



Death In Holy Orders

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A case of murder, greed and corruption for Commander Adam Dalgliesh, as Martin Shaw stars in PD James's *Death In Holy Orders*



Murder, greed, corruption and a serial killer on the loose are the ingredients in the latest case for PD James's acclaimed detective, Adam Dalgliesh, as Martin Shaw stars as the cerebral and dedicated Commander in PD James's *Death In Holy Orders*, a two-part drama for BBC One this summer.

PD James, one of the UK's most popular crime writers, has given Dalgliesh the most difficult and personal case of his career. He goes back to St Anselm's, the theological college at which he spent so many happy summers in his youth, which is now the setting for a series of frenzied murders.

Tackling questions of faith and the politics of an institution resistant to change, *Death In Holy Orders* boasts an impressive supporting cast. The irrepressible Robert Hardy, a sprightly 77 years old, had to spend two hours every day in make-up to age him for his role as Father Martin, Dalgliesh's former mentor and confidant, and the man who holds all the secrets to St Anselm's. Hardy recently starred in BBC One's Christmas smash hit *The Lost World* and is currently playing Cornelius Fudge in the *Harry Potter* films, *Harry Potter And The*

Chamber Of Secrets and *Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban*.

The Olivier Award-winning actress Janie Dee is Emma Lavenham, the glamorous tutor who arouses Dalgliesh's attention ... and not only as a potential murder suspect. Handsome Australian actor Jesse Spencer, known to millions of fans as the hunky Billy Kennedy in *Neighbours*, plays Raphael, the young ordinand whose mysterious past will open a Pandora's box from which no one is safe.

Alan Howard, one of the UK's most celebrated theatre actors, makes a rare television appearance as Father Sebastian Morell, the querulous warden of the college, charged with leading the struggle to preserve the future of St Anselm's. Jeff Rawle, best known as the harassed editor in *Drop The Dead Donkey*, is the pernicky Father Peregrine.

The setting for *Death In Holy Orders* is St Anselm's, an isolated, windswept Church of England outpost high on the Suffolk cliffs. For generations, the college has trained its chosen few in its hallowed cloisters, but now it's under threat. Its elitism and

archaic practices find no favour in the modern age. When one of the young ordinands dies in suspicious circumstances, his industrialist father is convinced that the college authorities have glossed over the truth to avoid a scandal which would result in the closure of the college.

Dalgliesh arrives back at St Anselm's, a place of which he has only happy memories, in order to look into the ordinand's strange death. No sooner has he scratched the surface than another murder has been committed, seemingly without motive. But there is much worse to come, and no longer is St Anselm's the innocent hideaway it once was. Archdeacon Crampton, the Bishop's representative, is intent on closing the college, news which is met with anger and fear by the tutors, staff and ordinands. It is not long before Dalgliesh has a major murder inquiry on his hands as the death count rises and the truth seems further away than ever.

Jane Tranter, BBC Controller of Drama Commissioning, says: "PD James is one of the country's most consistently popular and talented crime writers, so we are delighted to bring her latest novel to the BBC. Commander Adam Dalgliesh has become something of a national hero, and Martin Shaw brings an immediate freshness and emotional intensity to the role. I'm in no doubt that *Death In Holy Orders* will have audiences guessing whodunnit right up to the last minute."

The producer of *Death In Holy Orders*, Margaret Enefer, says: "The complexity and subtlety of PD James's novel make for gripping drama. The Gothic nature of the story and the intricate plot are perfect material for an audience with an appetite for demanding detective thrillers. Martin Shaw's portrayal of PD James's poetic detective is a powerful reminder of his talent and position as one of our most versatile leading men. I felt incredibly privileged to work with such an exceptional cast as the one we had in *Death In Holy Orders*."

Death In Holy Orders has been adapted for the screen by Robert Jones. It is produced by Margaret Enefer and directed by Jonny Campbell.

