



## Alone with the Dead

*James Nally*

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**Alone with the Dead** James Nally

'IMPECCABLE DESCRIPTIONS MADE THE STORY COME ALIVE ... EXHILARATING STUFF'  
THE SUN

\*The first in an electrifying new British detective series starring PC Donal Lynch.\*

Meet PC Donal Lynch.

Irish runaway. Insomniac. Functioning alcoholic.

Donal is new to working the beat in London, trying his best to forget that night. After all, there aren't many police officers who can say they have a convicted murderer for an ex-girlfriend.

So when a woman is murdered on his patch, Donal throws himself into the case. As the first person on the scene, Donal can't forget the horrific sight that faced him – and he knows this case can't go unsolved. But how do you solve a case with no lead suspect and no evidence?

As his past catches up with him, Donal is forced to confront his demons and the girl he left behind. But what will crack first, the case or Donal?

Chilling, brutal, addictive – if you like Tim Weaver and James Oswald, you will LOVE James Nally.

## Alone with the Dead Details

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Author : James Nally

Format : Kindle Edition 400 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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## From Reader Review Alone with the Dead for online ebook

### Petra says

Reading the book's description, I was expecting a straightforward British crime procedural, but *Alone With The Dead* was so much more than that.

Set in London in 1991, it follows Irish beat cop PC Donal Lynch who is dreaming of becoming a detective. When he is the first at the scene of a woman's horrific murder, he seizes his opportunity and wants to help solve the case.

However, Donal has a lot of personal problems he also has to deal with. He is a red wine drinking insomniac who can't get over his first girl-friend Eve, who was charged with murder back in Ireland. His relationship with his brother Fintan, who is a London crime reporter, is complicated, and his relationship with his Catholic dad non-existent.

Written in the first person, James Nelly has succeeded in creating a truly interesting and unique character. I loved Donal's descriptions of growing up in rural Ireland in the 1980s ("It was easier to get hold of Semtex than a packet of condoms.") and his cynical observations on life in general. Donal is just a funny and quite adorable guy.

This is the author's first novel, but James Nelly has long-term experience in journalism and TV production, which shows. The writing was superb. The dialogue witty and authentic.

Being a bit of a psychology nerd and interested in all things brain-related, I also really enjoyed Donal's "therapy" sessions, but I appreciate that other readers may feel that these parts could have been more condensed.

The police procedural more or less flowed around this really intriguing central character and his complicated personal life as he struggles with an extraordinary aptitude and shady elements within the police force. Highly recommended if you enjoy crime fiction with a touch of the supernatural. I can't wait to see where James Nelly will take Donal next!

Thank you to the author and the publisher for providing me with a complimentary copy via NetGalley in exchange for an unbiased review.

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### Angela says

A crime thriller with a difference, a bit of a twist. Great attention to detail, very descriptive, realistic and entirely believable. I enjoyed this first installment and am looking forward to reading the rest of the series to see what the author has in store for us.

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### Gregoire says

un milieu complexe où se côtoient journalistes avides de scoops, policiers véreux, et un jeune policier irlandais auto-exilé à Londres C'est un peu fouillis, les flashbacks sont parfois trop longs et nuisent à l'intrigue Ce qui m'a le plus gêné c'est l'alcoolisme et les beuveries sous tous les prétextes ... j'ai du mal à croire à cette ambiance noircie à outrance Donal m'a tapé sur les nerfs tout du long de l'enquête

Malgré cela, je pense que l'auteur montre des qualités d'écriture intéressantes (il nous fait pénétrer dans l'intimité des pensées de Donal avec aisance, il sait intelligemment alterner descriptions, états d'âme,

dialogues et actions ) c'est pourquoi je lirai sans doute au moins une autre enquête de Donal Lynch

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### **Lou says**

I came across this title from James Nally as a READ NOW offering on NetGalley and having read the blurb decided it would be a fantastic introduction to Nally's books. I started it pretty quickly after downloading and took only two sittings for me to finish. The rest of Nally's PC Donal Lynch trilogy has moved a long way up my TBR pile to close to the top. I guess that should tell you all you need to know as to my thoughts on **ALONE WITH THE DEAD**.

One thing that sets this book apart from most others in the crime genre is that it has a supernatural element to it, the most well-known author who frequently uses that combination is Stephen King. So, this genre mix definitely has the potential to create something pretty unique. I feel Nally does a great job at using the mix to his advantage and creates a chilling and compelling read. The characterisation is excellent and the book feels authentic throughout. I cannot wait to dive into the rest of the series!

