



A Dedicated Man

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An admired local historian is found dead and half-buried in a farmer's field in the village of Gratly. A slimy land-developer, an editor, a local thriller writer, and a beautiful folk singer are all figures from the historian's past, and all of them are suspects. Sally, a young would-be actress, knows more than she's telling and wants to solve the case herself, but may find herself in danger. There's trouble brewing beneath Gratly's idyllic surface, and Chief Inspector Alan Banks must get to the bottom of the village's secrets. Second in the critically acclaimed Inspector Banks Mystery Series.

A Dedicated Man Details

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From Reader Review A Dedicated Man for online ebook

Laura says

I liked this less than Gallows View not because of the mystery or the writing, but because I really hate it when fictional detectives (or characters) get all "meta" and talk about what it would be like if this were the movies/tv/a book, but because this isn't... Grrrr.

It's also odd how far away the time seems, even though the books are written in the late 80s: no cells, no computers, not everyone has a phone. That time is still too recent to be historical fiction, but it's certainly not current.

Stuart says

As I often do, I have read Inspector Banks out of sequence, which is only a problem in that I know about some of his personal life problems before they happen. (I am reading this in 2013, the book having been published in 1998) But in an attempt to rationalize my Banks reading, I have gone back to the beginning of the series. This book is the second in the series, and I found it to be significantly different in tone and feel from the later ones. It is certainly not the DCI Banks of the TV series. (He smokes, is married and is described as small). This book hewed much more to the tone of the original book of the series, where Banks had just arrived in Yorkshire and was seen as an outsider, and where he is in love with the country idyll. I liked the map drawn at the front too, a feature that seems to have disappeared from the later books. What was strange to me was that we immediately met one character who had featured in the last Banks book I read, which was about the 12th in the series! That happened to me with the first Donna Leon book too.

As for the story itself, it was good. An ex-professor, a man "dedicated" to his research, whence the title, is found dead on the hills. He was apparently loved by all (with obviously one notable exception!). This makes Banks' job difficult; he decides that the motive must be in the past, and accordingly spends much of his time digging said past up. The book is relatively slow for most of the story, with lots of leads turning out to be dead ends, until a second murder takes place, upon which the book climaxes very quickly. The motive is logical – if you had a better imagination than mine, you might even have spotted it, and so satisfying from that point of view.

Helen says

A little slower moving than I remember others in the series being, but it was nice to finally find it and fill in some background.

Bettie? says

<http://bettie.booklikes.com/blog>

Jonetta says

Banks has a tough case this time, investigating the murder of a man who everyone seemed to like and admire. The suspect list is small but the motives are elusive. Complicating matters is a young girl who fashions herself as an amateur sleuth.

This was an interesting case as it was just dogged police work, assembling lots of clues and combinations. I had suspicions but nothing to really back it up and the ending was a bit of a surprise. However, I had focused correctly on the identity of the killer.

I'm enjoying this series, especially the audiobook format. The narrator effectively distinguishes the characters in a way that seems consistent with their personalities.

Pgchuis says

I had hoped that I might have discovered a long series of police procedurals that I could work my way through, but I don't think I will be doing that. This is set in Yorkshire and features Chief Inspector Alan Banks, who is trying to solve murder case. He spends a lot of time questioning people quite gently in a Midsomer Murders kind of way, while knocking back pints (and more pints) of beer at lunch time and smoking a pipe.

There were things about this novel which I enjoyed: Banks seemed to be a well-adjusted family man with no hidden past tragedy and his relationships with his colleagues were realistically portrayed. However, the standard of the writing was not great (favourite line: "I think I was responding to her sexual power unconsciously, and I was put off by her appearance") and the female characters were a bit off somehow. Penny Cartwright seemed to spend the novel having massive mood swings and behaving completely incoherently. Her back story was odd - I don't think people do make up incest-style gossip at all readily personally.

While I'm glad the villain was who it turned out to be, I don't think we were given enough clues to work things out for ourselves and Banks kind of stumbled across the answer by discovering the baddies red-handed. Finally, the whole Poirot-style "this is how it went down" explanation at the end was very unprofessional, since it is addressed to his wife and two civilians (and he found out most of it from a confession).

Disappointed.

Ivonne Rovira says

Who would kill Harry Steadman, a man without a single enemy by every account? When he inherited £250,000 from his father, Steadman ditches his job as a lecturer in industrial archeology at Leeds University, buys a former bed-and-breakfast in Helmthorpe in Swainsdale, and throws himself into excavating nails and things from the nearby Roman fort ruins and writing books about his work. But no matter how many times

Chief Inspector Alan Banks hears that Steadman was universally beloved, he knows that can't be true: After all, someone hit Steadman from behind and then hid his body. And the realization that Steadman was murdered not by a stranger but someone he knew and trusted has all Helmthorpe on edge.

I liked *A Dedicated Man* even more than the first book in the series, *Gallows View*. Banks emerges as tenacious as the proverbial terrier, and he realizes that Steadman's death has to do not with the present, but something from his past. He relentlessly questions Steadman's frumpy wife, associates, and friends until, at last, he pieces together the murderer and the motive. Recommended.

