



The Circus Train Conspiracy

Edward Marston

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1860. Following a string of successful performances, the Moscardi Circus is travelling by train to Newcastle for their next show. Amongst the usual railway hubbub the animals have been loaded, the clowns, now incognito, are aboard and Mauro Moscardi himself is comfortable in a first-class compartment with a cigar. Yet a collision on the track with a couple of sleepers causes pandemonium: passengers are thrown about, animals escape into the night and the future of the circus looks uncertain.

When the body of a woman is discovered in woodland next to the derailment, Inspector Colbeck is despatched to lend assistance, believing the two incidents might be connected. It is up to Colbeck to put the pieces together to discover the identity of the nameless woman and unmask who is targeting Moscardi's Magnificent Circus.

The Circus Train Conspiracy Details

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From Reader Review The Circus Train Conspiracy for online ebook

Zoe Radley says

drum roll..... and Edward Marston has done it again... another cracking mystery(ies) set in the north of the country around Newcastle and Durham. loved it. can't wait to read the next instalment.

Martin Hollands says

Another of the Railway Detective series.

Less Railway but more crime. Excellent tale, well written and continues to develop the main and subsidiary characters in a very attractive manner.

Blasr says

Some good, perhaps too good, plotting, but I found the characters too stereotyped and sentimental.

Sally Archer says

this author never disappoints cant wait for the next one

Chad says

A superb read! One of the best in this series and quite timely also. This has some people from previous books in the series which I always enjoy and also has three separate events going on.

Chris says

Boxcar Children for grown ups. Too neat, dialogue is 1950s sitcom feel good. Characters unrealistic, ending disappointing

Gerry says

Inspector Robert Colbeck and his partner Sergeant Victor Leeming embark once more on solving crimes connected to the railways. This time it is the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway (NCR) on which the dirty deed is committed. But it is not just the derailing of a train carrying Mauro Moscardi's circus that needs looking

into for, nearby, a body of a dead woman is discovered and Inspector Colbeck seems to think that the two may be connected.

The reason that Colbeck and Leeming are involved is because the owners of the NCR were at a loss to explain what had happened and, along with the local constabulary who were equally baffled, had requested the assistance of officers from Scotland Yard. Colbeck's boss Superintendent Tallis was, as usual in these type of cases, reluctant to allow the duo to go north but in the end he has little option but he insists that they keep him fully posted as to their progress. Their relationship with him is nothing if not fraught, as always.

And that progress is slow to begin with as there are plenty of people who could have wanted to inflict trouble on Moscardi's travelling circus and, as for the dead woman, it was initially difficult to identify her but then a break gave them information as to who she was. But there was no clue as to why she, from the south, was up in the north. This complicated matters and Colbeck and Leeming split the investigation so each could follow one strand at a time.

Then an additional problem presented itself when, back at home, Colbeck's wife, Madeleine, having recently given birth to their first child, a daughter, discovers that her closest friend is being stalked. She confides in Colbeck and in between times he tries to offer some help to his wife and her friend Lydia Quayle. In splitting his time in different directions he encounters some resentment from the circus owner who feels that he is not spending enough time on dealing with what he considers to be the primary problem.

After the derailment, the circus company camps for a while and then moves on by road but whoever is intent on causing them trouble strikes again and the horses, who are the star turn in the circus show, are released to run wild. Moscardi, and his brother Gianni, are at loggerheads as they disagree on the action that Colbeck is taking but the Inspector meets with them and reassures them that he is working ceaselessly on their crime as well as on the murder of the lady. But then, when the circus arrives at Newcastle the unknown troublemaker strikes again but fortunately disaster is averted when the circus staff manage to subdue a rampant lion that had been released to enter the circus ring unattended and they return it safely, and without harm to the spectators who thought it was all part of the show, to its cage.

The two detectives travel around the country interviewing various suspects in both crimes and, in true Railway Detective style, they eventually unravel the perpetrators of both and, by also spending time in London with Madeleine and Lydia, they also manage to unmask who is causing the latter the grief that she suffered. It is a case of three solved in one go - and all three turn out quite differently.