I would like to thank James Nally, HarperCollins UK, Avon and NetGalley for the opportunity to voluntarily read and review a copy of **ALONE WITH THE DEAD**. All opinions are honest, impartial and entirely my own.

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### **Liz Barnsley says**

This is one of those impulse buy books that worked out so well - spotted on a recent virtual shopping trip (lets gloss over the fact that I was supposed to be getting something entirely non book related) it accidentally fell into the basket. Its possible some of Donal Lynch's ghosts took over and forced me to get it. I guess we will never know.

Loved this. I mean crime fiction is always the best book fix out there when you can find the good stuff, even if occasionally a bit same old, so when an author can put a little extra fascination in the tale of your standard copper its always intriguing. In Donal's case the question hanging over his mental state was a clever thread to a multi layered police procedural with a twist.

Great plotting with great characters is what I look for personally in a crime novel and this one had buckets of both. Plus a wry and ironic humorous tone that often had me smiling, occasionally even letting out a very unbecoming snort of a giggle. Donal is sharp and well drawn, easy to grow fond of very quickly so big tick in the "Do I give a damn about the main protagonist" box. I did. I loved him. The supporting cast (especially his journalist brother and murderous ex girlfriend) are excellent and ever interesting, I was fully engaged with all of them throughout.

The mystery element aint half bad either. The clues are there, including the ones that may not really be there, the investigative track is pacy and intelligent, there are some nice little twists and turns along the way and it has a banging ending. Consider me satisfied.

Im very glad this is the start of a series, especially as James Nally has managed to pique my interest with a cleverly placed problem for Donal which will obviously bear more scrutiny. That plus the fact that it was a

terrific story well told that made me wish I had book 2 already means this could become one of my favourite series. Ask me in a few years.

A dark heart that thrills and some rocking characters. Can't ask for more than that.

Recommended for crime fiction fans.

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## Raven says

Alone With The Dead is the intriguing and unsettling debut that introduces us to rookie copper PC Donal Lynch, finding his way in his tough, new, chosen profession, but not without a few stumbling blocks in his path. Donal has turned his back on his native home of Ireland, after his ex-girlfriend is convicted of murder. Finding himself employed in a seedy Irish pub frequented by equally seedy and slightly dubious coppers, Donal makes a massive career change, and joins the boys in blue. But Lynch is not all he seems, and thanks to his propensity for seeing dead people, akin to the creepy kid in The Sixth Sense, his involvement in a brutal murder investigation, brings something a little different to your normal cut-out copper. Finding himself manipulated by his brother Fintan, an ambitious news reporter, his mercurial superior officer, 'Shep', and susceptible to the comely charms of a certain damsel in distress, Lynch more than has his work cut out...

As a police procedural and the depiction of a keen young officer's need to climb the career ladder, it worked superbly well. The central murder investigation was brilliantly structured, with a few nifty red herrings, and a surprising denouement, and the attention to forensic detail and the natural progression of a police investigation felt very authentic throughout. Likewise, Nally's characterisation of Donal, Shep and Fintan, and the alternate loyalty and aggravation that colours their relationship was well played out. This was bolstered further by the real stand-out aspect of Nally's writing- his use of humour. Few books make the Raven guffaw out loud, but this one did. There are some truly wicked, killer one-liners in this book, that brought a real splash of lightness, to what in other hands could have been a laboured and quite dark police procedural. The depiction of wet-behind-the-ears Donal, his weird psychiatric nurse housemate Aidan (more of him in the next one please), Donal's brother Fintan, and the Dick Dastardly figure of Donal's boss Shep, were all underscored by a series of cutting asides and witticisms that consistently worked, adding a nice line in graveyard humour to the whole affair.

CALLHowever, in the spirit of honesty, and appreciating the author's need to bring something different to a well-trod sub genre, I did find this a little bit a game of two halves. I just didn't quite buy the whole 'I see dead people' thing in relation to Donal's character. I thought it was an unnecessary distraction at points from what was a perfectly well-crafted, intriguing, and well-characterised crime thriller. The central murder storyline, the echo of past events, his navigation of the office politics in his chosen career, and a side plot showing his involvement with a woman in an abusive relationship, weighted the plot perfectly. As interesting as the details were about the clinical possibilities of Donal's 'special gift' to commune with the dead, I found it frustrating that such a well-constructed story, with all the necessary features to ensure a successful series, had to bring this trope into play. I did feel that that the need to return to the more 'spooky' element of the story was to the detriment and balance of the sub plots involving Eve, Donal's ex-girlfriend and the abused Gabby, and felt it left them a little rushed or partially unresolved. It really didn't need it, as the strength of Nally's writing outside of this strange diversion was more than satisfying, and all of his characters resonated brilliantly within the main plot. Overall though, I would be more than happy to read the next in the series, so

even allowing for my grumbles, Nally has come up trumps in my book. Recommended.

