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A dead woman is slumped against the door of a grubby trailer. She's on Sean Denton's patch, but who is she, how did she get there, and why doesn't CID want to investigate? As Doncaster's youngest PCSO, Denton takes the case into his own hands, but he's way out of his depth.

People are reported missing and Denton must work backwards, before anyone else falls prey to South Yorkshire's murky underworld of migrants and the sex trade.

To Catch A Rabbit Details

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From Reader Review To Catch A Rabbit for online ebook

Alison Hardtmann says

This is another debut in a planned series of police procedurals. Helen Cadbury's novel follows community services officer Sean Denton. He's not a real cop, but he wears a uniform and does things like untangle swings and provide a presence on the streets and housing estates of Doncaster, England. Then two of the boys on the estate take him out to a field and show him the body they found, which leads to his involvement in a series of murders, human trafficking and police corruption.

This isn't a bad book, nor is it a good one. As far as first-in-a-series goes, it's about average. Which is to say that Cadbury might end up with a solid series in time, or maybe not. The promise is there, but this book was hampered by the tendency to leave all of the bad guys and the secondary characters as cardboard cut-outs. This could change as her writing skills improve, in which case, this may turn into a series well worth following. I'm going to wait and see. If the series reaches four or five books, I'll give the newest a try.

Raven says

First of all, big kudos to Helen Cadbury, for introducing us in to the world of the Police Community Support Officer, a role oft neglected in the consciousness of not only the British public, but also in the world of crime writing. I immediately liked Sean Denton, with his charming mix of at times wide-eyed innocence, underscored by his strong sense of morality and his determination to see justice served for the victim. This combination of traits that Cadbury instils in his character is absolutely central to the manipulation of the reader's empathies throughout, and also gives Cadbury scope to show how far Denton progresses professionally in the course of this thorny and sensitive investigation. I also liked the comparison we see in Denton's character between his professionalism and intuitiveness when donning the uniform, and his hesitant and quite frankly clumsy efforts in matters of the heart. By so effectively balancing these two sides of her central protagonist, you feel as a reader a truthfulness and authenticity to the character, which enhances your reading pleasure. Similarly with the character of Karen Friedman, we encounter a woman who is doggedly searching for answers regarding her brother's disappearance, and Cadbury takes time to push the boundaries of Karen's character, drawing her into a criminal world, and testing her resolve as a professional, working at a migrant's advice centre, and as a wife and mother. Cadbury really puts Karen through the wringer, but never to the point of incredulity, and I found her a particularly likeable character. Her husband, though, has less to recommend him...snake in the grass.

Drawing on the sensitive subject of immigration in the UK, Cadbury keeps a balance and fairness in her portrayal of this subject throughout, without the mealy-mouthed hand-wringing liberalism, that tends to afflict modern British fiction. Cadbury presents the desperation and exploitation of the immigrant community with an almost detached air of realism, that makes their plight all the more affecting, and allows her readers to be gently drawn into the salient plot-lines that focus on this, while keeping solidly within the bounds of objectivity. This thought-provoking, and extremely well delineated plot carries the book along to a gripping conclusion, with many moments of tension along its way.

Hence, To Catch A Rabbit neatly straddles the bounds of crime thriller and police procedural punctuated by the feel of contemporary social fiction. Am already eyeing up the second instalment, Bones In The Nest, in my to-be-read pile. Highly recommended.

Suze Lavender says

Young Police Community Support Officer Sean Denton finds a dead prostitute. Even though cases like this aren't his area of expertise yet and he needs to let someone else take over, he can't forget the girl. He's unofficially still trying to find out more about the case. Karen's brother Phil is missing, but his wife doesn't want to go to the police. Karen thinks something isn't right, because her brother wouldn't just disappear without contacting her. She's trying to find him, but her attempts aren't successful at all. For a long time her personal life was just something to get through, but now she finally starts to feel a little bit alive again. Even though Karen and Sean have very different lives, their paths will cross...