'The Circus Train Conspiracy' is a worthy successor to all the other Railway Detective novels and once again it not only captures the Victorian times in relation to the development of the railways but Edward Marston provides credible characters and blends the strands of the story together with sumptuous skill.

Andrew says

Another very enjoyable read in the Railway Detective Series. There was certainly plenty going on in this book, with most of the events taking place in Northumberland, England. I certainly recommend this series (have now read them all) for anyone who likes light enjoyable historical mystery series - although there is more emphasis on the mystery as opposed to the history. Good for early railway enthusiasts!

S says

another great read in the railway detective series. Thoroughly enjoyed

Charlotte Holmans says

This was. Brilliant!

Alan says

Rating between 2.5 and 3

Normally I enjoy this series of books but I could not get involved with this one. Not sure why as the writing was as sure as always, and the reintroduction of Mulryne now acting as security for a circus was interesting. The brief descriptions of the employees and owners of the circus were interesting but did feel like a bit caricature at times, or at least that is how it felt for me.

The two main stories of dead woman found in wood and train derailment had no links between them and why Colbeck should have been summoned to investigate is a bit of a narrative stretch.

The third story of the stalker of the young lady was okay but it felt like a way to introduce extra characters and drama, in a way that soap operas normally do. Not bad but not really a railway detective mystery.

Overall an okay entry into this series but after 14 stories the reasons for Colbeck to investigate a crime are starting to get very tangential to the original premise.

Kimberly Ann says

Not liking the major players in a book has a profound effect on me... I take away stars, in this case Minus 2 Stars for the too many unlikable characters and Minus 2 Star for the story itself, which was mostly all Red Herrings. One or two Red Herrings really enhance a murder mystery, but in this case the guilty parties (there were 3 mysteries) were not introduced until the summation of the book, making for all the alleged clues in the book misleading & false.

A circus train derails, but no one is hurt, the only loss being an Arabian horse. Immediately after the derailment, Jocko, the Capuchin (monkey) runs off into a copse of trees. When Jocko's human (a former policeman who has worked w/ Colbeck) finally catches up with Jocko he find the monkey waving the hand of a corpse, which turns out to be that of a widow who was very popular w/ the married men of her town.

At the behest of the local MP & police, Inspector Colbeck & Detective Leeming are sent off to determine who derailed the circus train and why; and to shed light on who was the corpse and how she came to be buried out in the countryside.

As the circus continues its way to the next town, it is plagued by ever increasing acts of sabotage and

tempers fly as both Colbeck & Leeming are obliged to split their time between both crimes.

Meanwhile back in London, Colbeck's wife, Madeline, is providing shelter for a long-time friend who is being stalked.

There are no end of suspects (Red Herrings) and really no clues as to whom the criminals are. I really believe that Marston just pulled the bad guys out of nowhere in order to complete the story.

Overall I was very disappointed with the story, thankfully neither Leeming nor Colbeck's father-in-law were given to as many fits of whining as in the past, that would have earned this book a Minus Star.

Peastatgeria says

I have loved these novels ever since the first one. I love the main characters very much. It was a great story and I did not figure out who did the killing which was good for me.

Damien G says

A good light read. The book has great charm, and the inspector is once again called to solve a mystery. He finds himself immersed in the world of a Victorian circus but also has to link a railway accident with a murder. The Victorian railway is well researched and offers a detailed insight into the social changes that came about with the building of new railways.

GBL says

Another enjoyable adventure in The Railway Detective series with Inspector Colbeck investigating an attack on a circus in the north of England and the discovery of a woman's body in woods nearby.

The stories are undemanding but they provide real entertainment as the various suspects are questioned and considered. In this novel the central character of the circus owner is an excitable Italian with definite opinions on how Colbeck should be investigating the attacks on the circus.

As usual, the railway is at the heart of the novel with Colbeck and his assistant Leeming speeding across the country to investigate the crimes.

These novels are always an easy read and it is interesting to see the onward development of the main characters as their lives progress.
