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When a teenage boy shoots a young woman dead in the middle of a busy Glasgow street and then commits suicide, Detective Harry McCoy is sure of one thing. It wasn't a random act of violence.

With his new partner in tow, McCoy uses his underworld network to lead the investigation but soon runs up against a secret society led by Glasgow's wealthiest family, the Dunlops.

McCoy's boss doesn't want him to investigate. The Dunlops seem untouchable. But McCoy has other ideas . . .

In a helter-skelter tale - winding from moneyed elite to hipster music groupies to the brutal gangs of the urban wasteland - *Bloody January* brings to life the dark underbelly of 1970s Glasgow and establishes Alan Parks as a new and exciting voice in Scottish noir.

Bloody January Details

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Author : Alan Parks

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From Reader Review Bloody January for online ebook

Dave says

From cover to cover, Alan Parks has filled his debut novel, "Bloody January," with frighteningly realistic dark crime fiction. This novel is just everything you want out of crime fiction. Yes, it's got a lot of classic noir plotlines but it feels fresh and new.

It's set in early 1970's Glasgow, which doesn't exactly sound like a tourist mecca here. It's not the Scotland of castles, lochs, and fabulous golf courses. It's a city filled not just with bars, but with slums, drug addicts, vicious crime lords, fixers, whorehouses, party girls, blackmailers, corruption, and vice. The hero of this book is a police detective who almost blew his career on a vendetta with a rich family, who grew up in an orphanage, who stayed pals with a crime lord he knew when they were little, who has a thing for a prostitute who he likes to hang out with, whose caught in a few tight spots between the hammer and the anvil.

What makes it work is the narration sounds so authentic to the area. The writing is so crisp the pages seem to turn themselves.

Why hasn't this guy published anything else yet?

Mandy White says

The language in this book really put me off. I know that it fits with Glasgow in the 70s but it was a bit excessive. I enjoyed the story and the writing but the swearing was too much.

Thank you to Netgalley and Cannongate Books for the chance to read and review this book

Paromjit says

Absolutely Brilliant! This bleak and atmospheric debut Scottish Noir places Alan Parks firmly in the top league of crime writers. It is set in a 1970s Glasgow of hard men, crime gangsters and corrupt cops, with all the plethora of the cruelty and brutality of the time. It is a dark tale where there could never be enough snow to cover the filth, vice, the rising body count, the misogyny and the beginnings of the toll that heroin starts to take on the people of Glasgow. Detective Harry McCoy finds himself in Barlinnie to be informed of the planned killing of a waitress, Lorna, who works at an upmarket restaurant. He manages to locate the girl, only to see her shot in front of him by a teenage boy who proceeds to turn the gun on himself. The informant is found with his tongue cut off and his throat slit in the showers of Barlinnie and nobody is talking.

Under an intense media focus, McCoy and his rookie partner, Wattie, haunt the streets of Glasgow and its criminal underbelly to try and get a handle on what happened and why. McCoy is a deeply flawed individual, with a penchant for drugs, prostitutes, drink and a close relationship with Stevie Cooper, a brutal crime boss with his fingers in many pies from drugs and gambling to prostitution. We slowly learn that Stevie protected Harry by taking brutal beatings in a abusive Catholic boys home. Their close shared past makes Harry Stevie's man, although he tries to temper the out of control Stevie when he can. Harry has put himself out to

speak for the homeless 'the jakies' and earned their eternal gratitude. The case leads Harry to the powerful, ruthless and untouchable Dunlop family who know no boundaries when it comes to assuaging their deviant sexual proclivities. Harry is repeatedly warned to keep away from them. As Harry endures beating after beating, his heart and personal morality will not allow him to give up on trying to get some form of justice for the rising tide of the dead. Even if he has to go a roundabout, off the wall, way of achieving this by using his wit and cunning.

I sincerely hope that this is going to pan out into a series, I want the return of Harry McCoy. Alan Parks gives us the perfect antihero for the time and the place in Harry. Parks serves up an authentic picture of Glasgow, its people, the no go council estates, the culture, the poverty, the criminal rivalries, and the prejudice and attitudes of the period. Harry is a broken man, with a past he is haunted by, and a family he has lost. It is little wonder that he seeks the solace of drugs and drink to keep the demons away. Those looking for a moral protagonist should avoid this novel. However, if you are a crime noir aficionado, then this is a must read. A superb book that deserves to do well and which I cannot recommend highly enough. Many thanks to Canongate for an ARC.

