



## **The Body in the Dales**

*J.R. Ellis*

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# The Body in the Dales

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An unpopular victim. An impossible crime. A murderer on the loose.

A body is discovered deep in a cave beneath the Yorkshire Dales. Leading the investigation into the mysterious death are experienced DCI Jim Oldroyd and his partner DS Carter, a newcomer from London.

The deceased is Dave Atkins, well known throughout the village but not well liked. While there is no shortage of suspects, the details of the crime leave Oldroyd and Carter stumped. How did Atkins's body end up in such a remote section of the cave? When someone with vital information turns up dead, it becomes clear that whoever is behind the murders will stop at nothing to conceal their tracks.

Oldroyd and his team try to uncover the truth, but every answer unearths a new set of questions. And as secrets and lies are exposed within the close-knit community, the mystery becomes deeper, darker and more complex than the caves below.

**Revised edition:** Previously published as *The Body in Jingling Pot*, this edition of *The Body in the Dales* includes editorial revisions.

## The Body in the Dales Details

Date : Published August 9th 2018 by Thomas & Mercer

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Author : J.R. Ellis

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## From Reader Review The Body in the Dales for online ebook

### The Cats Mother says

This murder mystery set in Yorkshire is the beginning of a new series featuring DI Oldroyd and his team. Originally titled “The Body in Jingling Pot”, it has recently been re-published as “The Body in the Dales”, a shame in my opinion as the former name has more character, stands out, and more accurately sums up what it’s about. At this point there are two more books to look forward to.

A group of cavers discover a body deep underground in the Jingling Pot cave system. Clearly a murder, as the victim, an experienced caver himself, is not dressed for potholing and has been hit over the head, the police are perplexed as to why someone would carry a body so far, only to leave it in a populated caving route. DI Oldroyd, an old school detective, and his new DS, who recently moved from London and is finding his new environment a shock to the system, soon discover that the victim was highly unpopular in the village, being prone to seducing wives, swindling money and being an all-round selfish bastard. It seems like everyone has a motive, and many had the opportunity, so who did actually kill Dave Atkins, and why?

This reminded me a lot of the early Peter Robinson books, and given this is the name of a minor character, I suspect this is not a coincidence. While a bit slow and with rather more information about the incomprehensible (to me) hobby of caving (which I had forgotten is known as potholing in England) than strictly necessary, this had good characters, a large cast of suspects and it was not obvious whodunnit. There is minimal swearing, violence and sex and the solution to the mystery relies on good old fashioned police work rather than forensics - Oldroyd fancies himself as a modern day Sherlock, or Poirot, and has their slightly annoying habit of keeping his deductions to himself until the big reveal - supposedly to help teach his juniors to think for themselves.

I enjoyed this and will be reading the next ones soon, as I got them all for free from NetGalley in exchange for my honest reviews, so my thanks to the publisher, Amazon UK.

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### Jeannine says

A very solid British police procedural set in the Yorkshire Dales. First of a series, the story follows the investigation of a body found deep in one of the local cave systems, or "pothole." Lots of local and caving lore, plenty of suspects and an intriguing trio of detectives. The detective unit includes quirky Detective Chief Inspector Oldroyd, local DS Stephanie Johnson, and a fresh-from-the-Met (London) DS Andrew Carter. Using a newcomer is a useful way to introduce the reader to the characters and the region, and is handled fluidly here. The initial murder is of a man so universally despised that the detectives think they will never be able to narrow the list of suspects down. There is no new mystery ground covered here, just a very solid, interesting mystery with fairly engaging characters. All the detectives like to keep their theories close to their breasts, which can get a bit annoying as a blatant attempt for suspense, but all three are intelligent and engaging. An absorbing, though not riveting, read.

My copy was an ARC from NetGalley.

