



## The Complaints

*Ian Rankin*

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## **The Complaints** Ian Rankin

Nobody likes The Complaints--they're the cops who investigate other cops. It's a department known within the force as "The Dark Side," and it's where Malcolm Fox works. He's a serious man with a father in a nursing home and a sister who persists in an abusive relationship, frustrating problems about which he cannot seem to do anything.

Then the reluctant Fox is given a new case. There's a cop named Jamie Breck, and he's dirty. The problem is, no one can prove it. As Fox takes on the job, he learns that there's more to Breck than anyone thinks--dangerous knowledge, especially when a vicious murder takes place far too close to home.

In THE COMPLAINTS, Rankin proves again why he is one of the world's most beloved and bestselling crime writers, mixing unstoppable pacing with the deeper question of who decides right from wrong.

## **The Complaints Details**

Date : Published 2009 by Orion Books  
ISBN : 9780752889511  
Author : Ian Rankin  
Format : Hardcover 381 pages  
Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Cultural, Scotland

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## From Reader Review The Complaints for online ebook

### Simon says

I liked the twists and turns of this one. As others have mentioned, I found the pace a little slow and the book could have been shorter.

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### Kristen says

If you love great mysteries set in different locales, you'll enjoy the Complaints set in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Complaints is the Scottish version of our Internal Affairs. And we're introduced to Scottish police, politics and great locales. Malcolm is part of the Complaints team, when he's embroiled into a real tough case of dirty politics and corrupt policemen. Plenty of twists and turns with tons of drama and curvy surprises to keep you at the edge of the seat. We follow Malcolm's every move, meet his father in a nursing home and his sister who's involved with a troubled relationship. There's a lot of things you would never see coming. What a great introduction to a new series.

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### Thomas says

Πρ?τη επαφ? με ?αν Ρ?νκιν. Κλασσικ? σ?γχρονη αστυνομικ? ιστορ?α, με πρωταγωνιστ? ?να σκληροτρ?χηλο ντετ?κτιβ, μοναχικ? cowboy, με τους δικο?ς του δα?μονες. Αφ?γηση με γοργο?ς ρυθμο?ς και μικρ? plot twists που κρατο?ν το ενδιαφ?ρον ως τ?λους, εν? παρ?λληλα ο συγγραφ?ας αποτυπ?νει και την κοινωνικο-οικονομικ? κατ?σταση στη Σκωτ?α της προηγο?μενης δεκαετ?ας. Αρκετ? συμπαθητικ? δουλει?, χωρ?ς ποτ? ωστ?σο να γ?νεται κ?τι το ιδια?τερο.

★★★

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### Judy says

It is time I got caught up on my reviews. I've been just listening to audio books while traveling. Why do audio book readers insist on reading with accents? In the case of this book it's a Scottish brogue. I know the protagonist, Malcolm Fox is Scottish, and is on the Edinburgh police department. It doesn't add anything for me when the voices are done in accent, but maybe that's just me. This stand-alone mystery is very good, however. I like the characters and police procedures.

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### Akylina says

Π?ντοτε ξ?ρω πως κ?θε φορ? που νι?θω μια λογοτεχνικ? "κο?ραση" και χρει?ζομαι κ?τι ευκολοδι?βαστο, γρ?γορο και με πλοκ? που θα κρατ?σει αμε?ωτο το ενδιαφ?ρον μου, μπορ? να καταφ?γω στα αγαπημ?να μου αστυνομικ?. Το συγκεκριμ?νο, λοιπ?ν, το ε?χα αγορ?σει π?ρυσι θ?λοντας να διαβ?σω επιτ?λους κ?τι του Rankin, αλλ? ο ?γκος του (580 σελ?δες αν και pocket) με

Ήκανε να πιστέω πως αντ' να πραγματοποιήσει τους παραπ'νω στ'χους, θα με κο'ραζε. Χα'ρομαι πολ' ?μως που βγ'κα λ'θος αυτ' τη φορ'.

