The quiet, confident atmosphere of Bredgar Chambers School is shattered by the discovery of the body of one of its pupils in a country churchyard. Who murdered the brilliant boy and why? How did his body get from the school to the distant churchyard? Why had he lied about his exeat destination? Inspector Thomas Lynley and his partner, Barbara Havers, find their investigations hampered by the code of honour and loyalty that prevail in the old and distinguished public school. But they discover within the confines of that privileged community a culture of cruelty that stretches back across the generations.

Well-Schooled in Murder is a fascinating and critical look at social class, the traditions of English public schools and the problems with having a stiff upper lip. What is more remarkable is that those themes are developed in the context of an unusually complex and rewarding murder mystery. This book barely misses becoming a classic in detective fiction and will greatly reward fans of Elizabeth Georges series about Thomas Lynley and Barbara Havers and those who do not know the novels.

This is the third book in the series. You can read this book as a stand-alone, but it will work better for you if you first read A Great Deliverance and Payment in Blood.

As the story opens, Lynley is still reeling from having destroyed his relationship with Lady Helen. Shes gone off to Greece and sends him occasional noncommittal post cards. Lynley is burying himself in his work. Thats making life hard on Barbara Havers whose parents are not doing well.

John Corntel, an old school chum from Eton, approaches Lynley for unofficial assistance in locating a missing student who was under the
chums care. The situation soon changes when the student is found in an unlikely place dead, nude and having been tortured. Lynley takes on the case to avoid having free time to mourn his lost love. A delayed autopsy means that Lynley has to develop a sense of means, motive and opportunity without knowing the facts. The various suspects and witnesses do their best to mislead him, adhering to a code of silence that protects their most delicate secrets as well.

As the case evolves, its not a pretty picture that is revealed behind the privileged walls of Bredgar Chambers.

Theres little to complain about with this book and much to praise. Theres a powerful subplot about the marriage of Simon Allcourt-St. James that nicely develops Simon and his wife as characters. You also get a deep look into several other marriages and relationships. Elizabeth George seems to be saying that as much as we crave intimacy with others; such intimacy will probably bring us more pain than pleasure or happiness. Thats a pretty downbeat message, and one that keeps the book from working quite as well as it could. The lesson is that we have to perfect ourselves with another perfected person who shares a mutual attraction before we can achieve happy intimacy. Even then, if we are not candid with one another . . . all bets are off!

Ms. George is equally suspicious of physical attraction. It only seems to lead to no good in this book.

For fans of taut, challenging plotting, this book has few peers. Its as though Ms. George wanted to move away from writing novels that contain mysteries into writing mysteries that reveal the darkest secrets of the human condition. I defy any normal reader to sense the outcome of this book in all of its dimensions until right before the end.

This book will haunt you the most if you read it on a dark and stormy night when unhappiness is poisoning your sleep.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
Well Schooled in Murder (Inspector Lynley Mysteries 03) by Elizabeth George - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!