



Blind To The Bones

Stephen Booth

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Family troubles of all shapes and surprises keep the cops hopping and the tension high in English novelist Stephen Booth's fourth Ben Cooper/Diane Fry mystery, *Blind to the Bones*.

The most affecting of this novel's three plot lines concerns the disappearance of university student Emma Renshaw, who was last seen more than two years ago while on her way home to Derbyshire. Unable to accept that their daughter isn't merely late on the train, that she's more than likely dead, Howard and Sarah Renshaw have gone to extraordinary lengths to find her, consulting psychics and "bombarding the police with theories and suggestions, pleas and demands"--all for naught. But then, suddenly, Emma's blood-stained mobile phone is found, and the Renshaws' faith seems finally to be rewarded. Or is this just another opportunity for disappointment? Meanwhile, Detective Constable Cooper--posted temporarily (he hopes) to a rural crime squad--is investigating burglaries around the depressed old village of Withens, when the battered corpse of one of Emma's ex-housemates turns up on the nearby moors, his face blackened with theatrical make-up and stolen goods left behind in his car. Inquiries lead Cooper to a clannish local family with a history of trouble-making, and put him in the sights of a shadowy group called the Border Rats.

Booth's ability over the course of a story to transform some of his least suspicious players into the most devious (or vice-versa) and his appreciative portrayal of England's scenic Peak District both make for engrossing fiction. *Blind to the Bones*'s subtlest but most intriguing element, though, may be its third plot thread, which finds Detective Sergeant Fry's long-lost, heroin-addicted sister turning up in Edendale, where she tries to enlist Cooper's help in convincing the hard-edged Diane to stop looking for her, once and for all. This track answers several questions about DS Fry's past while raising more--and promising new levels of character development in future installments of this series. --J. Kingston Pierce

Blind To The Bones Details

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Diana Ellis says

A mixed response.

Stephen Booth researches historical and geographical facts and he likes to entwine his plots within the data. At times, it is very successful, but in this book the story ends up as repetitive and confusing in parts. As usual, the characters are superbly drawn.

LJ says

BLIND TO THE BONES – Okay

Stephen Booth – 4th in series

It's almost May Day, and on the desolate moors of Dark Peak the villagers of Withens are dying. One has been battered to death and left for the crows to find; another chose the wrong time to call on a neighbor. And one has been dead for two years - though not everyone will believe it.

I know others love his books and I've bought and read all four, but this falls into the category of authors I just "don't get." I find the books very slow reading and the characters rather flat and uninteresting. Unfortunately, he's just not my cup of tea.

Okidoki says

Ja, vad gör man inte för Ben Cooper? Jo, tar sig igenom dessa 511 sidor. Bitvis läsvärd men okoncentrerad deckare. Håll Dig till ämnet Stephen Booth. Var inte motivet väldigt långsökt?

Lorraine says

2 1/2 stars. This instalment in the series had significant pacing issues. Also, I'm starting to feel that our detective duo really just needs to sit down and speak to each other as adults rather than college kids. The mysteries were convoluted, and the main players were unsympathetic and uninteresting. The setting, as usual, was well evoked, but there was too much mood setting by far. Editors should have trimmed 50 pages off this one.

Miriam Smith says

I really enjoyed the plot in this book and have given 4 stars for the story. The characters are believable and the stories that come together are interesting and intriguing. It's a great detective novel the way they should

be written, The scenery descriptions are wonderful and there is a lot of attention to detail here. I will be reading more by Stephen and would recommend this book to anyone.

Steve says

The fourth Cooper and Fry book and one I chose because I found the previous three to be solid. This one, not so much. I enjoy Ben Cooper and the rural English setting, but this one at 608 pages felt bloated and too long to carry out the series' normal tepid pace. It probably would have worked out fine if edited down a couple of hundred pages. The story hinges on a death and a missing person, with most fingers pointing to an insular family in a remote village with an interesting history. There are some characters that prove fascinating and some history of the area that I haven't looked to verify but liked. The side story of Fry and her missing sister comes out well here. I will read book five, but with some concern that it is nearly 600 pages.

Monika says

Nu när jag läser böckerna i den här serien med något kortare uppehåll mellan dem så hade jag hoppats på att det skulle ge en extra kick. Det är ju betydligt roligare att läsa om man minns vad som hände i förra boken. Men *Blindspel* gör mig faktiskt lite besviken. Läs mer på min blogg

Janet says

A mystery involving the Yorkshire moors, morris dancing, a missing college girl and one police officer's search for a long lost sister. Booth is unparalleled at creating a truly gothic atmosphere. He also does something I really like in a mystery--he doesn't spell it all out for you. Sometimes, what people aren't saying is as important as what they do.

Joe says

This is the fourth book in the Ben Cooper/Diane Fry mystery series, "focused" on the murder of a local man and the two year old disappearance of a 19 year old girl in the small hamlet of Withens. The two cases separate our two protagonists - initially. In a word this book was a slog, about half way through it I just gritted my teeth and gutted it out to the finish - much like running the last half of a marathon - uphill.

As in this author's other books there is an interesting plot/mystery with some very crafty twists and turns - and all the idiosyncrasies, secrets and alliances of a small rural town are captured here. Unfortunately this is all buried under random observations and ruminations on things such as grocery shopping and supermarkets, birds and rats, maps and geography, backyards and landscaping (or the lack thereof), tunnel building, the introduction and numerous re-introductions of the same characters and a multitude of other extraneous and random topics.

There are some authors who can switch from story-line to observations to "inside the characters' heads" musings - P.D. James & Minette Walters come to mind - without missing a beat. Unfortunately, that's not

true for this book. It's not that the diversions are poorly written - some are even poignant - it's the sheer number of them. At first they're aggravating, then inane and finally just tiresome, continually testing the reader's stamina.

I have read all the previous books in this series and unfortunately the magic of the first, "Black Dog", has yet to be recaptured which probably means this will be my last Cooper/Fry mystery.

Susan says

Despite the length, this is my favorite of the series thus far. Slow start, but became gripping and I couldn't wait to finish.

Dez Nemec says

This was goes on the DNF pile. It's not that it's terrible, I just could not get into it. And I've already read 280 pages. That's enough!

Tom says

I really wanted to love this book and discover a new British police procedural. I had not read any previous Cooper/Fry novels, but had heard good things about this one. So I tried. And tried. It was a slog for me, and it never really took off. Points for a cool idea of a plot, and there's definitely some good dialogue. But for me, it seemed to be stuck in "granny gear."

Ana Goulart says

A fraca classificação que atribuí ao livro não se deve tanto à história ou às personagens (de que gostei) mas ao modo como a história é contada, ao desenrolar da narrativa. É extremamente morosa, cheia de pequenas histórias que até podem ajudar o leitor a captar o ambiente pretendido, mas que fazem perder de vista a história principal. O livro está centrado na investigação de uma morte, de um desaparecimento e de roubo de antiguidades, que acabam por se cruzar entre si. Foi o primeiro livro que li deste autor, espero que os outros sejam mais do meu agrado.

Kathryn says

The saga continues in this well written series. Awaiting the next book through our Inter Library system.

Thejelman says

More high-quality stuff from a writer who I don't think gets the acclaim he deserves. Set, as ever, in Derbyshire (though this time on its very edge on the border up in Longdendale), it is a taut thriller which goes along at just the right pace – moving the plot along while still having time to develop characters effectively. A really good read.