Ο πρωταγωνιστ'ς του βιβλ'ου, ο Μ'λκολμ Φοξ (ο οπο'ος μου θ'μισε αρκετ' τον Χ'λε), εργ'ζεται στις Καταγγελ'ες, το τιμ'μα της αστυνομ'ας που ασχολε'ται με τις "βρωμι'ς" των ?λλων αστυνομικ'ν. Ήχοντας μ'λις φ'ρει σε π'ρας με επιτυχ'α μια υπ'θεση, του αναθ'τουν να ερευν'σει ακ'μη ?ναν συν'δελφ' του, εν' ταυτ'χρονα προκ'πτει μια δολοφον'α και μια αυτοκτον'α δ'ο φαινομενικ' ασ'νδετων με την υπ'θεση ανθρ'πων. Ο Rankin υφ'ανει μια πολ'πλοκη ιστορ'α μ'σα απ' την οπο'α εξερευν' τα ?δυτα της ανθρ'πινης ψυχ'ς και αποδεικν'ει πως πολλ'ς φορ'ς τα φαιν'μενα απατο'ν.

?θελα πολ' να δω επ'σης πως ο Rankin θα παρουσ'αζε το Εδιμβο'ργο μ'σα απ' την ιστορ'α του αυτ'. Συν'θως τα αστυνομικ' μυθιστορ'ματα διαδραματ'ζονται σε περιοχ'ς διεφθαρμ'νες και "βρ'μικες", σα να αντανακλο'ν τις ψυχ'ς των ?διων των εγκληματι'ν. Κ'πως ?τσι παρουσι'ζεται λοιπ'ν κι εδ' το Εδιμβο'ργο, σκοτειν', μουντ' και γεμ'το ανθρ'πους που κρ'βουν μια κ'ποια δυσαρ'σκεια με τη ζω' τους και με το περιβ'λλον γ'ρω τους. Δε λε'πουν β'βαια και τα κοινωνικ' σχ'λια του συγγραφ'α σχετικ' με την οικονομικ' κατ'σταση, τους μεταν'στες και τις συνεχε'ς κατασκευ'ς στην π'λη που τελειωμ' δεν ?χουν.

Το απ'λαυσα αυτ' το μυθιστ'ρημα και θεωρ' πως το δι'βασα και την κατ'λληλη στιγμή. Σ'γουρα αποτ'λεσε μια πολ' καλ' γνωριμ'α με τη γραφ' του Rankin - μ'νει τ'ρα να γνωριστο'με και με τον επιθεωρητ' Ρ'μπους.

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## **Ian Mapp says**

This got off to a great start and I felt it was an improvement on Doors Open.

The Complaints are the internal affairs of the Edinburgh police force. Having put away a dodgy policeman.... Malcolm Fox is given the task of bringing Jamie Breck to justice. There is a paedophile ring run from Australia and Jamie has joined through his credit card but not yet submitted the 25 pictures for full membership.

This is a great start, not least because Jamie Breck is quite charming and diligent at his job. The early cat and mouse exchanges make it seem like its going to be a stunning thriller.

Malcolm is a well rounded character as well - a alcoholic on the wagon, there is a constant yearning for booze especially for Whiskey, where there are some stunning descriptions that make you want to hit the bottle.

Unfortunately, like a lot of 400 page crime novels, the plot just gets too convuluted. A mere week after finishing the book, I am struggling to remember who did what to who and who was guilty. This is not a good sign and I have to say I plodded through the last 200 pages and it was a relief to get to the end.

OK - not great.

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## **Rob says**

#1 in the Malcolm Fox Series.

This is a slow, methodical police procedural but it's a very satisfying read.

Malcolm Fox is an Inspector with Lothian and Border police force, Scotland.

Malcolm works with The Complaints and Conduct Department. In other word he is the police that police the police and as such is generally hated by all of the other departments.

There is something off in The Lothian and Border Police force and it's beginning to smell really bad. For no reason that Malcolm can think of all the accusing finger seem to be pointing at him. Malcolm is asked to investigate a fellow officer, DS Breck. Malcolm soon realises that Ds. Breck is clean and wants to know why he is being investigated. He doesn't get any answers so Malcolm decides to approach Breck about his concerns. Breck is taken aback that he is under surveillance and convinces Fox that there is something very amiss. So together they try to get to the bottoms of what's going on. But the more they dig the muddier the water becomes.