Stephen says

really enjoyed this crime thriller based in 1973 Glasgow there you can feel the underworld of the city with sex trade and drugs and few deaths which look unconnected its a dark and gritty Scottish crime thriller which would appeal to a lot of people

Tiger says

First book in what I anticipate (hope) will be a new series. This very gritty, very realistic crime novel set in 1973 Glasgow was excellent. Detective Harry McCoy is summoned to Barlinnie prison by an inmate who has information about an upcoming hit. When that hit shortly occurs right in front of him, the trail leads to some pretty powerful people in Glasgow and McCoy is warned off the case multiple times.

Detective Harry McCoy at first glance seemed a little cliché-ish as he has a troubled past, feuds with his superiors, uses drugs and alcohol liberally and isn't overly particular about how he gets the job done, but he became so much more complex as the story unfolded. Rich in characters with a morally complex plot and a no frills delivery, I loved this book. If you like Stuart McBride or Adrian McKinty, you will also enjoy it. Thanks to Net Galley and the publisher for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Christine says

Bloody January. Bloody fantastic.

Noir fans look no further for a superb read. Bloody January is the debut from Scottish author Alan Parks. It oozes atmosphere. It is dark. It is powerful.

We go back in time to the 1970s. To Glasgow, Scotland. To the dark underbelly of the city, with its poverty and sidelines in creative criminality. We follow Detective Harry McCoy and his young sidekick, Wattie.

They navigate the harsh landscape; with its corruption, dirty dealings and petty criminals. The story gets off to a glorious bang, when Harry finds out about a possible murder from an informant behind bars. A woman is shot by a teenage boy in the street. Harry witnesses this. The informant dies a terribly death, in retaliation. Harry finds connections to one powerful family, the Dunlops. He is warned off them. Nothing will stop Harry McCoy getting to the truth.

Harry McCoy is an anti-hero. He is your 1970s man, who follows his own path. He sleeps with prostitutes. He associates with criminals. This can be forgiven though. He is a character, that you can easily believe in. His heart is in the right place, even though his morals are a bit on the blurred side. He is a product of his background. A boy from the care system, who is trying to make good. He is wonderful.

Dark crime fans, you need to read this book. It is top notch crime! Highly recommended.

Sandy says

Detective Harry McCoy should have listened to his snitch. Now he's sitting beside the body of a teenager who just killed himself after shooting a waitress in the middle of a busy Glasgow street. Harry doesn't now it yet but things are about to get much worse. So much so that years from now they'll still refer to it as Bloody January.

This is a dark police procedural that takes us back to 1973. Glasgow is a gritty, violent place with territorial crime bosses, bent cops & an established class system. There are 2 sets of rules...one for those with influence & another for those deemed disposable.

Harry falls somewhere in the middle. He's an old school cop, struggling to adapt to changes within the department & society. While he works hard to put away the guilty, he has a soft spot for those who are down on their luck. He has his own set of rules when it comes to keeping the peace that includes a close relationship with hard man Stevie Cooper. Most of his colleagues figure Harry is in it for the perks but we come to learn it's much more complex than that. Their history gradually unfolds as the main plot plays out & it gives us heartbreaking insight into Harry's character.

The bodies continue to pile up over the course of a few weeks & everything seems to point toward the wealthiest family in Glasgow. Lord Dunlop is an arrogant, privileged man well known to Harry. His position comes with influence that reaches the highest levels of government & law enforcement. So it's no surprise when Harry is duly warned: stay away from his Lordship & find another suspect.

Ah, but what fun would that be? Besides, Harry has been saddled with a shiny new partner named Wattie & someone has to teach him the ropes. And as Harry drags him down dark allies full of prostitutes, criminals & the homeless, Wattie's eyes are well & truly opened.

I'm astonished this is a debut novel. It's well paced with a narrative that perfectly evokes the setting. Scenes are full of the clothing, hairstyles & music of the day & that mixed with dialogue full of local vernacular leaves you in no doubt of the time or place. But just a heads up, there is plenty of violence & sexual abuse. It informs the plot lines & fits the story but some may find certain scenes upsetting.

