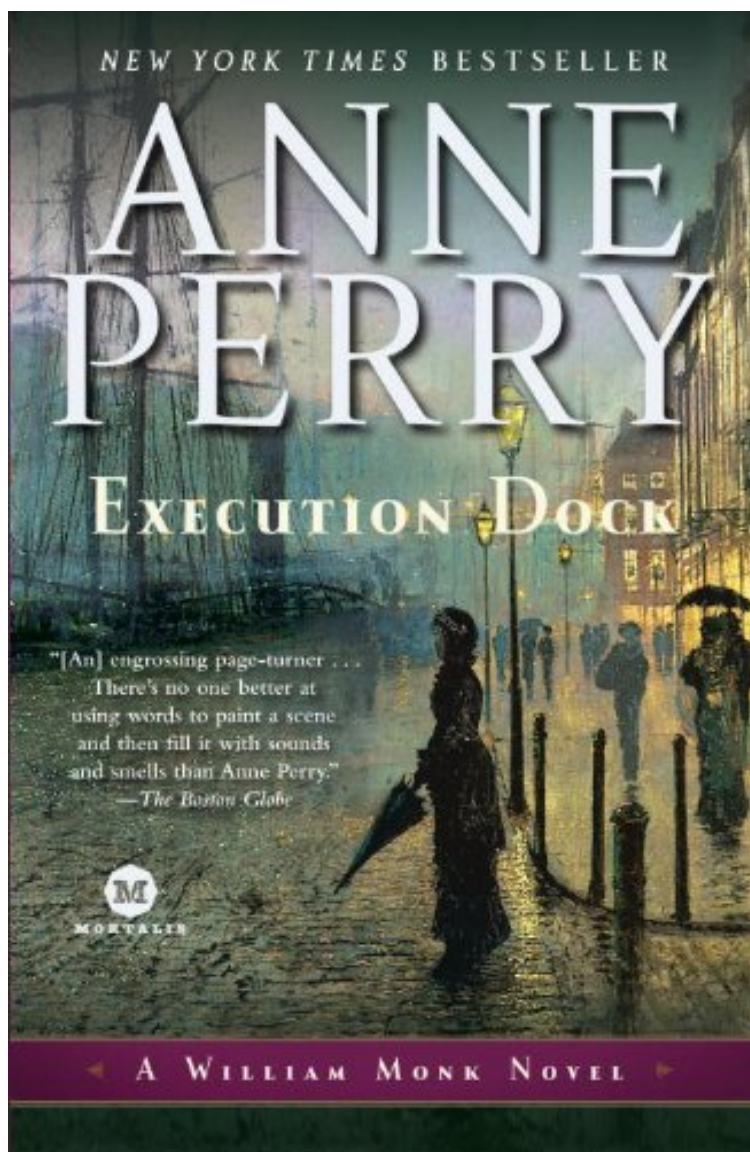


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# Execution Dock: A William Monk Novel



Par Anne Perry  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurOn the bustling docks along the River Thames, Great Britains merchant ships unload the treasures of the world. And here, in dank and sinister alleys, sex merchants ply their lucrative trade. The dreaded kingpin of this dark realm is Jericho Phillips, who seems far beyond the reach of the law. But when thirteen-year-old Fig is found with his throat cut, Commander William Monk of the River Police swears that Phillips will hang for this abomination. Monks wife, Hester, draws a highly unusual guerrilla force to her husbands causea canny ratcatcher, a retired brothel keeper, a fearless street urchin, and a rebellious society lady. To one as criminally minded as Phillips, these folks are mere mosquitoes, to be sure. But as he will soon discover, some mosquitoes can have a deadly sting.ExtraitChapter OneThe man balanced on the stern