Not before long both Insp. Fox and Ds. Breck are suspended from duty and told not to communicate with each other.

All this achieves is to make Fox and Breck all the more desperate to find out what is going on.

This is a well constructed police procedural. The story takes it's time evolve and along the way both Insp. Fox and Ds. Beck develop into characters that you will want to believe in.

So take a seat, relax and let the story envelope you.

Highly recommended. 4 stars.

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## **Seth Lynch says**

I listened to the Audiobook version of this book narrated by Peter Forbes. He did an excellent job. I've generally been impressed by the readers of the audiobooks I have listened to – the free librivox ones aren't in the same league as the paid for versions (or in my case borrowed from the library versions)

This book has lots of threads which are slowly lain before us as the chapters evolve and then tied up nicely at the end. The story focuses on a member of the police complaints who finds himself under investigation. He teams up with another cop – who is himself under investigation for subscribing to a child porn site. The levels of trust / miss-trust build up as the book progresses creating a certain degree of paranoia – which puts you in a similar state of mind as the main character Malcolm Fox.

I don't want to spoil it so I won't talk about the plot anymore. The Edinburgh portrayed in the book is a cold and bleak place – a real place rather than a tourist destination. Technology is also dealt with well – it's there it's used it s not too intrusive – and there are no dead zones to explain why a phone can't be used.

This book is the first Post-Rebus novel and – according to Amazon – is the first in a new series featuring Malcolm Fox. He will be an interesting person to follow having been through the events of this book. I'll be keeping an eye out for book two

## Carol says

**The Complaints** by Ian Rankin  
Book 1 in the Malcolm Fox series  
4 ★'s

### From The Book:

Nobody likes The Complaints--they're the cops who investigate other cops. It's a department known within the force as "The Dark Side," and it's where Malcolm Fox works. He's a serious man with a father in a nursing home and a sister who persists in an abusive relationship, frustrating problems about which he cannot seem to do anything.

Then the reluctant Fox is given a new case. There's a cop named Jamie Breck, and he's dirty. The problem is, no one can prove it. As Fox takes on the job, he learns that there's more to Breck than anyone thinks--dangerous knowledge, especially when a vicious murder takes place far too close to home.

### My Thoughts:

Rebus has retired and Ian Rankin has provided us a suitable replacement...Malcolm Fox. Is he Rebus?...no. Does he share the same values as Rebus?...absolutely. Fox is a reformed drinker, and much like Rebus, in that he is honest and fights for the rights of the innocent. As the book opens we find that "The Complaints" as Fox's department is known, is investigating corruption within their ranks...other cops...that's what the Complaints Dept. does. He and his colleagues are not particularly well liked as you can imagine.

Fox is asked to help investigate an officer, Jamie Breck who has been implicated as a pedophile. The problem is that Jamie Breck has found himself part of an investigation has begun in the death of Fox's sister's boyfriend. Fox is asked to get close to Breck to find out as much as he can. What Fox does discover is that there isn't much evidence to support the accusations and he actually begins to like and trust Breck. That doesn't mean there is nothing to uncover. What he does discover may bring down some high and mighty people that cannot allow...and will stop at nothing to keep their secrets from coming to light.

Ian Rankin has a well earned reputation of being the master of complex plots and characters and **The Complaints** has proven to be no exception. The book is a little too long and at times seems to go in directions that seem unnecessary to the storyline...hence the 4 stars...but overall If you do not compare Malcolm Fox to previous characters or the plot to previous novels...you will really enjoy the book.