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Cast

Martin Shaw	Commander Adam Dalgliesh
Janie Dee	Emma Lavenham
Jesse Spencer	Raphael Arbuthnot
Robert Hardy	Father Martin
Alan Howard	Father Sebastian
Jeff Rawle	Father Peregrine
John Clegg	Father John
Victoria Scarborough	Inspector Kate Miskin
Julia McKenzie	Margaret Munroe
Hugh Fraser	George Gregory
Clive Wood	Archdeacon Crampton
Roger Morlidge	Inspector Roger Yarborough
Jonathan Coy	Dr Clive Stannard
Freda Dowie	Agatha Betterton
Tom Goodman-Hill	Eric Surtees
Emma Rydal	Karen Surtees
Alex Hassell	Peter Buckhurst
Maggie McCarthy	Ruby Pilbeam
Will Willoughby	Ronald Treeves

Production Credits

Based on the Novel by	PD James
Adapted by	Robert Jones
Costume Designer	Les Lansdown
Hair & Make-up Designer	Caroline Noble
Production Designer	Michael Pickwoad
Director of Photography	Martin Fuhrer
Director	Jonny Campbell
Producer	Margaret Enefer
Executive Producers	Simon Lewis and Sue Hogg

Martin Shaw plays Commander Adam Dalgliesh



It's hard to believe that Martin Shaw's career has spanned an incredible 40 years, on stage, on screen and on television. His youthful good looks, despite the distinguished grey hair, belie a man in the latter half of his fifties. He does, however, think his days of on-screen romance are numbered

"Everything that I do has to be a challenge, otherwise there's no point in doing it. But the real challenge is still to come – more character parts. I'm still being cast in the roles where there is a 'love interest'. That's not going to be for much longer. There is definitely a shelf life with that kind of role and I think it's wise and also more fun to start exploring character roles."

In PD James's *Death In Holy Orders*, Shaw takes on the mantle of Commander Adam Dalgliesh, James's most popular character, for the first time. "I don't think I've portrayed a detective before, although I was a chief constable in *The Chief*," he says. "Dalgliesh's most distinguishing characteristic is that he's a poet and he's artistic. He's one of the hardest characters I've ever had to play because in the novels he's an observer. He is the eye piece through which the audience sees everything. This is quite hard to translate into a character on screen.

"He's very bright and he thinks a lot," Shaw continues. "I've only spent a few hours with PD

James and that was really fascinating. I didn't ask her much, nor did she volunteer very much about how to play Dalgliesh. I think she wanted to leave that to whichever actor portrays him. Also, there isn't a strong character there. I know that sounds blasphemous, but there really isn't. The good thing about that is that within certain boundaries he could be played many different ways. He is somebody who is very still and if you are really thinking what the character should be thinking, the audience can pick it up."

There is a dramatic change for PD James's brilliant detective, as this is the first novel in which the writer has given him even a suggestion of a potential romantic attachment. The glamorous tutor Emma Lavenham, played by Janie Dee, is the object of Dalgliesh's affection. Shaw continues: "The advent of Emma is interesting, but Dalgliesh is also somebody with a past. His wife and child have died, so he's somebody struggling with his own demons."

In such a varied career, it's difficult for Shaw to choose his most memorable roles. "I've never had more fun or been more challenged than when I played Rhodes for the BBC or Elvis Presley in *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* or Lord Goring in *An Ideal Husband*, because these were people who were both physically and emotionally different to me. And that's the real buzz, actually capturing somebody else. It's like being a painter or a sculptor, standing back and realising that you have actually created something, actually created somebody."

Shaw began his acting career at school, where the only subject he excelled in was English. From the school drama group he went to LAMDA, and from there he took the traditional route to repertory theatres. The Bristol Old Vic followed, then Television, and afterwards the National Theatre, Royal Court and the West End.

The National Theatre brings back particularly poignant memories for Shaw. "Olivier auditioned me and cast me, initially as Dionysus in *The Bacchae*, then in *Saturday Sunday Monday*. He was

fantastic, a proper actor/manager in that he cast and auditioned everybody in his company. He knew everyone and everyone knew him, although it was very clear that he was the boss. He used to come and talk to us in the dressing room at night. It was a magical time.”

Shaw has certainly enjoyed his success over the years, although clearly he finds that fame is the down-side of life as an actor. “Being a celebrity, whatever that means, is something I dislike intensely. I don’t like the cult of celebrity anyway. It has its uses but it’s not the only reason people should give you work. You should work because you’re good at it. The ephemeral side of fame, people’s obsession with celebrity and the sense that celebrities are somehow different – it’s all something I neither understand nor like.”