Sean is in over his head. The case he's trying to follow is more than fishy and he wants to figure it out. Soon he's getting into trouble and he's taking quite a lot of risks. Karen's marriage isn't as happy as it used to be and she meets someone she really likes. She keeps looking for her brother without the support of his wife. She's uncooperative and distant and Karen has no idea why. Matters become more and more complicated for both Sean and Karen and though they will eventually learn the truth, it has a price...

To Catch a Rabbit is a great book with an original story. I liked that Sean isn't an experienced police officer. Slowly the truth comes to light and I loved the way Helen Cadbury reveals it. I was gripped from the start and couldn't stop reading. There's a thrilling cliffhanger at the end which made me like the story even more. Both Sean and Karen are likable main characters and I wanted them to succeed, to find what they were looking for. Because I liked them so much I just had to find out more as soon as I could. I read this book in one sitting. It's a fantastic crime novel and I highly recommend it.

Lynda Kelly says

It's rare I get as far as I did in this book and pack it in but I was getting a little bored as it was quite confusing and kept sort of leaving loose ends and then mistakes started coming thick 'n' fast and I gave in at 58%.

Right at the beginning it mentioned that a PCSO officer took a guess at spelling 2 kids' names-Declan and Brandon. Wasn't really a lot of scope to go wrong so I thought it an odd sentence.

Then I happened across the odd missing words and commas and apostrophes. You was used in place of your and pannelled when panelled was meant. The errors came more often the more I read quite strangely and annoyingly. Then a line "When he back came in" which I'd have expected any proofreader to have spotted, lead was used instead of led, buildings buildings in one sentence, trial used in place of trail and my final straw was too used in place of to. So way too many daft errors all too close together.

I did love the cover. That's what first drew it to my eye in the first place. It really needs a good edit, though.

Donna says

really enjoyed this crime crime novel from Helen Cadbury who introduced us to CSO Sean Denton who is so likeable and no doubt going to become a favourite with the readers. CSO definitely steps up to the mark when he discovers the body of an unidentified young woman in a catering trailer. While others say it's a case of a heroin overdose Denton isn't convinced. He begins to make links with other cases and goes beyond his work requirements to try and fit the missing pieces in the puzzle. Foreign woman are being used as prostitutes and when he hears from Human Trafficking who are trying to find who is forcing these women into prostitution and where are they being kept. A fast paced book with a few twists to keep you guessing. I

look forward to reading the 2nd book in the series.

Tom Waters says

Great Book

A lovely story well told a book that will hold your interests I liked the thought that a simple dislodged policeman can come to the fore and solve the case

Barbara Beswick says

Liked this. Liked it a lot

Liked this. Liked it a lot. Always a good sign, is how quickly my head becomes leased out to the characters. I like to see who I'm reading as well as reading about them. Sure enough, this book delivers. From the 'hoodies' who skulked around the estates, 'trackie' bottoms slung precariously low on their skinny under-developed hips where, pound to a penny, the look is rounded off with bandage coloured towelling socks and knock-off trainers, to the likes of poor pathetic Kosovan Arieta - she with the pony tail scraped back so tightly from her face, it even gave me a headache! What's not to like? It moved along nicely at perfect pace and had me reading in several differing accents - another definite plus when imagining the characters. Almost virtually boo'd and curled a snarled lip at the odious 'Burger' so rapt was I! And how wonderful to have a lead man, one Sean Denton, who wasn't a whiskey addled chain smoking unshaven womaniser leaving in his wake numerous ex's and children, but rather a quiet unassuming bloke who loved his Mum and even managed to bring out the good in a Staffordshire Bull Terrier! Seemingly, his only down side was that he was "totally fucking dyslexic"! I'm sure in future there'll be no shortage of female admirers willing to take notes down for him however? Oh yes Ms Cadbury, - I'm a new fan!

Christine says

'To Catch A Rabbit' is the debut crime novel from Helen Cadbury. It is a delight, because of Sean Denton.

The story is set firmly in Yorkshire, mostly in Doncaster and York. A young Community Support Officer, Sean Denton, finds himself inadvertently investigating a murder. He seems to be the only one interested in what happened. The only one who cares. At the same time, a woman is searching for answers about her brother. Her brother has gone missing. The two strands eventually draw together.