of the flat-bottomed lighter, his wild figure outlined against the glittering water of the Thames, hair whipped in the wind, face sharp, lips drawn back. Then, at the last moment, when the other lighter was almost past him, he crouched and sprang. He only just reached the deck, scrambling to secure his footing. He swayed for a moment, then regained his balance and turned. He waved once in grotesque jubilation, then dropped to his knees out of sight behind the close-packed bales of wool. Monk smiled grimly as the oarsmen strained to bring the police boat around against the outgoing tide and the wash from barges on their way up to the Pool of London. He would not have given orders to shoot, even were he certain of not hitting anyone else in the teeming river traffic. He wanted Jericho Phillips alive, so he could see him tried and hanged. In the prow of the boat, Orme swore under his breath. He was a grizzled man in his late fifties, a decade older than the lean and elegant Monk, who had been in the Thames River Police Force only half a year. It was very different from the force ashore, where his experience lay, but more difficult for him was taking over the leadership of men to whom he was an outsider. He had a reputation for brilliance in detection, but also for a nature ruthless and hard to know, or to like. Monk had changed since then. The accident eight years ago in 1856, which had wiped out his memory, had also given him a chance to begin again. He had learned to know himself through the eyes of others, and it had been bitterly enlightening. Not that he could explain that to anyone else. They were gaining on the lighter, where Phillips was crouching out of sight, ignored by the man at the helm. Another hundred feet and they would draw level. There were five of them in the police boat. That was more than usual, but a man like Phillips might require the extra strength to take him down. He was wanted for the murder of a boy of thirteen or fourteen, Walter Figgis, known as Fig. He was thin and undersized, which might have been what had kept him alive so long. Phillips's trade was in boys from the age of four or five up to the time when their voices changed and they began to assume some of the physical characteristics of adults, and they were thus of no use in his particular market of pornography. The police boat's bow sliced through the choppy water. Fifty yards away a pleasure boat went lazily upstream, perhaps eventually towards Kew Gardens. Colored streamers blew in the wind, and there was the sound of laughter mixed with music. Ahead of them nearly a hundred ships from coal barges to tea clippers were anchored in the Upper Pool. Lighters plied back and forth, and stevedores unloaded cargoes brought in from every corner of the earth. Monk leaned forward a little, drawing in breath to urge the oarsmen to even greater effort, then changed his mind. It would look as if he did not trust them to do their best anyway. But they could not possibly want to catch Phillips as much as he did. It was Monk, not they, who had involved Durban in the Louvain case that had eventually cost him his life. And it was Monk whom Durban had recommended to take his place when he knew he was dying. Orme had served with Durban for years, but if he resented Monk's command he had never once shown it. He was loyal, diligent, even helpful, but for the most part, impossible to read. However, the longer Monk watched him, the more he realized Orme's respect was necessary to his success, and more than that, he actually wanted it. The thought jarred inside him. He could not remember ever before having cared what a junior thought of him. The lighter was only twenty feet ahead of them now and slowing as it made way for another lighter crossing its bow, which was laden with casks of raw sugar from a schooner moored fifty yards away. The ship was riding high now with its load almost gone, its huge canvases furled, spars bare and circling gently as it rocked. The police boat plunged forward and to port as the other lighter crossed to starboard. The first man leapt aboard, then the second, pistols drawn. Phillips was the one case Durban had not closed, and it had remained, even in his last notes, a still-bleeding wound in his mind. Monk had read every page since he had inherited them from Durban, along with the job. The facts were there, dates, times, people questioned, answers, conclusions, resolutions as to what to pursue next. But through all the words, the letters, sprawled and jagged, burned the emotion. There was an anger far deeper than the mere frustration of failure, or the injured pride at being outwitted. There was a deep, scalding fury at the suffering of children, and a pity for all the victims of Phillips's trade. And whether Monk wanted it to or not, it scarred him too. He thought about it when the day was ended and he was at home. It invaded the peace of mealtimes. It intruded into his conversations with his wife, Hester. Very little else had ever done that. He sat rigid in the stern of the boat now, aching to join the men on the lighter. Where were they? Why had they not reappeared with Phillips? Then he understood—they were on the wrong side. Phillips had judged it exactly. Knowing they would have to pass to port to avoid ramming the other lighter, he had gone to starboard and jumped again. It was risky, but he had nothing to lose. When they caught him he would be tried, and there could be only one verdict. Three Sundays later, he would be hanged. "Get the men back!" he shouted, half rising from the seat. "He's gone to starboard! On the other lighter!" They must have realized it too. Orme took the other oar, unshipped it, and began to pull hard to bring the

