



Honor's Kingdom

Owen Parry

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Winner of the 2002 Hammett Award They found the dead fellow in London, balled up in a basket of eels. Chewed upon he was, and most unsightly. He still had the proper shape of a man, if a bit whittled down and perforated. But he was not handsome on the butcher's table, even though the blood was long since out of him.

In a stunning re-creation of 1860s London and Glasgow that reaches from the worst slums in Europe to the lobbies of Parliament, Owen Parry brings the past to ravishing life. In a time when casualty lists grimly mount in America's Civil War, federal officer Major Abel Jones returns to the land he once left in hope of a better life on a mission essential to the Union cause. Yet it is the strange death of a lowly man of the cloth -- and a subsequent series of equally grotesque murders -- that intrude upon Jones's determined efforts to block the delivery of British warships to the Confederacy. And his pursuit of a monstrous killer is leading a patriot with a limp, Victorian morals, and a Welsh lilt into a hellish darkness...where some of England's most renowned personages and powerful political leaders -- including Benjamin Disraeli himself -- appear to have a great deal to hide.

Honor's Kingdom Details

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Author : Owen Parry

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From Reader Review Honor's Kingdom for online ebook

Pat says

I was fascinated by many aspects of this mystery, the first Major Abel one I've read. I loved the twist on the usually hard-boiled and cynical detective being a devout Christian, with unusual sympathy for the poor--and crippling guilt over his past killing soldier's past.

The portraits of Londaon and Glasgow's poverty was eye-opening and well drawn (especially the dialects). And I was unaware of the depth of the involvement of the Brits with the Confederates. I liked the blending of fictitious and historical characters: both Adamses, the Brit politicians, Trollope and even Whistler! The lesser characters of Polly, Fanny, the inspectors and the Colonel were great, too. The murders were sufficiently gory to satisfy my prurient interest, and the complex plot really kept me on my toes.

Donna says

This one in the series takes Abel Jones to England and Scotland in his investigation of persons who were working to aid the Confederacy in the Civil War. Interesting characters and more insights into Abel and his character. I liked the ones set in America better, but this one had a Sherlock Holmes flavor.

Greg Girard says

Wonderfully written! Nourishing reading!
Owen Parry is a delight!!

Jack says

More of a mystery this time around for our Major Abel Jones.
He is sent to England to help our Ambassador Charles Adams 'battle' Confederate agents.
Again characterization was first class. You really got to know each person in the book - great job.
There seemed to be a little more humor in Honor's Kingdom than in the previous Abel Jones' novel. That balance nicely with some gruesome sections of the book.
Moving on to the next novel - Bold Sons of Erin.

Nicole says

One of my friends suggested that I read this book as part of my efforts to figure out what to say in a review of another novel on the same theme, namely, American diplomatic efforts to prevent the British from building ships for the Confederacy during the Civil War. It was certainly helpful in that regard, but I can't say I really enjoyed the book. It's part of a series featuring Abel Jones, a Welshman who served in the British army in India (esp. during the 1857 Mutiny) before immigrating to the United States and serving in the

Union army. I did find Jones an interesting character - his Welsh and Methodist ways lead to some amusing turns of phrase.

In terms of setting the stage - providing a social history of 1860s London and Glasgow - the book is well researched and well constructed. (Although I think the author could have scaled back the quantity of discussions of the state of sanitation.... But maybe he's trying to do his part to dissuade people from becoming Civil War reenactors? That's certainly a noble cause.) His biographical research and his research into contemporary British politics and Anglo-American relations is scant, however, and he gets many things very, very wrong. (He's particularly unkind to Henry Adams, I would say.)

I felt that the social history elements overpowered everything else, including the mystery itself, which should have been at the center of the account. When the mystery did re-insert itself, it reminded me of Sherlock Holmes stories, and not in a good way; too much of Watson failing to convey to the reader what Holmes was actually seeing, and so no chance of figuring things out on one's own. It was especially jarring, since so much of the book is what's going on in Jones's head; you'd think we'd also be privy to the moments when Jones was using his head to solve the case.

I certainly don't feel compelled to read others in the series - although at least one of them has significant elements that take place in Rochester, so I might have to read that one - but this was definitely helpful in terms of thinking through what makes good historical fiction and in helping articulate the pros and cons of the other book I need to review.

Lisa Rathbun says

I'm enjoying these historical mysteries, even if the language is a bit more blue than I prefer. At least Abel Jones, the narrator, apologizes for relating profanity! This book dealt disturbingly with the seamy slums of London, but its duel in the graveyard was excellent and I really liked the Colonel.

Suzanne says

At first I commended the author on how well he mimicked the prejudices and small mindedness of the average 19th Century person. Then I found out who he is in real life and realized that those are his actual opinions today and it's no great stretch. Books are still entertaining, though. He's a talented writer.

But don't BUY them if you're a liberal. Get them from the library. You don't want your money going to this Fox News contributor who has vilified captured servicemen in uniform, called for the boundaries of the Middle East to be redrawn and for the political assassination of Julian Assange.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Pe...

Dorothy says

I picked up this book thinking it was a murder mystery. I read about a chapter and almost stopped reading the book. Decided to give it a little more time and then got hooked.

John Brissette says

I love historical novels. Somehow this one I had a difficult time engaging with and getting started. It had all the right elements. Good plot, interesting characters, etc. The author here writes this in the first person of the main character & doing so creates a novel that seems to be written in the 1860's. This is a tremendous feat but also shay I think prevents it from garnering a better rating from me. The painstaking work needed to recreate the period including the characters prejudices, the sociopolitical views of 1865 & the religious predilections associated with them is partially born by the reader. This makes for slow going and a read that at times feels like an essay on 1860's British society. Once I learned to identify these sections and skim them I could enjoy the more entertaining portions that drive the plot. All in all I don't know if I feel compelled to read the rest of the series.

John says

More from Able Jones. Always worth the read

Evie says

A little wordy, and sometimes takes a diversion somewhere that is seemingly away from the storyline, but since I have a penchant for intellectual Victorian mysteries, I will stay with this one until done. It may have helped if I had actually started with the first book in what seems to be a series for the character of Abel Jones. This book has some good imagery, and draws the reader in to Victorian London. I may go back and read the first in the series.

Rick says

Book 4 in Owen Parry's Abel Jones mystery series finds our intrepid Union Major in England investigating a series of murders related to the Civil War. Excellent, as always! I really love this character and his little idiosyncrasies. I've got two more left in the series and will miss him when I'm finished.

Frank says

Another entertaining book in the Major Abel Jones series, set during the Civil War. I'd read the first two in the series years and years ago, and decided last winter to try the third book, which I enjoyed immensely. Decided I needed another "hit" from this writer, after reading a couple books I didn't care for over the last month or so. This one may be the best of the first four. Major Jones is sent by the Lincoln administration to London to investigate Confederate sympathizers in England. Several very engaging characters, some tender, heartfelt moments with a sweet, uncultured orphan girl, and villains either physically violent or politically canny. Good stuff for a lazy read.