We get a dark and engaging plot, with a very contemporary feel to it. The dark world of prostitution and human exploitation is explored. This is something I heartily approve of.

I found myself very drawn to Sean Denton. He is a character with so much potential. He is observant and bright. And he cares about the victims. He really should be promoted from his CSO role to something more suiting his intelligence, like running a murder squad. A CSO for any non Brits reading this, is a support officer working with the police in the community. They are not meant to do any investigating, just be a

visible police presence in the community. Sean breaks all of the rules!

It is great to see a crime novel set in Yorkshire, with lovely Yorkshire colloquialisms. I think it is the first time, I have seen the word 'snicket' in print, apart from in the local Bradford newspaper the Telegraph and Argus.

I hope we get many more Sean Denton adventures, in the future. Helen Cadbury is an author to watch out for. Recommended, especially if you live in the north!

Anne says

I live in Gainsborough, a small town in Lincolnshire that nestles on the boundary with Nottinghamshire and is also a stone's throw from South Yorkshire. I've lived in this area for all of my life and really enjoy reading fiction that is set in this area. I came across To Catch a Rabbit by Helen Cadbury in Waterstone's Doncaster branch, I'd not heard of the book, or the author before, but was intrigued by a crime novel set in a town that is so familiar to me. I snapped it up and really intended to read it whilst I was on holiday. However, my husband snaffled it before I could get to it, he really enjoyed it, I finally managed to get hold of it and read it this week.

Sean Denton is a young Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), based on the streets of Doncaster, his home town. Sean is very keen, he puts far more into his job than he has to, and often finds himself in situations that are very difficult to get out of.

To Catch a Rabbit has three threads; there's Sean's story that starts when he is the first on the scene at what appears to be an accidental heroin overdose. The body of a young girl is discovered in a burger van by two young lads. Also weaved throughout Sean's case is the story of Karen, an advice worker for refugee and migrants who lives and works in York. Karen's story then links with the events of Bonfire Night 2007 which are relayed bit by bit throughout the book. Eventually it becomes clear that these three apparently separate stories are very firmly linked together.

The plot is very detailed and at times it can be difficult to understand how it all fits together, but Helen Cadbury's writing is clever, she manages to introduce some unexpected twists and turns that knit everything together very well.

There are some cracking characters in this story. The star is, of course, Sean Denton. He's young, inexperienced and at times he appears a little naive and gullible. However, he's loyal and determined and doesn't let go of a clue or a lead until he's got to the bottom of things. He's a lovable character. The same cannot be said for DCI Barry 'Burger' King. He's fat and rude and clearly thinks that he is a little above the law, excellently portrayed by the author and certainly the master of his own destiny.

Great plot, fabulous characters and very well drawn locations. The Doncaster and North Lincolnshire settings are very authentic, and recognisable. I enjoyed To Catch A Rabbit very much and look forward to reading the next in the series; Bones In The Nest.

Victoria Goldman says

To Catch A Rabbit is an enjoyable crime debut with a complex plot and lots of well-developed characters.

Sean Denton is an interesting protagonist as he's a community support officer rather than a police officer. He's good at watching people and certainly knows his patch, so notices when something isn't right. And he's not afraid to investigate, even though he isn't qualified to do so.

The story follows two seemingly unrelated subplots - the discovery of a dead prostitute and a man's disappearance. As the story progresses, it's clear that the crimes are linked, but Sean has to put the clues together to discover how. There's a great build up to the final showdown, as all the characters and subplots come together.

To Catch A Rabbit has some great twists and turns. I had no idea which direction this was going in until the end of the book. The author covers some very gritty topics, such as asylum seekers, human trafficking and the sex trade.

I'm looking forward to the next book in the series, which I will be reading very shortly.

I received an Advance Reader Copy from the author in exchange for an honest review.

BookwormDH says

Brilliant debut. For some reason, Helen Cadbury has passed me by. I'm so glad I've found her books now. An excellently written piece of crime writing. With hints of humour tied in, it flows brilliantly throughout. I don't give spoilers, you just have to pick it up and give it a go. I'm sure you won't be disappointed. Highly recommend.