One of the many highlights of Shaw’s career was the success he enjoyed on Broadway with *An Ideal Husband*, for which he was nominated for a prestigious Tony award. This followed an award-winning run in London’s West End. “You have to be honest about awards – they are absolutely fantastic!” says Shaw. “An acknowledgement is wonderful wherever it comes from, especially from within the industry. Awards also mean a lot because they make other things become possible later on – and they look good on the CV!”

When he’s not working, Shaw is happy to be at his home in Norfolk with his wife, Vicky. They both share a love of his favourite hobby, flying. “I don’t get so much time to fly – I’m just too busy. My

plane is an old open cockpit biplane from the Second World War. My wife has a pilot’s licence and flies, too. It’s a two-seater plane and has dual controls. One of the reasons I went to live in Norfolk is because there are so many disused airfields and the vintage aviation scene is very well looked after.”

A second generation of Shaws is following in their father’s footsteps. His three children – Luke, Joe, and Sophie – are all actors. “It’s something I’ve encouraged. It would be hypocritical of me to tell them not to pursue acting,” says Shaw. “They ask me to read their scripts and vice versa – they’re very good critics of what I’ve done.”

And what’s next on the horizon for Shaw, who is as busy as ever? “I’m doing another series of *Judge John Deed*,” he says, “and there might be another Dalglish story. There are also two West End projects I’m talking about.”

Janie Dee plays Emma Lavenham



Janie Dee may not be that familiar a face to television audiences but, in the theatre, she's the queen of song and dance, and a multi-award winning actress. In 1999/2000, Dee won the Olivier, London Evening Standard and Critics Circle Awards for Best Actress for her performance as Jacie in Alan Ayckbourn's *Comic Potential*, making her the only actress, apart from Dame Judi Dench, to have won the three major theatre acting awards in the same year.

Janie's lithe and lissom figure is testament to her dancing career, although it belies the fact that she's also the mother of a six-year-old daughter. "I started acting when I was three," she says. "I continually worked at it and still do. I learnt singing on my own and I learnt to dance in England and in Italy with some of the best teachers. I remember my agent saying to me, 'You have to stop dancing

and singing for a bit if you want to be on television'. I thought about it briefly, but I've worked really hard for my singing and dancing, so I decided to say no!

"I think it's a wonderful thing to be able to sing and dance. My body is so used to being pushed to the limit that every time I take a job that doesn't involve singing or dancing, I miss the physical challenge and the rigour. There'll be a time when I don't do this but, at the moment, I have so much energy I won't ever turn my back on those things until it's absolutely necessary."

Dee makes a rare television appearance, and temporarily puts her singing and dancing career to one side, to take on the role of Emma Lavenham, the glamorous tutor at St Anselm's theological college who catches the eye of the taciturn Commander Adam Dalgliesh.

"I've always chosen things that get me excited and I badly wanted to do this," she says. "The bottom line for me is always whether or not the role is exciting. My agent wants me to do more television, but it depends on the role – the passion has to be there. If there's no passion, it won't work for me.

"Taking on the role was really uplifting, challenging, scary and exciting. This is a big deal for me. I've played big parts in the theatre but not on television. I am the love interest and slightly light relief in this rather dark and harrowing tale. I'd also been wanting to meet PD James since I got the part and when she came up to Oxford, where we were shooting, she was absolutely lovely, very complimentary, very enthusiastic, a charming lady – rather like a fairy godmother!"

The musical theatre is where Dee made her name. Her first big theatrical break was in Nicholas Hytner's award-winning production of *Carousel*, for which she won a Best Supporting Actress Olivier Award. She recalls: "Nick was producing *Carousel* at the National Theatre and when I auditioned he asked me what I was doing. I said I was working

with Alan Ayckbourn. His eyes lit up and he said, 'Oh, I love Ayckbourn Actresses'. I think that went a long way to getting me the job, which then won me awards and led on to so many other things."

Dee's talents have not gone unnoticed on the other side of the Atlantic either. She was lured to Broadway to reprise her award-winning role as Jacie in Ayckbourn's *Comic Potential* at the Manhattan Theatre Club. "I was also flown out to LA and I ended up getting 'The Treatment' – staying at a gorgeous hotel, taken everywhere in a lovely chauffeured car, sent to speak to everybody at the studios. I really was on cloud nine. But I knew I didn't want to live there when it came to the crunch.