Wendy says

Good gracious - "murder in Yorkshire" appears to be an entire mystery subgenre. I never knew what I was missing.

The back cover of one of the Reginald Hill novels that I checked out of the library suggested that I would like it if I liked Peter Robinson. I liked the Reginald Hill novel, so I decided to try Peter Robinson.

I did enjoy this book. It's a good solid detective story - I particularly liked the fact that while I didn't guess the identity of the murderer, once it was revealed I was able to think back and notice all the little clues that pointed in that direction. There were some fun characters, too, although I'm not quite sure what to make of Robinson's depiction of Sally Lumb, a 16-year old girl. I'm pretty sure that I wasn't much like Sally when I was 16, but then again, I can't make any claims to having been a typical 16 year-old girl. (Is there such a thing as a typical 16 year-old girl? I'm not sure.)

I'm also not 100% sold on Robinson's Inspector Banks. His being a police officer from London in a small Northern town gives him an interesting outsider status, but it sometimes feels like Robinson is trying a little bit too hard to give him quirks, dwelling on his fondness for opera and folk music and playing with toy trains a little too much. Banks even spends most of this book trying to learn how to smoke a pipe, partly because he's trying to give up cigarettes, but partly because he seems to think that he needs a shtick. Still, I'm willing to see how the character settles out over another book or two.

If I had to pick only one writer of mysteries set in Yorkshire, Hill would be the clear winner based on what I've read so far. However, since there's room on my reading list for more than one, I'll be reading at least a few more of Robinson's books as well.

Charlotte (Buried in Books) says

Another quick read. This time the body of a local man is found buried in a dry stone wall. Banks spent most of the book frustrated - as he knew pretty much everyone had something to hide, but it's tricky when you have a victim that seems to have no enemies.

Harry Steadman was a lecturer - local historian enthusiast/author with lots of friends - so who would want to kill him? A man of leisure after coming into an inheritance he is the most unlikely man to be murdered.

The solution came a bit out of nowhere and final chapter is just Banks relaying to other people what actually

happened and then it just ended.

It did show it's age a bit, as a possible witness used a phone box. Banks asked another person if they had a phone (to which the response was that they'd had one for a couple of years) - but this did come out in the late 80's.

It was fine.

Jeffrey Keeten says

"By the side of the north-south wall, loosely covered with earth and stones, lay the body. Enough of its covering had been removed to make it recognizable as a man. The head lay to one side, and, kneeling beside it, Banks could see that the hair at the back was matted with blood. A jolt of nausea shot through his stomach, but he quickly controlled it as he began to make mental notes about the scene. Standing up, he was struck by the contrast between the beautiful, serene day and the corpse at his feet."

Who killed Harry Steadman?

Chief Inspector Alan Banks moved away from London to get away from murder investigations, but here he is in the small hamlet of Gratly, staring at a murder most foul. As Banks begins to investigate the man more than the murder itself, he starts to realize that the key to this crime must exist around something from Steadman's past.

One problem that Banks is not used to dealing with in London is the clouds of gossip that billow up around every aspect of the case. The cicadaesque chatter among the natives creates layers of misdirection that are difficult to sort through. Steadman was a rich man who abandoned working when he inherited this windfall of money, but was still **a dedicated man** to pursuing his interests in Industrial Archaeology and the Roman occupation of Britain.

Don't you love it when the title of the novel presents itself in the book?

There is a small group of men who seem better suited to London life than living in the country, who gather at a seedy pub to have higher level discussions about common interests. The peeling wallpaper, sticky floors, and butt worn booths are made up for with the excellent pint that comes out of the tap. Some of them have known Steadman for decades, but if they know anything relevant, they are not obliging Banks with any of the pertinent information he needs to catch the murderer. When he presses them about the past, they become evasive.

Banks has a second problem in the person of Sally Lumb, who is an aspiring actress and amateur detective who is being moved by her reading of *Wuthering Heights* to ascribe motives to the crime. **"She was reading the wrong book," Barker said. 'And misreading it, at that. She should have been reading *Madame Bovary*.'"**

Banks makes a note to pick up a copy of *Madame Bovary* to read, and so do I. (There is a newer translation by Lydia Davis I've been wanting to read anyway.)

There is also the mysterious and beautiful Penny Cartwright, who has connections to nearly everyone in the circle of suspects. She went away to become a successful songwriter and performer, but burned out and returned to her hometown. She had a special relationship with Steadman that is difficult for Banks to understand. **"She looked a lonely, wild figure, Sally thought, like Catherine in Wuthering Heights: a woman of the moors, spirit of the place."** Certainly, Penny is a woman who can inspire grand passions in men. But did she do so for Steadman? Or one of the other men in his circle of acquaintances?

There is more than one instance where Banks questions the integrity of the police force as a whole which dovetails with my own steadily increasing dissatisfaction with law enforcement.