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## **Kate says**

Donal Lynch has a past, he can't let go of his ex-girlfriend, despite her being a murderer and try as he might, he can't shake the feeling he's being haunted by someone or something from his past..

As a PC on the beat in London, Donal is called to a crime scene that affects him more than he could imagine. A young woman has been found murdered, it's a gory scene and the panicking witnesses make it all the more desperate and desolate.

Knowing that as one of the first on the scene he will have to provide a witness statement once he's back on duty the next day, Donal heads home to think over what he saw, the witnesses he spoke to and try to block out the scene of the body of murder victim Marion Ryan. At least that was his plan until Marion appears to him in his sleep, determined to tell him something.

Brushing off Marion's appearance as a dream brought on by too much Shiraz, he gets back on duty, but is soon called to disturbance.

Donal is determined to protect this victim, doing anything he can think of to ensure her safety, he advises her to call for the Police if her threatening ex-boyfriend returns to menace her, gives her his number and mentions he lives not far away so could check in on her from time to time to make sure she's ok.

They eventually strike up a friendship, and Donal mentions about his insomnia and the feeling that he's being haunted by Marion, feels she's trying to tell him something, and is convinced to go see psychiatrist (who happens to be her friend).

Donal is promoted to acting DC and is brought in on the investigation into Marion's murder, keen to impress his superiors he sets about working hard, but his efforts are somewhat hampered by his older brother being a crime journalist. Fintan Lynch reporting on certain things throws into question Donal's loyalty and integrity, but he can't do anything about it, not until unless he has proof where the actual leak is.

The appearance of Donal's ex-girlfriend Eve further exacerbates the chaotic situation. Does he want her back in his life? Why has she come back after telling him not to wait for her? Should he just tell her to leave as his career is more important?

Donal needs to focus, he needs to work out what Marion is trying to tell him, he needs to solve her case, and he wants to know what the psychiatrist might be able to tell him about his insomnia/seeing "ghosts" is all about.

This is a gripping first novel, Donal Lynch is fantastic character, a tortured soul that I really liked, his dry sense of humour appealed to me, the "paranormal" element to the story worked for me. I was a little sceptical when I heard about it and wanted to see how it would be portrayed, but I was pleasantly surprised. Nally uses it as a form of "old fashioned gut instinct" and it really does add something to the story - I certainly will admit I wondered what Marion was trying to get across with her antics.

The writing is good, setting this in a time of hostility in Ireland and England, the political ties make this

atmospheric as well as intriguing. The characters making comments about stereotypes prevalent at the time give an authenticity to the book. The characters are believable, incorporating many from the police procedural set - the overzealous detective, lazy constables, guns blazing superiors, and sneaky journalists but, in this book they all have a place and work so well.

Many reviews I've seen have commented that there's too back story or mention of Donal's past and sleep problems, but for me these really explain certain things. They add to the story and make the back story come to life. I think it's vital for that level of detail to make this book work and I applaud James Nally for his attention to detail and excellent writing skills.

This is definitely a series I will be following, I can't wait to see what Donal gets up to next and really look forward to reading more by this author.

I would have no hesitation to recommend this to fans of Fiction, Thrillers, Suspense and Crime genres.

I would like to thank HarperCollins UK, Avon for the copy of this book in return for an honest review.

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## **Paul says**

### **Alone With The Dead – A Different Way of Solving Crime**

Alone with the Dead is the new book from James Nally who has taken a different way of looking at crime thrillers. Rather than the standard police procedural novel he has given us something with an added twist, which is something that will draw you in to an absorbing read.

PC Donal Lynch is an Irish expat, disowned by his father for joining Her Majesty's Constabulary in London, the old enemy of Ireland. At the same time Donal is just about functioning as a human being an insomniac who also happens to be what an American would consider a functioning alcoholic. We Brits and the Irish would call it a normal drinks session.

Donal is attempting to forget his life of three years previous when his girlfriend was arrested and charged with the murder of a local lad, he went to school with. He cannot move on really from that night when Eve Daly stabbed Tony Meehan in his crown jewels.