This is a well written, atmospheric addition to the genre of tartan noir & if Harry should pop up in a book #2, I'll be more than happy to go along for the ride.

Roy says

3.5*

Dark, brutal, cruel Scottish crime noir. Harry is a protagonist where you develop that love/hate relationship. We get exposed to Glasgow 70s and its seedy underbelly, murder, deceit, prostitution, drugs it has it all, and all wrapped amongst a city like Glasgow. Harry has his secrets too and so does the town. A little predictable for me but the writing is elegant for those that love that noir/literary type crime. For some reason didn't grab me, but I still managed to read over a couple of days. It's not one of those happy crime novels where police catch the criminals, it's dark and depressingly brutal. Kinda reminded me of Rankin Macbride but with darker characters and minimal humour.

Eric says

Bloody January by Alan Parks follows Glasgow detective Harry McCoy as he tries to solve crimes in January 1973.

Parks is summoned to a nearby prison to meet with an aging gangster he does not know and is given an order to protect a young woman. The violent gangster is spare with details and sends Parks on his way with more questions than answers.

McCoy then carries on in his investigation.

Bloody January is a down and dirty police procedural where no one seems to be sparkly clean. McCoy is thought to be too friendly with a violent gangster his own age who if not is easily sociopathic, is bordering on psychopathic.

Parks' writing style is with local jargon and unfolds where he does not tell the reader everything and leaves things to be pondered through the novel as the story is told.

If a reader likes novels where the lead "hero" is possibly compromised or walks on a razor's edge, then Bloody January is of that style. Parks has created well-developed characters and relationships where the reader will remain interested in later installments to learn how the characters move forward.

A second Harry McCoy is set to be released in 2019.

Highly recommended for those that enjoy gritty, street-level, gravel in the knees police procedurals.

Helga says

“Outside, the snow was gently falling, covering Glasgow in a fresh white layer, hiding the dirt beneath...”

This intense, dark and impressive debut crime thriller by talented Alan Parks is set in Scotland in the 1970's and centers around corruption, violence, prostitution and drugs. The characters are well defined and one can imagine the bleak and cold atmosphere and feel the destitution, pain and the helplessness emanating from the unforgiving streets.

Nigel says

In brief - Very 70s, very Glaswegian. Bleak, dark and unpleasant at times. I found it a very good read.

From the start this book is highly atmospheric. It says that those who were not around for the events of Bloody January say it "can't have been that bad - but they were wrong". Effectively the whole story takes place in the early part of January 1973 although reference is made to earlier events too. Harry McCoy, a cop who may be one of the "good guys" gets a tip off from an inmate in Barlinnie prison of a forthcoming murder. He's not sure why he was selected for the information nor exactly what he can do about it as it is not very specific.

The story follows the investigation of this and other crimes. Throughout this book I got a very clear feel of the 70s and Glasgow. It is often hard and dirty and I guess some folk may find parts of this offensive but it seemed appropriate to me. The language is very colloquial generally. It starts dark and frankly gets darker. Much though I like the character of McCoy it would be hard to point to anyone who is on the side of the angels by the end of this!

Harry McCoy is the standout character here and I liked him a lot. He is flawed - drink, drugs and at least one undesirable friend underpin that. However he is also an attractive person. The other characters are mostly more sketched than filled out however that didn't detract from the book for me. Even sketched they were very rooted in the time and place as Harry was.

Overall I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is dark and dirty but even that is well done. The morality of almost all the characters can be questioned - the "good" guys just as much as they criminals. That added some depth and layers to this crime story and it was better for that. For me it clearly captured place and time in the narrative. There were odd times when I felt the story was somewhat disjointed but never to a degree that bothered me. I really would like to read Alan Parks's next book.

Note - I received an advance digital copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for a fair review

<http://viewson.org.uk/police/bloody-j...>

Marianne says

4.5★s

Bloody January is the first book in the Harry McCoy series by British author, Alan Parks. It's January 1973, and thirty-year-old Harry McCoy is a detective with the Glasgow Police Force. Later, they'll call it Bloody January, but on the first, it's a visit to the jail for a (rather vague) tip-off to a killing. Next morning, when

Harry and his (very green) sidekick, Wattie follow up, they find themselves in the middle of a murder-suicide. The murder is indeed as predicted. The suicide, eventually identified, turns out to have links with the prestigious and powerful Dunlop family.