"The studios wanted me to sign a six-year contract to star in one of their sitcoms. My husband, Rupert, would have come out to America with me and our daughter, Matilda, but their lives would have changed completely. When I looked at the script I thought, 'Be honest – is this role something I'm going to get passionate about for six years? No'. I was then offered another project, so I got on a plane to America and 10 minutes before it left, I got off. It suddenly hit me: I've got a fantastic career here in England already, how much better is it going to get by being in America?"

Since finishing shooting *Death In Holy Orders*, Dee has performed in *Anyone Can Whistle* at London's Bridewell Theatre and produced a concert for peace at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane with a host of major theatrical names. Her next major role will be for Sir Peter Hall in his touring productions of *Betrayal* and *Design For Living*.

"The best bit of advice I ever heard was from Bob Crowley, the brilliant set designer, to a group of his students," Dee concludes. "They asked what he'd say to a wannabe designer. Bob said, 'Go out, go to football matches, go to concerts, go drinking with your friends, go to films, do the gardening, live life, absorb it, eat it up'. That's how I see life and what my career is about. When I did an opera with David Pountney I was excited because it was something completely new and I could have a go at it. I think you shouldn't put any barriers there for yourself."

Jesse Spencer plays Raphael Arbuthnot



Jesse Spencer, best known for playing heart-throb Billy Kennedy in *Neighbours*, admits that filming *Death In Holy Orders* was often a gruelling experience – but, surprisingly, the filming of one scene that would have sent a lesser man back to the sunnier climes of Australia didn't faze him at all.

"You're going to think I'm mad, but swimming totally naked in the North Sea in November for one of my scenes really wasn't that bad. I didn't have a wet suit or anything – it was just me and the sea. I'd never done a nude scene before, but I found it completely liberating. I surf back home in Melbourne in the winter, and that's pretty cold – not quite as cold as it was in the North Sea, but still decidedly chilly. In Australia, I always wear a wet suit.

"This, however, was an altogether different experience. When I first dived in, I thought it was going to be all right, but the waves and the

temperature absolutely whacked me. I just had to keep swimming, but I felt as though I'd been winded, so breathing was a real struggle. The more I swam, the warmer I became. I went on to do it twice again. Once you're swimming, it's a wonderful feeling; the natural rush of it is fantastic."

The Norfolk coast in winter is a long way from Ramsay Street and Spencer admits that, while he loved being in *Neighbours*, he has struggled to shake off the part of Billy Kennedy. "I was in *Neighbours* for four years and had the most fantastic time. It's ironic, really, because I didn't want to accept the part at first. I didn't think it was a sensible career move. But my parents convinced me to take it. At the end of the day, they were right, but it has taken me a few years to persuade people that I'm not really Billy Kennedy."

Acting was by no means the obvious career move for Spencer. "My dad is a doctor, as are my two elder brothers and my younger sister. I was offered a place to read medicine at Melbourne University, but I decided to defer my place and pursue acting instead. I never really wanted to become a doctor – I'd rather go swimming naked in the North Sea, thanks! I didn't go to acting school. Instead, when I was 12, I did some musical theatre, having been in the choir at school, and then I was offered the *Neighbours* job. On reflection, I don't think I'll take up my place at Melbourne University after all. I'm having far too much fun acting."

Jesse, who also starred in the BBC's production of *Lorna Doone*, has evidently relished the opportunity to play the Machiavellian and manipulative ordinand Raphael Arbuthnot in PD James's *Death In Holy Orders*. "Raphael is a fantastic character. There is just so much for me to play with. Raphael surrounds himself with so many people and keeps himself really busy within the world of St Anselm's but, essentially, he feels ostracised by his peers and religious teachers. His loneliness drives him to use and abuse people to suit his own ends. Of course, in the end, it all comes back to haunt him.

“At the end of the day, the plot revolves around a horribly gruesome murder, so it’s inevitable that there wasn’t too much light relief on set. But I prefer to come to work and have a heavy day; I like to go home feeling that I have earned my dinner.”

For the first time in his life, Spencer was the youngest person on set. He found it easy to fit in with the veteran performers, but one of the biggest challenges he faced was the demands of his role as an ordinand.