Donal is first on the scene at the murder of Marion Ryan, discovered by her husband and a work colleague. Later that night he is visited in an apparition by Marian trying to point him in the right direction to the murderer. As the Murder Investigation team take over and sideline Donal he still gets the visitations but can do nothing about them but investigate from afar.

With the investigation going nowhere, a new head of the team takes over and Donal becomes an acting detective constable and can work the case. With the visitations he is able to guide the investigation while trying to keep his secret.

At the same time he has met Gabby a woman who attracts him for the first time since he left Ireland, but then Eve turns up and he is between a rock and a hard place. Once again Donal is not sure what is going on in his life and how everything will fit in with his police work and an attempted love life. This alone will throw some light on Donal's background and on his future as well as an added dimension to the story.

Alone with the Dead is a great crime thriller and with twists that gives the book an added dimension that really delivers some subtle punches throughout. James Nally also delivers with an Irish lilt some wonderful one liners, a great pace of a thriller which is addictive that seems to sprint to the end but still delivers a knockout blow.

A great book by an interesting writer, I hope this is the first of many.

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### **Wendy says**

With the number of positive reviews this book has attracted I was really looking forward to reading it: who could resist a terminally flawed police officer who stumbles upon his psychic ability, and unleashes it in an attempt to solve a murder enquiry?

At the very least I either need to be intrigued by the plot or a particular character to maintain an interest in any book. On this occasion I found myself ready to walk away at the 20% mark and only continued reading to the end because others had hinted that the conclusion was worthwhile.

The final quarter did liven up a little as the pace gained momentum, plus there were one or two humorous moments. On the whole I felt the storyline was drawn out unnecessarily. Clearly there are avid fans of this author's work out there, so I can only conclude that this one (sadly) just wasn't up my street.

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### **John says**

I was unprepared for just how good this book turned out to be. Donal Lynch leaves Ireland to live and work in London, after his girlfriend was charged with the murder of an old schoolfriend of his. He joins the Met sold his soul to Dan (Shep) Shepherd a 'socially-functioning psychopath' detective superintendant to become one of Shep's 'bitches.'

Donal was blessed or cursed with a gift, and is visited by murder victims who point him in the direction of clues to the identity of their killers.

The narrative has a great voice, that comes through strongly with good Irish brogue and humour, which made it almost impossible to put this book down.

I'm very happy that there are two more Donal Lynch books for me to read in this series.

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### **Anne says**

Anyone who reads crime fiction will be familiar with the damaged, moody cop who fronts many of the investigations. He, or she, is usually a hard drinker with failed relationships galore; a bit long in the tooth; a bit of a rebel; somewhat disillusioned with life on the force. You know the type.

PC Donal Lynch certainly has a whole suitcase full of issues that he carts about with him during this murder investigation, but apart from that, he's very different to the norm. He's not even a Detective, he's just a lowly beat bobby, and new to the job as well.

Donal doesn't sleep well, he hears voices and sees faces. He is tortured by half-remembered snatches of conversations, and just-out-of-sight images of crimes that have been committed. Can he 'see dead people'? Are the ghosts of murder victims haunting him and trying to help him to find their killers?

It all sounds a bit odd, and to be honest, *Alone With The Dead* can be a little strange at times, but it's also incredibly compelling and Donal is a fabulously drawn character. He's young and a little wet behind the ears, and sometimes he makes decisions and does things that will make the reader gasp with horror. There were times when I was sure that Donal would be booted out of the force and on the first boat back to his home in Ireland on the very next page. Somehow though, Donal manages to pull it off, and despite the apparent fuck ups, he does get to the bottom of the murder that happens on his patch.

Donal is a great character and I'm sure that James Nally is going to continue to develop this young copper over this series. He's already begun to deal with his issues; his insomnia; the ex-girlfriend charged with murder; the fractured relationship with his parents. These have all been dealt with, and dealt with very well. Donal will still have to contend with his journalist brother Fintan though, and their relationship is really well drawn in this first of the series, I look forward to seeing how Donal continues to deal with his brother's mission to always get the best scoop for his newspaper.

*Alone With The Dead* is intriguing and very different, I enjoyed it very much and look forward to meeting up with Donal again in the near future.

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### **Suzan Lloyd says**

A young woman has been found stabbed to death on the landing to her flat. PC Donal Lynch and his partner are first on the scene. From here the investigation unfolds with Donal as an uniformed officer and then later as part of the action through his promotion to acting DC.