boat astern of the first lighter. The two men returned, leaping down, sending the boat rocking violently. This was no time to change places with Orme. The other lighter was already twenty yards away and heading towards the dock. If Phillips made it before they caught him he would disappear among the boxes and bales, the tea chests, rum and sugar casks, the piles of timber, horn, hides, and pottery that crowded the quayside. Monk's body was rigid, the wind blowing in his face sharp with the smells of salt and fish on the outgoing tide. Catching Phillips was the one thing he could still do for Durban. It would justify the trust Durban had placed in him after knowing him only a few weeks. They had shared nothing of daily life and routine, only one case of a horror almost beyond imagination. The lighter ahead passed out of sight for a few moments, hidden by the stern of a five-masted schooner. Monk watched intently. It seemed to take far too long to reappear. Was Phillips catching a loose rope, calling out for help from the stevedores, anything to board the ship? If so, Monk would have to go back to the station at Wapping and get more men. Anything could happen in that time. Orme must have seen the possibility too. He hurled his weight behind his oar, shouting at the other men. The boat leapt forward and the lighter appeared again, still comfortably ahead of them. Monk swiveled to stare at the hull of the schooner, but there was no one on the ropes over its sides. The stevedores on the deck were still bent-backed, hauling casks up out of the hold. Relief swept over Monk as they closed on the lighter. Another minute or two and they would have Phillips. The long chase would be over. With him in custody it would only be a matter of waiting for the law to take its course. The police boat came alongside the lighter. Again two armed men boarded, and came back moments later, bleak-faced and shaking their heads. This time Monk swore. Phillips had not gone up the sides onto the schooner, he was certain of that. No matter how agile, a man could not climb the ropes swiftly enough in the few minutes he had been out of sight. No lighter had passed them going to the north bank. It could only have been to the south. Angry, rowing with tight-knotted shoulders, the men sent the boat straight around the stern of the schooner into the wash of a stream of barges going upriver. They bucked and veered, slapping hard down into the water and sending up spray. Monk clung on to the sides, snarling between his teeth as he saw another lighter going south to Rotherhithe. Orme saw it at the same moment, and gave the order. They wove through the traffic. A ferry crossed swiftly in front of them, passengers crouched against the wind; a pleasure boat sent snatches of music into the air. This time the lighter made it to the dockside only twenty yards ahead of them, and they saw Phillips's agile figure, hair and coattails flying, jump from the stern as they passed the East Lane Stairs. He landed on the lowest step, which was slimed over from the tide. He teetered for a moment, arms wheeling, and then fell sideways, hard against the stone wall green with weed. It must have hurt, but he knew the police boat was not far behind him, and fear must have spurred him to scramble to his hands and knees and clamber upwards. It was a maneuver utterly without dignity, and a couple of lightermen jeered at him, but it was extremely rapid. By the time the police boat jarred against the stone, Phillips was at the top on the dry surface. He sprinted towards the Fore and Aft Dock with its crates of pottery from Spain, dumped haphazardly amid dark brown barrels and lighter piles of unfinished timber. The stench of hides was thick in the air, mixed with the sickening sweetness of raw sugar and the heady aroma of spices. Beyond that was the Bermondsey Road, and a whole network of streets and alleys, doss-houses, pawnshops, chandleries, taverns, and brothels. Monk hesitated only a moment, fearing wrenched ankles, the howls of laughter from the...  
Revue de presse"Set in 1864, bestseller Perry's outstanding 16th novel to feature William Monk (after Dark Assassin) finds Monk suffering from a series of hard knocks, including memory loss. Now superintendent of the Thames River Police Force, Monk is on the verge of closing the books on Jericho Phillips, a particularly nasty villain who specializes in child pornography. Monk and his team catch Phillips, but what appears to be an airtight murder case springs leaks and ends with the accused's acquittal. Many in authority view the judgment as a rebuke to the river police, whose existence as a separate force is threatened. Convinced that he got the right man, despite the jury's verdict, Monk devotes himself to setting the record straight. Monk's wife, Hester, who works with London's downtrodden, provides support. Rich in plot development, believable characters and period detail, this entry will only add to the already sizable ranks of Perry's admirers."Publishers WeeklyPraise for Anne Perry and her William Monk novelsDark AssassinBrilliant . . . a page-turning thriller . . . blending compelling plotting with superbly realized human emotion and exquisite period detail. Jeffery Deaver, author of The Broken WindowThe Shifting TideAn engrossing story that leaves the reader waiting for Monks next adventure . . . The mysterious and dangerous waterfront world of Londons longest street, the Thames, comes to life.South Florida Sun-Sentinel Death of a Stranger[A] tantalizing puzzle . . . At last, in Death of a Stranger, the secrets of Monks past are dramatically revealed.New York Times Book Funeral in BlueNo one writes more elegantly than Perry, nor better conjures

up the rich and colorful tapestry of London in the Victorian era. But for all its arcane setting and stylistic eloquence, *Funeral in Blue* is an old-style private eye novel and an extremely good one. *Cleveland Plain Dealer* *Slaves of Obsession* *Luxuriant* . . . Its E. M. Forster spliced with Thomas Harris. . . . Perry is a master. *Baltimore Sun*