“Ironically enough, I found it was far harder to learn plainsong* and sing in Latin than it was to face the hardships of the North Sea. Maybe the hardest thing of all was a scene in which my character reads aloud from Trollope’s *Barchester Towers*. I found the language and the stilted English almost impenetrable. Of course, it’s nice and easy for Janie Dee, Robert Hardy, Alan Howard and the rest of the cast, the majority of whom have been practically brought up with Shakespeare, but I found it painfully tough. Swimming naked in the North Sea was a doddle by comparison!”

Spencer has been very busy recently, starring in feature films both in America and Australia. The US movie, *Molly Gunn*, also stars *8 Mile*’s Brittany Murphy; the Australian *Swimming Upstream* sees Spencer starring alongside two of Australia’s

foremost actors: Geoffrey Rush, who won an Oscar for his performance in *Shine*, and Judy Davis, Oscar nominated for roles in David Lean’s *A Passage To India* and Woody Allen’s *Husbands And Wives*.

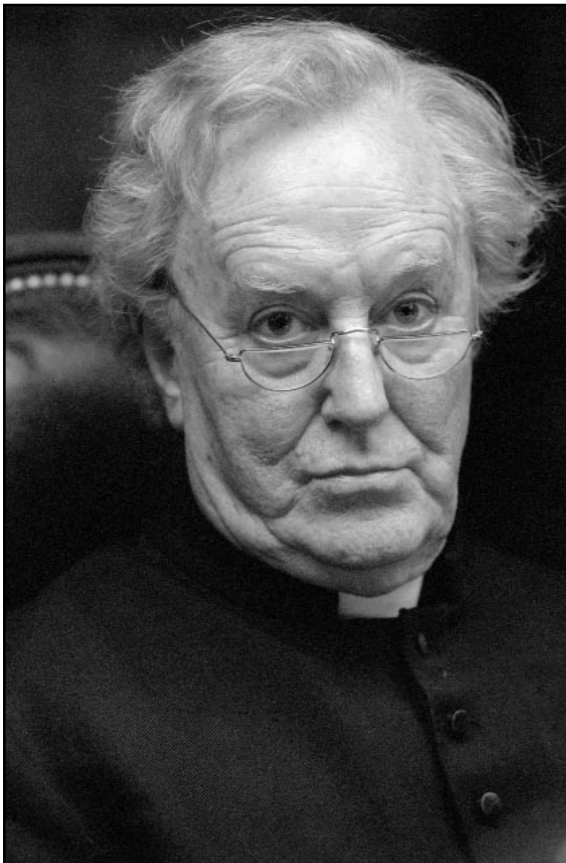
“*Molly Gunn* was a crazy experience,” says Spencer. “I play a struggling musician in New York, who falls in love with Brittany Murphy’s character, the eponymous Molly Gunn. He wants to be taken desperately seriously and then becomes a one-hit wonder, much to his chagrin. It’s a really funny movie.

“*Swimming Upstream*, on the other hand, is far darker. It’s based on the true story of the Fingleton family and is set in Fifties Australia. I play Tony Fingleton, the youngest son of a very troubled family, whose phenomenal swimming talents finally win him his father’s attention and love. It’s a sad story but a very uplifting one, too. My character comes through and finds his inner strength, in spite of his father’s alcoholism and abusiveness.”

Spencer, who relishes the opportunity to spend time with his London-based Maltese girlfriend, is currently back in Melbourne. But he will undoubtedly be back soon, leaving Billy Kennedy and the prospect of Melbourne University far behind him.

***Plainsong is the style of unaccompanied choral music used in the medieval Church, especially in Gregorian chant.**

Robert Hardy plays Father Martin



After a lifetime of scripts and definitive performances, veteran actor Robert Hardy proudly confirms that he is as much in demand now as he has always been. Two main factors are ensuring that Hardy is enjoying a renaissance – the first being the advent of digital television, the second the popularity of Harry Potter.

