



Dark Country

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Dark Country is the second book in the loosely-linked series set in Dungirri.

Most people in the small town of Dungirri have considered Morgan 'Gil' Gillespie a murderer for eighteen years, so he expects no welcome on his return. What he doesn't expect is the discovery of a woman's tortured body in the boot of his car, and new accusations of murder.

Wearied by too many deaths and doubting her own skills, local police sergeant Kris Matthews isn't sure whether Gil is a decent man wronged by life, or a brutal criminal she should be locking up. But she does know that he is not guilty of this murder – because she is his alibi . . .

Between organised crime, police corruption, and the hatred of a town, Gil has nowhere to hide. He needs to work out who's behind the murder before his enemies realise that the one thing more punishing than putting him back in prison would be to harm the few people he cares about.

Kris is determined to help him, but will their search for the truth make her the next target?

Dark Country Details

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Author : Bronwyn Parry

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From Reader Review Dark Country for online ebook

Richard Heggie says

Great Ozzie country setting and story. Well written and engaging, complex plot.

Bridgit says

This was my first by Australian author Bronwyn Parry and I really enjoyed it. It was a fascinating look at a suspense/romance in the Australian bush. I haven't really read anything about this area of the world before, so that, combined with the compelling, well-developed plot really drew me in. Not sure I can find any of her other books here in the US, but I'll be on the lookout for them.

Lynn Spencer says

I picked this book up at RWA several years ago, and now that I've read it, I'm dying to read more from this author. I really wish she had an American publisher! One can order from Australia but the prices are exorbitant both for print and digital editions.

This particular book centers on the homecoming of Morgan Gillespie, son of a town troublemaker who left Dungirri a convicted felon himself. Now, years later and cleared of his conviction, Gil has returned to a town that welcomes him with something less than open arms. During his time out in the world, Gil has fallen in with some unsavory characters as he tries to make a living and it's obvious from the beginning of the story that some of this may have followed him home. Mix in some romance with a local police sergeant, and you've got some good (and somewhat dark) romantic suspense.

I really wanted to see more depth of characterization, but overall I liked what I got with this book. I may even brave the ridiculous pricing to sink myself back into Parry's dark world once more.

Brenda says

This is a signed copy by Bronwyn done at her 'signing' in the Collins Store in Tamworth Saturday 31st March, 2012.

In this the second of the Dungirri series, police Sergeant Kris Matthews is the dominant character. We met her first in *As Darkness Falls*, and it was lovely to learn more about her in this novel.

When Gil came across a police car in the heavy rain and darkness, with its lights flashing, and the raincoat clad cop using a torch to wave him to a stop, he swore, glanced at the speedo, and drew to a stop. He was on his way back to Dungirri for a very short visit, just to see one of the residents, then he was out of there. It was his first time back in almost 20 years, and he really didn't want to be there. And to be met by a cop on

the outskirts of town just confirmed his views!

But it seemed that police sergeant Kris Matthews was in trouble...her vehicle had veered off the road and into a ditch, and she needed help to get back to town. So against his better judgment, Gil drove her into Dungirri and the police station. What a way to start his visit to the town!

When he was seen by some of the residents of the town, he was not made welcome at all. But he was not surprised, as he had spent time in jail for murder, and even being acquitted didn't change the views of the people he had known all those years ago. Suddenly though, things went from bad to much, much worse...the body of a young woman was found in the boot of his car, and she had been tortured! Fortunately for him, he had Kris as his rock solid alibi, but the sceptics of the town were doubtful about that!

But was Kris in danger? As she began the investigation, secrets from the past came to light, with organised crime, AND police corruption well in front. Suddenly the dangers were immense, and Gil needed to find the murderer before anyone else was hurt. With his quick stop stretched out to days more in Dungirri, Gil knew he shouldn't have returned, but now his life and the lives of the few other people he cared about, were all in jeopardy!

I thoroughly enjoyed this novel, and am anxious to read the last in the trilogy of Dungirri. I highly recommend this book, for anyone who loves a suspense novel, and the Australian setting was extremely well done. Oh, the smell of the bush!

Dísir says

The spotlight falls on Morgan Gillespie and Kris Matthews - a supporting character in the first book - this time around and we're thrown deep into complex issues surrounding witness protection, the limits of law enforcement, organised crime and its spillover into the rural parts of Australia.