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## Lourdes Venard says

Insp. John Rebus has retired, so from Rankin we now get a different type of cop: Malcolm Fox, who works for The Complaints and Conduct, the cops who investigate other cops. He and his team have just finished a case involving veteran officer Glen Heaton, meaning The Complaints has stirred up some more anger. Fox is also dealing with his sister, who is being physically abused by her live-in boyfriend, when he's asked to start investigating another cop who worked with Heaton, this time as part of an online child pornography group. Before Fox can even begin, he gets a call from that same officer, Jamie Breck, with news that his sister's boyfriend has been killed. Although Breck is one of the main investigators and this might appear a conflict of

interest, Fox's boss tells him to continue investigating Breck. He does -- and finds Breck to be intelligent, charming, very likable. Can he really be a pedophile? And what about all the coincidences starting to build up?

The novel is all about rights and wrongs, as we try to figure out just which cop is bent -- and which is honest. As Fox mulls:

He wondered: did it bother him that the world wasn't entirely fair? That justice was seldom sufficient? There would always be people ready to pocket a wad of banknotes in exchange for a favour. There would always be people who played the system and wrung out every penny. Some people -- lots of people -- would keep getting away with it.

'But you're not one of them,' he told himself.

Rankin gives us a great story, a great protagonist and more than enough reason to believe there's life after Rebus.

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### **Michelle says**

I found myself instantly liking the protagonist Malcolm Fox. He struggles with a history of alcoholism, has a father in a care home, and a sister who is in an abusive relationship and has her own rocky time with drinking. Along with the many things he has to juggle in his personal life, his work in the "Complaints" earns him the contempt and hostility of fellow police officers. Those in the Complaints are asked (none too kindly) how they could "turn on one of their own", and if they are "without fault, whiter than white". Malcolm's conflict begins when he is assigned to investigate an officer who, in a twist, is keeping tabs on him regarding the suspicious death of his sister's boyfriend. As both investigations go deeper and a friendship develops, Malcolm is in a battle to maintain professionalism and find the truth that makes for a great novel.

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### **Effie says**

Η Σκοτεινή Πλευρά είναι το δεύτερο βιβλίο του Rankin που διαβάζω, και με έκανε να ενδιαφερθώ πραγματικά για την αστυνομική λογοτεχνία. Η ροή των γεγονότων έχει τη σωστή ταχύτητα, η ιστορία έχει ενδιαφέρον και με κράτησε μέχρι το τέλος και οι χαρακτήρες είναι καλογραμμένοι. Σίγουρα ο Fox μου ταιριάζει περισσότερο από τον Rebus σαν χαρακτήρας και ο Μπρεκ ήταν αρκετά ενδιαφέρον επίσης.

Αυτό όμως που ξεχάρισα περισσότερο είναι οι περιγραφές του Εδιμβούργου. Ήσως συνέβαλε και το γεγονός ότι έχω ζήσει ένα διάστημα εκεί και έχω πολύ ιδιαίτερες αναμνήσεις τις οποίες ο Rankin κατάφερε να μου ξυπνήσει μέσα προς μένα. Παρ' όλα αυτά, πιστεύω ότι οι περιγραφές του θα μπορούσαν να ταξιδύσουν τον καθένα και να τον κάνουν να νιώσει κομμάτι αυτής της μουντής, κρύας πύλης.

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## Stavrula says

3.5

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## Ben Dutton says

Crime fiction. I've always been of the impression that it is highly schematic, tightly plotted and more interested in the workings of that plot than the workings of its characters. It is that, and this is such an example. The best crime fiction blends plot with character, and usually ends up saying something about the world we live in today.

Ian Rankin, one of the UK's brightest stars in the crime writing world, made his name with the Rebus novels. I read one of those many years ago, *Fleshmarket Close*, and thought Rankin a good writer - that novel blended crime with social commentary all built around the complex Rebus. Rebus hung up his hat a few years ago. Rankin is now concerned with Malcolm Fox, a man who works for The Complaints - Internal Affairs to you American readers. This is the first of the Fox novels.

*The Complaints* begins promisingly enough: Malcolm Fox is well drawn. A former alcoholic, he tows a straight line. His sister, Jude, is in an abusive relationship. Their father is in a care home, and neither child visits him as often as they should. The novel I hoped for - how a cop deals with the fact that his sister is in, and wants to remain in, an abusive relationship - was curtailed by the murder of Vince Faulkner, that abusive man. Meanwhile, Fox has been asked to help the CEOP shop (colloquially, the chop shop, a department who investigate sex predators) as they have information that an officer in a department Fox has only just finished investigating has paid to join a child pornography website. That all these disparate storylines will connect is in no doubt: this is a tightly plotted crime novel, written by a master.