He is an insomniac, he drinks too much, has lost touch with his parents, has a difficult relationship with his hungry fame reporter brother and his girlfriend has been convicted of murder. He also has a "special gift" in that he is visited by those murdered giving him clues to whodunit. You might think these are well worn characteristics for the central officer in a crime series - yet surprisingly, Donal really does work as a convincing and likeable character.

The supernatural part reminded me a little of a TV drama of some years ago called "Afterlife". It's not severe enough for this to be spine chilling and the explanations of Donal being a subject for a psychology student dissertation and superstitions such as leaving a window open for the soul to escape are a little bit odd.

This has some surprises in it, the witnesses testimonies in the investigation gives some good suspense and the writing seems to flow effortlessly. I lost track of time and kept reading on and on. There is a lot of dry humour that is extremely funny reminding me at times of a stand up comedian who can make the obvious every day laugh out loud funny.

Donal has moved from Ireland to London in the 1990s and the descriptions of the time adds to the energy of this novel.

In summary, this is 9/10 really good read and it will be interesting to see what happens next.

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### **Bookread2day says**

Sorry I found *Alone With The Dead* very hard to get into. I generally find most crime books that I read unputdownable.

I am glad that many readers who have done reviews for this book have loved it.

I hope that many readers will continue to enjoy *Alone With The Dead* by James Nally more than I did. We have to respect other readers points of view. We each all have minds of our own and where one reader can not get into a novel, there are always plenty of readers that will totally just love it.

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## **Sandy says**

3.5 stars

Welcome to the wild & very weird world of PC Donal Lynch.

It's 1991 & Donal is pounding the beat in London as a lowly copper. He fled Ireland 3 years ago after his girlfriend Eve Daly was charged with murder. That was the penultimate nail in the coffin as far as his relationship with his father was concerned. When he became a "british" cop, he ceased to exist & hasn't spoken to his parents in 2 years. He gets the odd bit of news through his older brother Fintan, a cocky journalist for a tabloid rag.

His personal life is a shambles. No one has replaced Eve & he spends most nights trying to drink himself to sleep as a cure for his chronic insomnia. But professionally, he dreams of being a proper detective. When he & his partner stumble across the body of a murdered young woman, he's determined to be part of the investigation.

And so it all begins. It's hard to say more about the plot as there's a major element of the story not mentioned in the blurb & far be it from me to tip the beans. Just know this is not your typical police procedural. It's a mash-up of several genres, including comedy. We spend a lot of time in Donal's head & turns out he's a pretty funny guy. His sense of humour is definitely on the dark side, nurtured by years of insecurity, hard times & good old Catholic guilt.

He ends up involved in the murder investigation & comes into contact with a wide variety of characters. The 2 most central are his self serving brother & DS Dan Shepard. "Shep" is an old school detective, determined to show up the new uni educated/computer obsessed cops taking over the force. He's not exactly burdened by ethics & soon Donal is helplessly ensnared in his world of back room informants & secret deals.

Donal spends his spare time trying to crack the cause of his insomnia & night terrors. All he wants is a diagnosis & begins working with a young doctoral candidate. But he gets more than he bargained for when startling results reveal a secret from his childhood that makes him look at his parents with fresh eyes.

The book starts with a bang & Donal's humorous asides help balance the graphic violence. The middle section drags a bit & could definitely be tightened up without losing any of the story. Like their investigation, it stalls as Donal's suddenly complex personal life tales centre stage. But when the author again focuses on cops & crimes, the pace picks up & pages fly by as some surprising twists catch you off guard. By the end, his life has changed on several fronts & the Donal who walks through the final pages is light years from the naive young man we met at the beginning.

I especially enjoyed watching the evolution of this character & his wry take on the world around him. Now that he's armed with new skills, I look forward to seeing what he gets up to in the next instalment.

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### **Sarah says**

This was a funny mix of a book for me. PC Donal Lynch has a mixed up background, he has an estranged relationship with his parents, his ex-girlfriend is in prison and he has moved from his native Ireland to England and become a policeman. He is an insomniac with the ability to "see" things that have happened.

He is seconded to a team investigating the murder of a woman and his abilities lead him down certain tracks that maybe wouldn't be the first ones investigated.

I felt that this story was rather too drawn out and spent a lot of time not going anywhere. I did quite like the main character but felt everyone else seemed to lack any sort of depth. Not sure whether I'd seek out more in the series or not.

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