I dove straight into Bronwyn Parry's second book in the Dungirri series as soon as I got hold of my copy and while I didn't like it as much as I did her first, there was pretty good round storytelling and a fantastic build-up that should be present in the mystery/crime/thriller genre.

Ms Parry has become one of my most-liked authors and I can't wait to get to Mark's story in the third book.

Jenny says

.Dark Country is about the romance between Morgan Gillespie, Dungirri's bad boy and Kris Matthews, the local police sergeant. Readers of Dark Country will realise that you can not take things at face value and not judge people on what you do not understand. I must enjoy bad boys because I liked the portrayal of Morgan Gillespie and how Gill coped with the small town thought of him. Dark Country another drop dead and read book by Bronwyn Parry. Readers of Dark Country will love the twist and turns in the story, and with the way, the bubbling romance between Morgan and Kris is entwined in the plot. I recommend this book.

Annabel says

Stunning. Perfect as both a stand alone and as the second in the series.

I was waiting on tenterhooks for this book to come out, you can probably accurately envisage me haunting local bookshops, ever since the first book in the loosely linked series *As Darkness Falls* fell into my possession. I had a lingering doubt that maybe, it wouldn't be as good? Could it be as good? **It is.**

Gil has all the trappings of a traditional tall, dark, handsome hero with a dangerous past but there's nothing pat or cliché about him. He's a guy who seems to permanently *exist* in the wrong place at the wrong time but despite it all managed to build a successful life keeping all the old darkness at bay. But one short trip back home and suddenly it's all coming crashing down around him.

Kris is a gutsy, devoted police woman trying to turn the tide in a town that's going downhill fast. A town she loves but she isn't blind to its faults and she knows how deep the darkness runs in some of the town's hearts. Having Gil practically thrust onto her already overflowing plate would make some people take the easy way out, just this once, rather than dig-in and work the over-over-time but not Kris. She's not chalking anyone else up to the "Guilty List" without real proof and this time, it just doesn't add up.

Yes it's got romance in it but there's nobody which could say it's light on plot. It's intelligent, well written and very difficult to put down. Even on the second and third reads.

Sarah says

I was so pleasantly surprised by this book! I really loved the fact that it was basically a crime thriller with just a tiny touch of romance. And what a story it was! I loved the remote setting with the small town feel, but somehow it still had such a sense of space to it. The whole book was first rate and I can't wait to read more.

Bree T says

Morgan 'Gil' Gillespie has been away from the small country town of Dungirri for a long time. Given most of the population believe he's a murderer and that he didn't serve long enough in jail for his crime, it's no real surprise to him that there's no warm welcome. But Gil is back to help someone that helped him at a time he desperately needed it and if that stirs up the locals, so be it. He owes someone and he always pays his debts.

When he is driving into town, he meets the local police sergeant bogged off the country road. He ends up giving her a lift back into Dungirri and they cross paths later on that night after a brawl at the local pub puts Gil in her station as she keeps an eye on him for concussion. The nearest hospital is 60kms away so Kris Matthews takes it upon herself to give Gil somewhere to sleep and she checks on him constantly. Turns out, that saves Gil's bacon.

The next morning investigators from the city arrive and find the dead body of a woman in Gil's car. Kris knows he didn't do it – she saw the boot of his car last night when he offered her a lift and it was perfectly clean. He also spent most of the night either with her, or seen by others at the local pub so she becomes his

alibi. Gil has a pretty good idea of who is out to get him and that this murder was a warning and that he's going to be next. But he's going to have to battle organised crime, police corruption, his reputation and his growing attraction for a red headed police sergeant and he may still not get out alive.

Prior to this I'd only read one of Bronwyn Parry's romantic suspense novels set in country New South Wales, which was *Dead Heat* and I loved it. With the release of her latest book *Darkening Skies* recently, which is the third *Dungirri* book, I thought I might give the other two a look before I read that one. I found this one pretty cheap and although they are linked by the town, they can be read as stand alone novels.