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## **Cathleen says**

The Body in the Dales is the first in a series of police procedurals set in the Yorkshire Dales. A body is found in one of the series of caves often explored by cavers, and although it's clearly a murder, the even more pressing question is how the body ended up there. DCI Oldroyd, DS Carter and DS Johnson discover that there's no lack of people who hated Dave Atkins, a shifty cheat with money and with men's wives. The premise of the mystery is eye-catching, and the characters of Oldroyd, Carter, and Johnson—as well as several minor characters, like Alison, Oldroyd's sister, are developed and sympathetic. The plot tended to plod a bit in spots, too much backstory in parts, too much explanation in others. Readers can surmise characters' feelings and motivations without being explicitly told what they are. The likability of the characters and the evocative descriptions of Yorkshire are the strengths of this first in a series. An entertaining read.

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## **Joyce says**

5 stars

A group of cave divers find a body about two hours into a cave. The man is wearing no climbing gear and was obviously not planning a climb. They know who the man is.

DCI Jim Oldroyd and his new DS Andy Carter are called to the scene. They also work with DS Stephanie Johnson who is not at work that day. They learn the man was Dave Atkins and no one liked him much at all. They set about interviewing the locals immediately. The suspects are thick on the ground as the interviews show that most people believe Atkins was a braggart, a loudmouth and a womanizer.

Caver John Baxter phones Oldroyd up and wants to meet with him. He believes he knows who the killer is and how he got Atkins into the cave. When Oldroyd shows up at his home, he finds Baxter has been murdered.

The interviews continue in light of the two murders that have now occurred. Oldroyd goes to an antique bookshop and picks up a very useful volume and pertinent to the investigation. The police seem to be getting nowhere when Steph finally recalls what it is that she couldn't remember. Oldroyd has an answer and tells Steph, Andy, Craven and the others about his plan. In an exciting conclusion, including a car chase, the story is concluded.

Ellis describes the beautiful countryside around Harrogate called the Dales. He speaks of an interesting and exciting cave climb with Oldroyd, Carter and Steph. I've read some about caving, but Ellis' descriptions were complete and thrilling. Allison is Oldroyd's sister and an Anglican priest, brilliant, fearless and Oldroyd's Mycroft who plays a small role in this book. Hopefully, we shall see more of her in the future. Oldroyd's team gets along remarkably well and they seem to love Oldroyd's slightly eccentric personality. It is great fun to watch them and read about their exploits.

I want to thank NetGalley and Amazon Publishing UK/Thomas & Mercer for forwarding to me a copy of this great book to read, enjoy and review.

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## **Kate Ellis says**

First book in Yorkshire Mystery Series titled "The Body in Jingling Pot" on Goodreads, re-titled "The Body in the Dales"

An easy read, good police procedural mystery.

Good plot with a "who done it" feel.

Looking forward to reading The Quartet Murders by J.R.Ellis who is not a relative and not known by me.

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## **Dennis says**

This was a well-written murder mystery located in modern day Yorkshire, England. I enjoyed the flow and quality of the writing and the story, but was really happy to read this book for other reasons as well: it focuses on the elements of the mystery, the police detectives process, and the characters without relying on gore, shocking language, and sex. In other words, the author's story-telling skills were excellent and allowed the reader to like the principal detectives enough to want to follow the team on other cases. The pace is not a thrilling page-turner. However, it lets the case develop in a way that keeps the reader's interest. I would enjoy others in this series.

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## **Crittermom says**

Perfect for fans of Midsomer Murders, The Body in the Dales has everything that readers crave - an unusual murder, a wide cast of colorful suspects, a chocolate box village where everyone knows everyone, and a likable group of detectives led by an easygoing but brilliant DCI.

Part of the attraction is the impossible murder. Dave Atkins, a womanizer and all around despicable character is discovered dead in a cave system underground. The journey to where he was found takes at least two hours - and it would be impossible to drag the body along. Forensics shows the body was underground for at least a week, but a team of cavers had gone past this point a few days prior, and the body wasn't there. So The Body in the Dales isn't only a whodunnit but a how done it. Naturally someone with caving experience is involved, but the close knit community is filled with cavers, and each and everyone has a motive.

DCI Oldroyd is an eccentric, but his kindly lackadaisical approach hides a brilliant mind. He loves the Yorkshire Dales and its wild beauty, and is a dab hand at dealing with locals. DS Carter is newly assigned from London. He quickly grows to appreciate the peaceful rural setting, and acknowledges that his experience in the city may not have fully prepared him. There is a lot of gentle humor in their interactions, which is appealing. DCI Oldroyd and his team are human, likable. They have a tough job, but they use their brains as opposed to relentless bullying.