Kagsy Wagsy says

Amazeballs, I want to give it 6 stars

Wow, I've just finished reading this book and am blown away with how much I enjoyed it. I'd say I've got a book hangover, but was lucky enough to win a copy of the next in the Sean Denton Series, "Bones in the Nest" so as soon as I've finished this review I can have the literary hair-of-the-dog.

The characters are credible, believable and loveable. The story builds and builds giving great description and weaving each character beautifully into the plot. There are some nasty pieces of work in this book, but you love them just the same because without them, the good guys would not be able to shine as brightly. Fabulous plot (no spoilers) you'll just have to get this book and read it for yourself. it's unlike any story I've ever read and I loved it.

Well done Helen Cadbury, thank goodness i have the next book to quench my thirst for more.

Bev Taylor says

there is nowhere to run

a young girl is found slumped on the steps of a trailer, dead. the post mortem reveals a drug overdose and as she is foreign and a prostitute the head of the investigations does not want to pursue it further

h/e this is on sean denton's patch, although as a pcso, and he wants to look further but he soon realises he is out of his depth

[people r then reported missing and the brother of a social worker is found dead in a similar caravan after 2 months

denton faces corruption within the police force, an underworld of migrants and the sex trade

a very skillfully told novel of subjects that r all too real today , each chapter told by one of the characters until it is all woven together

u will certainly find yourself rooting for sean!

would love to see a lot more of him - not literally! - but unfortunately the author is no longer with us

bev

Lainy says

Time taken to read - 2 days

Publisher - Allison & Busby

Pages - 350 pages

Blurb from Goodreads

A dead woman is slumped against the door of a grubby trailer. She's on Sean Denton's patch, but who is she, how did she get there, and why doesn't CID want to investigate? As Doncaster's youngest PCSO, Denton takes the case into his own hands, but he's way out of his depth.

People are reported missing and Denton must work backwards, before anyone else falls prey to South Yorkshire's murky underworld of migrants and the sex trade.

My review

Introducing Sean Denton, PCSO (Police Community Support Officer), who finds the body of a young woman on his patch. When no one seems to take much notice Sean finds he can't just walk away or leave well along and does some investigating for himself. Along with that there are people going missing and before long Sean finds himself in deeper than he could have imagined.

So, I had to message the author because PCSO seems to get very involved in the case and in Scotland, our specials or support officers wouldn't get close to or as involved as he seems to. Things are a bit different in the roles where this is set however, for the most part, Denton pushes boundaries and pokes his nose in where it most definitely isn't wanted. He is an eager and honest young man who is pulled toward the truth of what happened to this dead young girl. This sees him putting himself in danger and going over and above the call of duty.

The tale goes between Denton and the investigation and Bonfire night where the story focuses on Phil Holyroyd, a chap who as the story goes on you realize the relevance to this jump in the story. It takes a wee bit of getting used to as you wonder why it is going to this bloke but his part becomes apparently relatively quick into it. Karen Friedman is another main character within the book, introduced to her working and family life before her and Denton's paths cross when Karen has to report a missing person.

The story lines are interwoven, quite smartly executed. There are a few key players and more issues than you can imagine. Marital infidelity, police procedures and investigations, murder, drugs, abuse and human trafficking are just some of the issues covered in this busy wee book. A strong start to the series and a very well done debut novel. Definitely will be reading more by this author, certainly worth keeping an eye out for, 4/5 for me this time.

Rachel Hall says

A first class introduction to what is surely set to become a solid police procedural series which readers will see much more of! Highly recommended for crime fiction fiends and more casual readers alike. A gripping and believable foray into the Northern crime scene.

In a genre which some readers can accuse of being hackneyed and formulaic, this assured debut novel from Helen Cadbury feels like a breath of fresh air! There is so much to praise, not least a fast paced, gripping and superbly plotted story, that it is difficult to know where to start. However, key to the success of this novel is without a doubt the protagonist, PCSO Sean Denton. As Doncaster's youngest Police Community Support Officer, he is nothing like the typical investigative presence that fills many a novel. Young, enthusiastic, dyslexic and unencumbered by the familiar demons which abound, he grew up on the estate he patrols. Best of all, he is a realistic character, an underdog who the reader cannot help backing and an incredibly likeable chap to boot!