Where for me the novel began to fail, was that as the schematics of the crime novel began to take over, and Rankin began to speed towards the climax, the emotional threads become discarded. Rankin has to complete the jigsaw puzzle and show us the full picture of the crime: that doesn't allow us to engage with character as fully. This is, of course, not Rankin's fault: it is the way crime fiction works. As an introduction to a new character designed to replace Rebus: it's not at all bad.

The novel I think Rankin fans are all waiting for though will be the one where Fox squares up to Rebus: a man who surely must have come, at some point, into the target sights of *The Complaints*.

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## Carly says

~3.5

**\*\*Note: This is a reaction--a few ill-considered opinions not backed up by textual evidence-- rather than a review.\*\***

It's always interesting to read a book from the perspective of the IAD/Complaints/Watchers of the Watchmen. As always, the watchers turn out to be just as corrupt as the watchmen. *The Complaints* introduces a new protagonist, Malcom Fox, who turns out to be just as rough-edged and difficult as John Rebus. I'm not sure what I think about him or his morals, but I found him a bit easier to sympathise with than

Rebus. For me, the most interesting aspect of the book was its focus on the odd friendship that develops between Fox and one of his suspects. About half the efforts of the book is spent on their bromance, and it's pretty well drawn. Honestly, I think my major issue with the book was Fox's sister Jude, not just because her role as victim and defender of her abuser is left pretty stark and unexplored, but because whenever she was mentioned, I got "Hey Jude" stuck in my head.

And not the Beatles version.

**This version.**

Yep.

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## **Craig Pittman says**

I know Scottish writer Ian Rankin is best known for his award-winning series featuring a detective named John Rebus, but somehow I missed reading all of those. Instead, I stumbled on this book and was intrigued by the title and set-up. I'm really glad I picked it up.

The book focuses on Malcolm Fox, a detective inspector from Edinburgh who works in "The Complaints," a department we in America would refer to as Internal Affairs. Fox has scored a major triumph in a case -- but in short order he is himself suspended and put under investigation. Meanwhile his sister's live-in boyfriend (and sometime abuser) dies violently. The investigation of the murder is being handled by officers who despise The Complaints in general and Fox in particular, and it's clear they'd love to pin the murder on Fox, suggesting he was seeking revenge for what happened to his sister.

For a while, Rankin toys with the reader, leaving the question open as to whether Fox is indeed guilty of the murder and is engineering a cover-up. He winds up working with the lead investigator -- who also gets suspended, this time for helping Fox. Is Fox cooperating or is he really keeping tabs on where the investigation of the murder is going?

The plot spins and spins and soon you realize there's a lot more going on than what first appeared to be happening. I don't want to give too much away but I sped through this book to find out what happened next. The ending seemed a little pat, but otherwise I enjoyed the heck out of this book.

I must also give Rankin high marks for making me feel like I was in Scotland -- not just with his descriptions but also with the way he depicted the demeanor of the people there.

I've already made plans to read the next Malcolm Fox book, "The Impossible Dead." And who knows? Maybe next I'll try one about that Rebus fellow.

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## **James Thane says**

With this book, Ian Rankin, the author of the very popular series featuring Scottish detective John Rebus, introduces a new protagonist, Malcolm Fox. Fox is also a Scottish police detective, but he belongs to the Complaints and Conduct division, usually known as the Complaints, which is the Scottish equivalent of Internal Affairs. Fox and his colleagues investigate other cops who have been accused of improper conduct.

As the book opens, Fox is assigned to investigate another detective, Jamie Breck, who is perhaps involved in a child pornography ring. But then, to complicate matters, the abusive live-in boyfriend of Fox's sister is murdered and Breck is assigned to the case. To further complicate matters, Malcolm Fox is a potential

suspect.