“Digital television has had an extraordinary impact,” Hardy says. “A few years back, all these things had died down and run their course. People weren’t really very aware of me. *Elizabeth R*, *All Creatures Great And Small*, *Daniel Deronda* and *Winston Churchill – The Wilderness Years* – they’re all back now. As an actor, you leave it all behind, of course. But I have to admit that I did watch *Elizabeth R* the other night and I winced throughout. ‘Is this how

you used to act?’ I asked myself. But there are a few things of which I’m hugely proud and which don’t get repeated. My performance as Prince Albert in *Edward The King*, for example.”

And then, of course, there are the *Harry Potter* films, in which Hardy plays Cornelius Fudge. “My character was introduced in the second Potter film, *Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets*, and I had the privilege of doing a scene with the remarkable Richard Harris, with whom I’d happily worked before. We’ve started the third Potter instalment, and it’s going well thus far.”

JK Rowling would be the first to admit the debt she owes to both CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien. It is, therefore, ironic and apposite that Hardy was tutored while at Oxford by both men. “I had my weekly tutorials at Oxford with Lewis – he was a wonderful, adorable man. My Anglo-Saxon tutor was Tolkien, who was equally amazing in his way. The former was great fun to argue with, while the latter was the original Professor Higgins – he could tell where we were from by the way we spoke. And, of course, both these old dears were going home at night and writing their stories for children. We had no idea that they would end up as multi-millionaires. Both were geniuses.”

Hardy himself owes Lewis a great deal, too. Not only was he a fine tutor, but he was also a fine critic of Hardy’s acting. “I remember playing Orestes in Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Les Mouches* while I was at Oxford. It was performed in a snow storm in May and it was frighteningly cold. I was wearing a little skirt and had bare knees. Lewis came up to me afterwards and said, ‘I thought you were rather good. But may I give you a piece of advice? I think, especially with bare legs, that even in the moments of the greatest stress you shouldn’t act with bent knees. It weakens’. I’ve obeyed that rule ever since.” Hardy stops himself and laughs wistfully.

He has been on stage and screen for over 50 years and there is evidently no sign of his retiring. While perhaps not being cast as the leading man he once

was, there is still plenty of work for this irreplaceable actor when he chooses to take it. “I simply accept a part that I think is amusing, whether it’s small or large,” he says. “*Death In Holy Orders* has a well-written script with clear and interesting characters and one of the things I really enjoyed is that Father Martin is a part which ran and developed throughout the film. In *Shackleton* or *The Lost World*, for example, I only had very small parts – but, goodness, they were fun to do!

“I took a certain amount of delight in the fact that Father Martin is extremely intelligent. He isn’t curmudgeonly at all – he’s very gentle, indeed at one stage he’s described as saintly. He’s a very simple man with a vast intelligence and a grand generosity.”

But this is, after all, a murder mystery, and one of the great skills of PD James, as Hardy himself acknowledges, is that no-one is above suspicion, not even the grand old man of the college. “There are some very good red herrings in this plot. Father Martin could have slain – he had enough energy and understands everyone’s anger and rage at the fact that Archdeacon Crampton is trying to close St Anselm’s for good. But Father Martin is a wise man, and he realises that St Anselm’s is an anachronistic and isolated institution which needs to change as a matter of urgency.”

Hardy admits that the filming of *Death In Holy Orders* took its toll, not least because he had to undergo two hours of make-up every day in order to make him look like the wizened Father Martin. “Yes, it has been tough. The Norfolk coast is not the ideal place to be in winter. But I haven’t enjoyed myself so much for a very long time. Martin Shaw and I got on like a house on fire. We played off each other quite well, I think. He’s a marvellous man and I’m delighted to have worked with him at last.”

High praise, indeed, especially considering the sheer number of legends with whom Hardy has worked over the years – Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Richard Attenborough, Glenda Jackson, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. He met the latter while still at Oxford University, where both men studied English during the Second World War. “Burton and I were both in the Forces together. We were doing half university stuff at Oxford and

half military stuff. We were an elite air crew, and they treated us very kindly. We didn’t much like each other to start with, but then we became very close, thanks to a mutual love and understanding of Shakespeare.”

After the War, Burton and Hardy’s paths soon diverged, however. “Richard went straight onto the stage and I went back up to finish my studies at Oxford, which was rather a smart move. I figured that there would be enormous gaps in the theatre world, which there were – so many people in the theatre business, both on and off stage, had lost their lives. And, of course, everyone was six years older. I was therefore quite a skilled character player, in the days when young people would be asked to play old men. The talent scouts came up to Oxford from London and looked at the up-and-coming university actors. I was offered an interview at Stratford and I went up in January 1949, straight after my Oxford Finals.”