There's nothing like having the local police officer as your alibi and that's what happens to Gil after barely 12 hours back in *Dungirri* when all of a sudden city detectives descend upon him and search his car, finding a dead body inside – the body of a woman Gil knew and warned to get out of town. It seems she didn't heed the warning and now Gil finds himself being questioned extensively by the police, even though Kris has vouched for him saying he couldn't possibly have had time to kill anyone between her placing things in his boot when he gave her a lift and seeing him again later that night when a brawl broke out at the local pub. Gil doesn't want Kris to get involved because he knows what's going on and exactly what he's gotten himself into. It stems back in *Dungirri* and a protection racket and organised crime ring. They think Gil has something that one of them in particular, the new 'boss' needs and they're going to stop at nothing to get it. They'll kidnap and threaten his colleagues, kill people, torture him. All until he gives up what they think he has.

But it seems they didn't bank on the investigative skills of Sergeant Kris Matthews who makes it pretty plain that she believes in Gil's innocence and that also, she wants to get to the bottom of exactly what's going on. The more time Gil and Kris spend together, the more the attraction between them builds. Gil sees them as utterly different – he's the one the town loathes, because they believe his irresponsible ways killed one of their own. His father was a no good drunk and as far as most are concerned, the apple didn't fall far from the tree. Kris came to town well after Gil left so she has none of those prejudices and she can see for herself what sort of a man Gil is. He's had it hard, of that there is no doubt, and he's been mixed up in a thing or two but he's fought his way out of it to get where he is today, standing on the right side of the law but with those on the other side coming after him. She wants to help him, especially when it looks like quite a lot of it might be coming from her own backyard.

Gil is my very favourite sort of character – that sort of bad-boy, rough around the edges, traumatic past, is-he-or-isn't-he-bad? I loved his interactions with Kris – as a redhead, I've been called Blue on and off for most of my life (it's one of the 'affectionate' nicknames I prefer, particularly against the rising popularity of 'ranga' these days) and so I liked his little tendency to reference her hair. This novel is very much about the crime and suspense, which is excellently done. I loved the whole story and the way in which Bronwyn Parry teased it out and with it, more and more of Gil's past and his character. But I also liked the little hints of romance between Gil and Kris. It was never going to take over, but it simmers enough there in the background. I think that perhaps this book didn't show the town in its best light at first, given how hostile they are towards Gil (they believe they have their reasons and Gil doesn't discourage this thinking) so I'm looking forward to the other two in the series to get a bit more of an idea of it.

This is a great thriller, further cementing Bronwyn Parry as a master of the rural romantic suspense and a definite auto-read for me.

Carol Preston says

I enjoyed this story set in a small country Aussie town. Kris is a tough cop on the outside, with a soft and lonely heart. Gil is suspicious of law enforcers, guarded and self sufficient. He has connections to a criminal element, has been in prison, and is clearly not a man to toy with. The relationship that grows between them as they deal with murder, drug dealing, arson and revenge, is fraught with problems but surprisingly tender. Those who like their crime stories laced with unlikely romance - a bit steamy at times - will enjoy this story.

Sharon says

Gil was in two minds about returning to his hometown of Dungirri, but there was someone he wanted to visit. Driving towards town he had to make a detour due the road being flooded. As he was driving along the detoured road he was stopped by a car on the side of the road with blue and red flashing lights. Sergeant Kris Matthews's patrol car was bogged and she needed, Gil to get a message back to her constable to help assist her. Gil offers Kris a lift and at first she is hesitant then decides to accept his offer. Kris is curious about who, Gil is and why he has returned to Dungirri, but it seems he is not giving too much away.

Later on that night, Kris is called out to the local pub where a fight has broken out and soon discovers who, Gil is and understands why he has been set upon by some of the locals. For his own protection, Kris takes Gil back to the police station and after talking to him she decides it might be best he stays at her place for the night. The next morning, Gil's life is turned upside down after a body of a dead woman is found in the boot of his car. Kris knows, Gil has a solid alibi as he'd stayed at her place the night before. Both Kris and Gil are determined to find out who is responsible for the murder of the woman so they join forces, but could Kris be putting her own life in danger?

A fabulous suspense novel by Aussie author, Bronwyn Parry which I thoroughly enjoyed. Recommended.