"Banks wanted to argue, to defend the police, but he was too tired and he knew there would be no point anyway. Besides, he also knew that the police were just like everyone else; a lot were bastards and few weren't."

"He had many objections to the way the government seemed to look upon the police as a private army of well paid bully-boys to pit against people with genuine grievances and a constitutional right to air them."

This book came out during the latter part of the Margaret Thatcher regime, and the general discord of the working classes clashing with the police over her policies, that benefited the wealthy and screwed over everyone else, might have colored the author's perceptions of the police force in general.

I personally just want the police to focus on the protecting and serving part of their creed.

These early Peter Robinson books are more in the line of Agatha Christie's whodoneits and are cleverly written, but I prefer his later books, when Alan Banks has become more of a brooding, jazz listening, book reading detective. My first Robinson book was *In a Dry Season* (1999), which I followed with *Cold is the Grave* (2000), which both feature the Banks I prefer. As the author ages and becomes more interesting, so does his character. My goal in going back to the early cases is to discover exactly when Banks becomes the Banks I appreciate the most. Meanwhile, I can enjoy these very British mysteries, knowing that my interest will increase with each new case he solves.

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>
I also have a Facebook blogger page at: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>

Bicky says

After a less than satisfying experience with *Gallows View*, the first book in this series, I loved this book. A really baffling mystery where you flounder along with DCI Alan Banks because the victim as the title suggests was a man dedicated to his study of industrial archaeology and Roman ruins with apparently no skeletons in his closet and with no apparent enemies, at least to the extent of a cold blooded murder. This, of course, makes the denouement even more successful as the clues were actually all not that hidden. Don't get me wrong. This is not Agatha Christie as Poirot never openly speculates or wanders off onto paths which turn out to be dead ends.

In fact this is a perfect police procedural as you are completely along with Banks as he follows one lead and theory after another by questioning the available suspects again and again not only as to alibis but to the perplexing question about motive and you are right there when he gains the crucial insight.

Two things which also endeared me to this book were the depiction of the attitude of the Yorkshire residents

who are now coming to partially accept Banks who is a recent import from London and the atmosphere in the police station where his boss Superintendent Gristhorpe is even more of a generous soul than Banks with an office full of books! There are no intra office politics, at least for the duration depicted in this book. I am well aware that the positives that that I find will for others be red flags which will send them running towards apparently more realistic detective fiction where unhappiness and cynicism are a must even if the readers own lives resemble lives like Banks'. It is not that I don't enjoy those books also but for me detective fiction is allowed more than one flavour and here Robinson has managed to carry out the task he set himself very well.

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

3 1/2 stars for this second Detective Alan Banks mystery from Peter Robinson.

The body of a local historian is found buried under stones in a local farmer's field.

This book lacked some of the pace of his first in the series Gallows View, but it made for lovely easy listening.

There is a serious lack of suspects in this murder - everyone seemed to have admired the man - which kept it interesting.

On to # 3 in the series A Necessary End as soon as it is returned.

An interesting series. I enjoy Peter Robinson's writing. It is not dramatic, but not quite a 'cosy' either. I am enjoying getting to know Inspector Banks and his family (although they featured much less in this book than the first) and his colleagues.

Jaksen says

The second in the Inspector Banks series by Peter Robinson. (I've yet to read No. 1, had to go on a wait list in my Cape Cod library system for it - can you imagine? :D)

Inspector Alan Banks is investigating the murder of a 'dedicated man' in this one, an ordinary sort of fellow with an interest in industrial archaeology, who, after inheriting a good sum of money, heads to rural England to do what he loves - digging up Roman ruins. Sadly, the poor guy is found dead and partly buried and Banks has to figure out when, why, and most importantly: who killed him.

This is not a book with a heavy tilt to evidence, clues, forensics, etc. (It was written in 1988, but there was a whole lot going on at that time, forensically speaking.) It is Banks' continual interrogation of the locals - and they can get mighty testy at times - that help him sort this one out. (In other words, it's personalities and Banks' understanding of human behavior which lead to the killer.)

Interesting, very 'talky,' lots of description, though it doesn't take away from the story. What I would call a 'serviceable' addition to a series, which I will continue reading.

Three stars.

Lesley says

What can I say? Crime fiction as it should be, when you reach the denouement and think "That was so obvious, why didn't I get it sooner?" Chief Inspector Alan Banks is a policeman that I would love to meet in real life, not just in fiction. Peter Robinson never fails to please. His descriptions of the Yorkshire countryside and towns make me want to visit. I'm just about to start reading the latest in the series.

Bill Lynas says

The second in Peter Robinson's series featuring DCI Banks starts off promisingly enough, but it lost my attention half way through. Some of the characters appeared a little lacklustre and it was only really the character of Banks that kept my interest. Having seen the TV series (& thoroughly enjoyed it) it is interesting to see how the main character differs in many ways from his screen counterpart. I like the differences between both versions & will continue reading more of the novels, not having been put off by this weak entry.