The Body in the Dales is a challenging, complex mystery that is certain to please fans of British police procedurals. The characters, topic (caving) and setting keep the reader glued to the page, while there is (as in Midsomer Murders) the certainty that justice will be done and there will be minimal violence other than the

murder(s). I highly recommend this charming novel.

5 / 5

I received a copy of The Body in the Dales from the publisher and Netgalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

— Crittermom

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### **Alyson Read says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book from start to finish. It is good strong whodunit police detective story written in a more gentle style than some with minimal gore, sex and swearing, making it suitable for a wide range of readers without being cosy in any sense. Set in Yorkshire (God's own country) the descriptions of the landscape and the hobby of pot-holing are both interesting and informative. The main characters are well formed and you feel like you're getting to know them already. There are plenty of suspects and possible motives for the murders in the story and the reader is kept guessing until near the end. Books two and three are already out and I think the stories would make a good television series, in fact throughout the book I could picture the actor Alun Armstrong playing DCI Oldroyd! Highly recommended for anyone who likes a good murder mystery.

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### **Stacy says**

If you enjoy the TV show Broadchurch I think you'll also enjoy this book. It has several POVs and casts doubt on just about everyone you encounter. If I had to criticise anything it would be that I wasn't expecting so many suspects, so they got a little jumbled in my head.

Bits of SPOILERS BELOW

I also felt that the spot of romance was a bit forced? Carter has only just arrived, what's with the romantic interest with one of the first women you lay your eyes on? They don't feel like they have real chemistry yet, I'm really not sure why either of them like each other except they both find the other good looking. Perhaps their relationship will grow in the next book, which I'm about to start!

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### **Kathleen Gray says**

Well done procedural elevated above the pack by the setting- the Yorkshire Dales. No one much liked Dave Atkins but no one expected to find his body in a cave. Then there's another murder! I very much enjoyed the details of the caving, something new for this genre. Oldroyd is the classic older lead and Andy Carter the loyal younger man. Steph, the dogged DS, is also a great character. Thanks to Netgalley for the ARC. This is a nicely plotted and written mystery.

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## **Kelly-Jo Sweeney says**

I was in two minds as to whether to give this four or five stars. On the one hand, I really enjoyed it and thought it was a great start to a series. On the other hand, I don't like to give out a lot of five stars and I think that while this was good, there is still room for even better in later books. So, I'm going with a four plus.

This was a good detective story, with lots of hints, a puzzling case to solve and some interesting characters for both the investigating team and the suspects. So far, the main detectives haven't fallen into the cliches that a lot of police detectives seem to fit. The author clearly loves Yorkshire and the countryside almost appears as a character in its own right. It certainly helps to drive the plot and the mystery along.

I didn't solve this one, although I had ideas that weren't a million miles away I don't think that I'd really come close to narrowing it down properly. It was a good read and I already have the second in the series lined up and ready to go.

I received a complimentary copy of this book through NetGalley. Opinions expressed in this review are completely my own.

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## **Mandy says**

The Body in the Dales is the first book in the series Yorkshire Murder Mysteries. As the novel begins a group of cavers deep inside a Yorkshire caving route stumble across the dead body of Dave Atkins. DCI Oldroyd, new arrival DS Andy Carter and DS Stephanie Johnson. This lovely murder mystery unfolds slowly and carefully allowing the reader to join in with the thought processes of the murder team. There are wondrous descriptions of the dales and Yorkshire at its finest and having visited Harrogate it was lovely to read a quick mention of Betty's tea house.

The Body in the Dales is the first in a trilogy of books and if this is anything to go by I will most definitely be reading the others. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who likes a very well written, believable murder mystery. As with all good books of this genre there are plenty of twists and turns that keep you on your toes and ensure that you really engage with the novel. The particular beauty of this book is the wonderful style it is written in. I was drawn in right from the start of the novel and was gently led along through the narrative in such a way that when another murder takes place the shock is palpable. Can't wait to read The Quartet Murders.