He still lives in the splendid Tudor house in Oxfordshire that he chose with his second wife, Sally, 30 years ago. He has been married twice and admits to being a man of raging emotion, immensely difficult to live with “and really not a good bet for any woman – I’m not proud of my record as a husband.” As an actor, however, he can certainly be assured that he has triumphed and will probably continue to do so for some time yet.

PD James



It seems as though PD James is as much in awe of her iconic hero, Commander Adam Dalgliesh, as are his legions of adoring fans. Asked to describe her poetic protagonist, James says: “I would hope he is a good, successful and professional policeman and detective. He is also a sensitive human being. When I created him, I gave him the qualities that I personally like in men and in women – courage, reticence, generosity of spirit, and sensitivity without sentimentality.”

Death In Holy Orders is the 11th outing for Adam Dalgliesh. He has fast become one of the seminal figures in crime fiction, as famous for his detective skills as his love of poetry. James explains what she believes makes him tick: “I wanted him to be a well-rounded, interesting human being, but I also wanted him to have some kind of artistic interest. I sometimes think that, now I’ve known him so well over the years, he would have been a musician of some kind or other. Alas, I don’t know enough about music to deal with that effectively, but I think

I do understand the poetic imagination and I love poetry – so I decided to make him a poet.”

James admits to being thrilled that Martin Shaw has taken on the role of Adam Dalgliesh. “I’m very excited by the idea of seeing Martin up on the screen – he is an intelligent and cerebral actor, so he’s able to do what I think is so difficult, which is to convey to the viewer what is going on between his ears. Physically, he is a very attractive character – and one likes one’s characters to be attractive.” James chuckles coyly. To his loyal fans, Dalgliesh is a hero; to James, he is a way of life.

In *Death In Holy Orders*, James tackles a subject with which Dalgliesh has never previously been associated – love. “When I began writing, I rather agreed with Dorothy L Sayers, who said that the detective should concentrate on following the clues, not chasing after love. But I didn’t want him to be totally celibate – he’s not that sort of man. So I rather callously killed off his wife and new-born child before the first Dalgliesh novel, *Cover Her Face*, even began.

“And after that, I said that what he chose to do in private with a consenting female was no business of mine. But now he has fallen in love. As a writer, I am faced with the decision, is this going to be a successful love affair? Is Emma Lavenham going to be the woman who is able to break through this privacy, this reserve, this carefully guarded heart, or is she not? And, of course, the new novel which I have just completed will tell us that,” she teases, refusing to divulge anything further.

PD James – created Baroness James of Holland Park in 1991 – has balanced an illustrious writing career with an equally prestigious career as a public administrator. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, between 1988 and 1993 she was both a Governor of the BBC and a member of the Board of the British Council. In 1997, PD James – Phyllis to her friends – was elected President of the

Society of Authors. But it is as a crime novelist that the 83-year-old mother of two and grandmother of five has become most famous. Indeed, the ins and outs of murder have become part of her DNA. “It was Dorothy L Sayers again who said that no subject matter has been a cause of more innocent enjoyment to the Anglo-Saxon race than murder. Very often, real-life murders are pathetic and sordid, commonplace and very easily solved. We are fascinated by murder because it is a unique crime, the crime for which we can make no reparation. And people are intrigued by another human being who has, as it were, stepped over that invisible line between a murderer and a non-murderer.”

Death In Holy Orders not only brings in the idea of love, but it also introduces profound questions about faith. “The plot revolves around the decay of faith. But you could also say it is about different kinds of loving, about the importance of the jobs that people do and their commitment to their own way of life. It’s difficult to imagine a really vicious or selfish killer who would also have a religious life, because a genuine religious conviction demands humility. Murder is a unique crime in which the killer is arrogant enough to think that he is entitled to get what he wants, even if it means killing another human being. That isn’t a very religious view of life, but that doesn’t mean to say that they’re entirely evil.” Besides, James implies, an entirely evil character is an entirely unremarkable character – and the noble Baroness is far too skilled an operator to allow any aspect of her writing or private life to descend into the unremarkable.