Fox and Breck begin a delicate dance, wary of each other, but each needing the other's help. Although warned away from the investigation into his sister's lover's death, Fox can't help but at least nibble around the edges which will inevitably get him into trouble. It turns out that the murdered boyfriend was tied to a developer who mysteriously committed suicide at about the same time as the murder, and in the end Fox and Breck can't know who to trust as they are both enveloped in an apparent conspiracy that may destroy them both.

This is a good read, and Fox is an interesting protagonist, though he is not as compelling as Rebus. He doesn't drink; he's not as tortured and he does not share Rebus's interest in music. The plot is a bit too convoluted, but still this is a fun ride and I'll look forward to seeing more of Malcolm Fox.

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### **Ed says**

I read this book in reverse order. I read the second book in the series first but had no difficulty appreciating both truly extraordinary mysteries from, in my view, the master of UK crime fiction, Ian Rankin. This first book in Rankin's new series sets up the characters operating in one of Edinburgh's Internal Affairs units known in the UK as the "Complaints". This is a brilliantly crafted novel that challenged my deductive reasoning process with its mind numbing plot complexity and surprising twists of this highly unique story.

I highly recommend it to my GR friends.....Ed

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### **Lori says**

4.5 stars really. An excellent plot line in this book but, following after the amazing Exit Music, this one didn't quite measure up to that fabulous Rebus swan song. The Complaints introduces Malcolm Fox; smart, calculating and a bit of a rule breaker himself. Inside sources told me Fox's and Rebus' paths do intersect in the next Rebus book after Exit Music, so wanted to get to know Fox in his two solo pieces first. I was not one bit disappointed with The Complaints. Although Fox is no Rebus, he's intriguing in his own right. Working as part of the Complaints and Conduct section of the force, Fox and his colleagues are the hated scourge of the police department; Investigating and charging their own; Sousing out dirty cops wherever they may be. In this one, Fox finds himself at the wrong end of an internal investigation with not a clue of how or who got him there. Working on the outside with another cop under investigation, Fox investigates the murder of his sister's significant other and the mysterious disappearance of a real estate mogul down on his luck. Nothing is at it seems and Fox and his partner in the shadows, Jamie Breck, unearth a complicated series of seemingly unrelated events that all tie together in a sinister but very satisfying way. This novel is well worth the read for any Rankin fan.

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### **Alexandra Pedro says**

Finalmente acabei. Não foi uma boa escolha para terminar uma temporada sem ler. Acho que será bom para alguém que goste deste género e este estilo de escrita simples.

Pontos positivos:

- . É fácil de ler (embora consuma tempo).
- . A história é bem pensada pelo autor.
- . Mostra bem a Escócia.
- . É tudo claramente resolvido no fim.

Pontos negativos:

- . Não há uma visão clara da personalidade de cada personagem e não é fácil o leitor sentir alguma espécie de conexão com alguma delas.
- . Embora seja narrado na primeira pessoa, não compreendemos sobre o que é que o Malcom Fox está a pensar nem as opções que lhe passam pela mente. Isso faz com que tudo pareça surgir do nada. Não há um processo lógico na investigação.
- . Demora muito até que comece a resolução de tudo.
- . Ficou confuso com todas as distintas partes da ação em conjunto.

Basicamente, não sou fã!

Opinião em vídeo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVF60...>

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[EN] Finally I'm finished with it. It was not a good choice to get rid of a reading slump. I think it does the trick for someone who likes this genre and this simple kind of writing.

PROS:

- . It's easy to read (although time consuming).
- . The plot was really thought by the author.
- . Nice show off of Scotland.
- . Everything is wrapped up at the end.

CONS:

- . There's not a clear vision of the personality of each character and it's not easy for the reader to feel any kind of connection with them.
- . Although it's narrated in the first person, we don't really understand what Malcom Fox is thinking about and the options that cross his mind. That makes it all kind of appeared from thin air. There's not a logic process in the investigation.
- . It took too long to start solving everything.
- . It got confusing with all the parts of the plot together.

Basicly, I'm not a fan!

Video opinion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVF60...>

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