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## **Annie says**

Originally published on my blog: Nonstop Reader.

*The Body in the Dales* is the first book in a procedural series set in Yorkshire. It's an ensemble cast featuring a methodical and cerebral lead character DCI Jim Oldroyd and co. Originally published as *The Body in Jingling Pot* (a better title in my opinion) and released in 2017, this re-release is published by Amazon UK's crime imprint Thomas & Mercer and came out 9th August, 2018. This version is available in ebook, paperback and audiobook formats and clocks in at 320 pages.

The pacing is very sedate and there is a large cast of secondary characters who aren't always clearly delineated. I did enjoy this book once I was a bit more invested in the characters, though that honestly took a while. The dialogue was competent and readable from the beginning, and though there wasn't much of a hook at the start, the book really did reward the effort to keep reading.

A little side info: When I was a kid, my best friend's family were keen spelunking enthusiasts. I have always been a very bookish kid (big surprise there), but well, best friend and all, I tried my very best to get into caving along with her family. It never took with me at least, the breathtaking glittering caves full of secret beauty never outweighed the squishy muddy stodgy cold drippy reality of squeezing along in the near-darkness and hearing my own breathing interspersed with the occasional grunt and \*dammit\* of something whacking against a cave wall or low hanging hard surface.

This book is about that. Lots and lots of that. It is pretty well written and entirely readable. It has a very 'English crime' feel and in a lot of ways reminds me of Deborah Crombie's Duncan and Gemma series.

Obvious trigger warning, extreme claustrophobes need not apply.

Four stars, I'll be reading the next books in the series. Possibly worth noting for Kindle Unlimited subscribers, the entire series is available to borrow on KU.

Disclosure: I received an ARC at no cost from the author/publisher for review purposes.

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### **John says**

Read as "The Body In The Dales"

As a police procedural, I found this book not bad at all. The police officers are personable and DCI Oldroyd is a very likeable and humane character. There is just enough of the personal lives of the police officers to add a bit of interest but not enough to take over the story which I find happens a lot in some of the modern stories and which I don't like. Lots of suspects and a few red herrings. The plot is quite interesting being set in an area of caving activity but the ending was a bit unsatisfactory, however, to say why would give the game away so I won't.

Thanks to Netgalley and Thomas & Mercer for a digital copy of this book.

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### **Elaine Tomasso says**

I would like to thank Netgalley and Thomas & Mercer for an advance copy of The Body in the Dales, the first novel to feature DCI Oldroyd and DS Carter of the Harrogate police.

When cavers stumble across a dead body in the Jingling Pot caverns DCI Oldroyd and newbie DS Carter are called out to investigate, because with no specialist equipment it is obvious that the man didn't voluntarily enter the cave. The detectives have their work cut out as the victim, Dave Atkins, was the most unpopular man in the village so neither suspects nor motives are thin on the ground.

I enjoyed *The Body in the Dales*, which, while not being a particularly profound read, has a good mystery to it. Told in the third person, mostly from the point of view of Oldroyd and Carter, it has an old fashioned format which keeps the perpetrator well hidden until the denouement and allows the reader to have a go at working it out, unsuccessfully in my case but that's not entirely my fault as much of the pertinent information is also concealed. Still, it's fun having a go and certainly keeps the reader occupied as they run through the possibilities. It had me hooked from the start with several puzzles, like how the body got there, and held my interest throughout with its steady drip feed of reveals and permutations.

The characters are pleasant and get on well, which is always a bonus. DS Andy Carter gets thrown in at the deep end because the investigation starts on his first day in Harrogate where he has transferred from The Met. As a city boy and outsider he is the perfect vehicle for introducing the beauties and dangers of the Dales to the reader. How he develops will make for good reading in future novels. DCI Oldroyd is an old fashioned copper who just wants to get on with his cases and has a nice line in denigrating management speak. Surprisingly (so nice to see the usual clichés turned upside down) for such a down to earth man who loves Yorkshire and its nature he is an Oxford graduate. He plays his cards and thoughts close to his chest, encouraging his subordinates, and thus the reader, to think for themselves. It's a clever device.

*The Body in the Dales* is a good read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

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