Taking as a base what is set to become a increasing theme in crime fiction with the scant resources and budgets being stretched ever more thinly, Helen Cadbury explores the necessary interaction between civilian, ranked staff and the general public. Without a doubt the Police will become more dependent on civilian staff as time progresses and the dynamic between the two sectors and ensuing friction is central to this novel. As a PCSO, Sean is used to the outright derision of some colleagues (nicknames such as 'Plastic Percy') to the gentle ribbing by more supportive staff. Either way, there is a huge social divide. Viewed with similar scepticism by the residents of the local rundown estate, Sean bites his tongue and for the most part lets these slights pass. With a protagonist who isn't weighed down with typical bitterness at the bureaucracy of much of

the current police force, Sean in a wonderful creation.

Portraying two seemingly unrelated incidents, the first of which is the discovery of a prostitutes body in a disused caravan on PCSO Sean Denton's patch, Sean cares about this girl who has fallen by the wayside. It is his first 'body' and he is determined to get justice for the victim. When it appears that Doncaster Central has a certain resistance to investigating and with a dodgy DI leading the investigation in the shape of Barry 'Burger' King, Sean can't help but do his own digging. Meanwhile Karen Friedman is searching for her brother who she cannot believe would abandon his five year old daughter. His wife, Stacey lacks the motivation to track him down, simply believing the rumour that he has found a better offer with another lover, and hence the impetus passes to Karen. Struggling with a stagnating home life and a demanding role working amongst the refugee and migrant community in York, Karen is ruled by her emotions and things start to develop on a little more personal note for her as she pushes to know more about Phil's disappearance.

The two key subplots which are played out in this novel eventually merge together as the story progresses. The author uses a clever technique with one subplot playing out in 'real time', with the days from November to Christmas passing visibly, and the other simply a slow unfurling of Bonfire Night to draw out the tension. It was always made very clear that whilst time is moving forward in one element, the other was beautifully drawn out to ratchet up the angst level as we get closer towards disclosure. This worked well and I would not expect it to confuse readers. The subplots remain very distinct throughout and it is only in the final few chapters that they are flawlessly brought together.

I was longing for a little more back story of Sean and craved an insight into his motives and key drivers for becoming a PCSO. Besides residing with his Nan, I felt unable to gauge his measure on a more personal level. Hopefully as Cadbury continues the series this will be rectified. I was itching to understand Sean and for a glimpse of his life outside of work in a little more clarity.

To Catch A Rabbit is a phenomenal debut and Helen Cadbury is a very worthy entrant to the stable of excellent Northern crime fiction talent. She is clearly perceptive enough to see that she cannot afford to let the grass grow under her feet and Sean Denton cannot remain a PCSO as the series continues. Development of the lead character is essential as after playing a major part in the resolution of two cases, fellow staff and seniors would undoubtedly be a little more wary of Sean and his understated approach. He gains much of his insight from his bystander approach in this first book, remaining on the periphery of the inner circle of investigators and this works to his advantage. Clearly he would be viewed with a little more caution by fellow staff and co-workers in the next outing and it is necessary that we see Sean progress to the position of PC in the second book of the series, Bones in The Nest.

All in all, Helen Cadbury has produced a captivating read with some very well developed characters. The dialogue also seems so natural and with the Northern colloquialisms adding a grim and gritty bleakness to this novel is it an outstanding debut with a contemporary plot which readers will care about. I toyed over rating To Catch A Rabbit as a 4 or a 5 star read, however I plumped for 4 star with the full expectation that the best of Sean Denton and Helen Cadbury is yet to come! I would also hope that several of the other characters whom we were introduced to in this novel play a part in future books.

It is with thanks to the Facebook festival of BritCrime that I was first alerted to the talents of Helen Cadbury.