Michele says

I usually don't read books that seem to have a wrongfully accused character, so I put it down. But being a voracious reader it was the only thing in the car when I had time to kill. Well am I glad I started again. A great read and looking forward to reading her others Although set in same place seem to be separate characters

Lauren K says

Dark Country is the second book in the Dungirri series by Bronwyn Parry following on from As Darkness Falls, introducing new hero and heroine; Gil and Kris.

Gil returns to his hometown, Dungirri after estrangement for 18 years and comes across new acting Sergeant Kris Matthews's experiencing car troubles. The mood is set instantly with Gil on edge around Kris because of his mistreatment by the police force in the past, yet his protectiveness of this red-headed beauty is sparked

instantly. He offers her a lift back to town and Kris is intrigued by this man who is vague about where he's come from and where he's going. When a pub brawl breaks out later that evening, Kris discovers Gil is the infamous Morgan 'Gil' Gillespie, an alleged murderer.

His behaviour toward her: considerate and respectful contradicts the town gossip so she follows her gut instincts and offers her guest room for overnight protection. The following day a woman's body is found in the boot of his car and Gil is facing the same hostility from the town he experienced eighteen years prior. Convinced of his innocence, Kris is determined to find the killer and bring them to justice and the only person who can help is Gil. Forced to work closely together, they are faced with several life or death situations and their shared trauma brings them closer together-despite their individual protests. Kris's involvement with a prime suspect is against her professional rulebook and Gil's fondness of Kris is contrary to how he's felt about a woman in a long time.

I don't know if words can do this book justice, I just think Bronwyn Parry is a marvellous author and has nailed the romantic thriller to a tee. Every scene is emotionally charged; it has a purpose and drew me in so that it was impossible to put down. Gil is a man of few words, yet every interaction between him and Kris was thick with tension and their chemistry undeniable. Parry offers an adept combination of dialogue, characterisation and grounding a scene with use of the five senses to immerse the reader completely in the thick of the story.

The crime plot is meticulously constructed and left me guessing until the very end. From the mafia to corrupt police officers, there's plenty of action and suspense to keep this story moving forward. The romantic sub-plot was realistic and entrancing and of course resulted in a very satisfactory ending.

I highly recommend this series and I'm eagerly anticipating the third book based in Dungirri due for release around September this year.

puppitypup says

Romantic Suspense *Disappointing*

Well, this did not live up to my expectations, but I suspect that's partly my fault. After the first book in the series, which was remarkable, I had purposely not jumped right into Book 2, saving it instead for a special treat.

While there is nothing really wrong with Dark Country, it didn't grab hold of me, making me feel like I was a part of Dungirri. That deep loneliness and despair, intrinsically tied to the dusty, dying town, never made an appearance here. The story needed breathing room, time to think, to feel.

This is told more from Gil's perspective, the male lead, than Kris', and I always feel a story more when it's told from the female perspective.

There are other things that conspired against me in this novel as well. This is a mafia story, and when I hear the word mafia, my eyes glaze over. For whatever reason, mafia stories hold no appeal for me.

And to make matters worse, the bad guys are continually talked about, but don't make an appearance until

the very end. I think I needed to "put a name with a face" earlier in the story to keep all the characters straight.

Finally, the love story here isn't nearly as romantic, it feels more about physical need than emotional need. I seem to have hit on a number of books in a row with an emotionally distant main character, understandable due to their life circumstances, but hard for me as a reader to relate to.

That said, I will try the third in the series, Ms. Parry proved her worth to me with the first book, I am absolutely willing to give her another try.

The book is not clean, there is one intimate scene and several bad words.

Stacey Houllis says

I thoroughly loved this book Dark Country by Bronwyn Parry. It is the story of Morgan Gil Gillespie and Sergeant Kris Mathews. After being away from Dungirri for many years Gil decides to return to thank the woman who looked out for him when he was growing up after his mother left while on he was he finds Sergeant Kris Mathews on the side of the road with a damaged police car he offers her a lift to town. He does not tell her his full name as he was once in prison for death of young woman in car he was supposed driving. Jenni a murdered woman turns up in his car who used to part own the pub he just sold.

We learn that he was trying to get her on straight and narrow. Everytime something happens he is with Kris Mathews. There are many twists and turns in the book as we learn of a criminal connection to Gil, they have an attraction for each other as well and that someone is trying to set him up for murder. Can't wait to read the next book in the series.