Harry's aggressive approach to the Dunlops sees him upbraided by his boss, and when he later turns up with stronger evidence, the whole investigation is shut down by the powers that be. By this time, there are more victims, including his prison tipster. The female victims have suffered rough sex and violence; a number of the males bear a common tattoo.

Parks gives the reader a protagonist very much of the era who would, forty-five years later, be seen as politically incorrect on so many levels: Harry is a smoking, drinking, whoring sexist, not averse to the use of pot and speed, nor to a bit of graft. His childhood friend is a local crime boss and favours are regularly exchanged. Harry gets beaten up quite a bit: he is quick to voice opinions that might be better not shared and, over the course of the story, becomes only marginally more likeable, seeming oblivious to the double standards he holds.

Parks manages to include hallucinogenic drugs, group sex, compromising photographs, acid trips and black magic rituals, child abuse and pornography in the roller-coaster ride to a heart-thumping climax. While the prolific use of profanities and expletives by many of the characters may offend some readers, this is Scottish Noir at its best: dark, gritty and violent, yet also strangely addictive. There's more of Harry McCoy to come in February's Son.

Linda Strong says

This Scottish Noir takes the reader back to the 1970's in Glasgow.

Detective Harry McCoy and his new partner don't just happen to be on the street when a woman is gunned down. McCoy was tipped off by a prisoner that this particular woman was going to be eliminated. He said no more, not a motive, not who the killer would be. The shooter then turned the gun on himself and committed suicide.

Most police think this was just a random act of violence, but McCoy doesn't believe it for a moment. Called upon to lead the investigation, McCoy runs up against a secret society. When he learns who's behind this society, his boss goes bananas. The Dunlops are the wealthiest family in Glasgow ...and McCoy is ordered under no circumstances to question any of them.

But McCoy has other plans and those plans just might cost him his job ...or his life.

The story premise is a good one if you like gritty, down to earth cops. These cops may or may not be corrupt. The language comes from the gutter. Most of McCoy's acquaintances live in the steam underbelly and back alleys of Glasgow. The Dunlops are a self-indulgent, unrestrained family who thinks they can buy the law.

Many thanks to the author / World Noir / Edelweiss for the advanced digital copy of this compelling crime fiction. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

Maureen says

****4.5 STARS****

I seem to be saying this a lot just recently, but for fear of repeating myself, I have to say what an excellent debut novel this is! Alan Parks brings 70's Glasgow brilliantly to life, with this raw and gritty Scottish crime novel.

It's January 1973, it's snowing, it's freezing cold, but it's not going to keep this particular killer from increasing the body count.

A young man shoots a young woman dead in a busy Glasgow street, he makes no attempt to conceal what he's done, on the contrary, with a smile on his face he turns the gun on himself and commits suicide. Detective Harry McCoy is convinced it wasn't a random act of violence, and he guessed correctly, so, with his new partner Wattie, he begins an investigation that will take him from the brothels in the less salubrious areas of this city to a secret society run by one of the wealthiest families in Glasgow.

McCoy is your archetypal flawed Detective, he has many issues, and he's far from squeaky clean. He has friends in the underworld, people with power and control, these are real old school hard men, gangsters, they're sadistic, and nobody, not even McCoy, will stop them from achieving their aims.

Oh my! This was such a great read. The author has captured 70's Glasgow perfectly with a great sense of time and place. The dark, grim winter weather only adds to the bleak oppressive atmosphere. This was a very graphic novel - there are some particularly vicious characters leading to some brutal scenes, but this is how it was during that particular period, with its proliferation of gangsters, cops taking back handers, and hard drugs becoming more readily available, and our protagonist is no stranger to any of these! Excellent!

Thank you to Netgalley and Canongate Books for my ARC. I have given an honest review in exchange.

Tracy Shephard says

Detective Harry McCoy knows something, told to him by an informant currently residing in Barlinnie prison.

Now a young has killed himself after shooting dead a waitress.

Glasgow 1973 is not a good place, it is a violent place with crime bosses, bent cops and people know their place.

This debut novel is seriously brilliant and for me it was like watching one of those old cop TV shows come to life between the pages.

A fast paced and dramatic read, the setting really takes you there. The music, the styles and dialect is what makes this a winner.

I really loved it and I highly recommend
