



The Murder Road: A Cooper & Fry Mystery

Stephen Booth

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For fans of *Broadchurch*, Louise Penny, and Peter Robinson comes a spellbinding new novel from internationally bestselling author Stephen Booth

Welcome to the picturesque English village of Shawhead, where there's one road in and one road out. And on that road this morning is an abandoned vehicle...with an ominous bloodstain inside.

It's a mystery. It could be a murder. Where—and who—is the driver? Whose blood has been discovered? Why are the people of Shawhead so hostile toward Detective Ben Cooper, sent in to take charge of the investigation?

As Cooper peels back layers of lies and exposes dark secrets to the light, he draws ever closer to a killer hiding in plain sight. Packed with atmosphere, suspense, and surprises, *The Murder Road* is Stephen Booth's most unforgettable novel yet.

The Murder Road: A Cooper & Fry Mystery Details

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From Reader Review The Murder Road: A Cooper & Fry Mystery for online ebook

Sam says

I picked this up on a complete whim and once I got home I realised I have read some of the others in the series so I was quite looking forward to it. The story started really well but it got a little long winded to the middle as Cooper found himself going around in circles chapter after chapter. This made it quite hard to keep going as the story seemed to grind to a halt a bit and there wasn't much to keep things going. But it picked up again towards the end and the finale was great to read (although as soon as those characters cropped up I just knew they had a lot to do with it). Not as good as the others I've read but still a good crime story.

Plum-crazy says

I've followed this series from the very start &, apart from two criticisms, this book did not disappoint. Another great read & once again Booth invokes the feeling of dark, brooding landscapes & insular communities & into it weaves a credible crime story. Now onto my criticisms....

Firstly...& I am aware I'm being picky here...I just couldn't visualise in my mind, the double bridge under which the lorry got stuck. A trivial point but as the scenery is always so well described & easily imaginable I was frustrated that despite reading the passage over & over I just couldn't see it!

And secondly....

spoiler alert ahead

.. more importantly after reading "The Corpse Bridge" I was so looking forward to seeing if things had moved on between Ben & Diane in the way I had anticipated. Well it would appear so, though nothing is said outright, just a hint like "*Not for the first time, Ben Cooper was driving back from Nottingham...*" & in the closing chapter "*Ben, it was a rebound*" - what?!! Part of me says kudos to the author for not spoiling the style of the series by bogging the reader down with the love-life of the characters but a little more info would have been nice. I felt Diane was notably absent in this tale & seeing as she's given Ben the push maybe she'll stay in Nottingham & not appear in "*Secrets of Death*" at all! Hope not but look forward to finding out :o)

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Book 15 in the Cooper and Fry series and the first book I have read. Yes, this is starting to become a trend for me reading the latest book in a series. I do that all the time now a day and yes I do prefer to start from the beginning, but most of the time it's actually no problem with starting at the latest book and then go back to the beginning. That is something I will do with this series, especially since I have bought almost every single book in this series as an eBook. I just need the time.

A lorry driver is killed in just outside the little picturesque village of Shawhead, on the only road leading in and out of the village. Detective Ben Cooper is the man in charge of the investigation and it seems that many of the people in the village are hiding something. Is the killer living in the village? Why was the lorry driver killed? It seems that to find the answers Cooper must look into the past...

I had no problem whatsoever getting into the story. I found Ben Cooper to be a competent and likable

character. I did wonder where the hell Diane Fry was, she was hardly in this book's story and I was curious about their relationship, especially since they seem to have been rivals that now are something much more. I'm looking forward to starting the series from the beginning to read more about how they came to be the people they are today.

I liked the book, it was engrossing to read and I found it very well written.

I received this copy from Witness Impulse through Edelweiss in return for an honest review! Thank you!

Daisy says

This is the first book in the Cooper and Fry series I have read and I highly enjoyed it. I decided to give this book 4/5 stars as it was difficult to get into however thoroughly enjoyed it as it went on. I defiantly plan on reading more books from the series as soon as I can.

Bobby D says

Just arrived from a book seller located in the United Kingdom this the 15th book in Stephen Booth's mystery series featuring Detective Inspector Ben Cooper and Detective Sergeant Diane Fry. Set again in the rural Peak District of England which is just east of Manchester with its wonderful moors and small villages. (I am not sure why no American Publisher has picked up the series beyond e-books and several of the early editions in the series but I think they are missing a good bet. The series is in development for a TV series which if ever produced might encourage an American Publisher.) I have read only the last four books in the series as well as the first, Black Dog.

THE MURDER ROAD is a straight procedural mystery. The premise has a semi-trailer truck driver trying to navigate an unfamiliar route using his GPS which sends him down the wrong road. Its narrow and visibility is poor and the driver knows he has to find a way to turn around. Ahead is a tunnel, no it is an arch which is part of a railroad bridge crossing. The arch looks high enough in the center for the driver to clear but he finds out too late that the sides of the arch are too narrow and low. The driver crashes and his cab is stuck under the bridge. DI Copper is sent to the scene because the driver has gone missing and the cab of the truck is covered with blood.

The search for the driver and suspects in what is thought might be a murder begins. This while Copper is adjusting to having just been promoted and trying to decide if he likes managing rather than the actual doing the investigating work himself. His oldest team member has just retired so there are two vacancies in his staff and because of budget cuts he receives only one new detective replacement, Detective Sergeant Dev Sharma who is Hindu having only prior work experience in inner city areas. Sharma may be the introduction of a new character for the series. Diane Fry is not much featured in this book but in brief appearances adds much. During the investigation Copper takes note that the missing driver was a witness 8 years earlier to an horrific accident on the A-6. The driver witnessed a small SUV as it was crushed between two semi-trailer trucks and its young girl driver killed. Copper becomes fascinated in the previous case and thinks the missing driver may be a part of a larger mystery. All and all it is a very entertaining and well executed, plausible plot.

I am just getting into reading a few more mysteries and this is a series that I have so far enjoyed understanding that it is fun and entertaining while not great literature. It's the kind of book you imagine reading in a small library while seated in a large leather winged chair next to a burning, crackling fire stopping for a minute here and there to consider the Peak District environment and who might be the guilty of murder. (Steven Booth appears to be an author who really enjoys his readers. He has an excellent email newsletter which covers his journeys to bookstores and libraries as well as the status of his next book. The

Copper character is only 34 in this his 15th book so it appears he can keep going for some time.)

Jo Chambers says

This was a sound British crime novel set in the Peak District, and featuring DI Ben Cooper (and occasionally DS Diane Fry). The crime mystery itself was good. A lorry driver is lured down a country lane leading to a tiny hamlet, where it gets wedged under a railway bridge. He is then brutally murdered. Was it a random attack, or deliberate? It was a good plot and I wanted to keep reading to find out the answers.

On the minus side, I found the minutiae of details about roads, tracks, railway lines, canals etc rather tiresome and mostly irrelevant. Maybe they would've meant more if I lived in the Peak District. I also found the atmosphere of the book bleak and rather depressing. In addition, I hadn't realised this was #15 in a series and I felt I was missing quite a lot of backstory on the lead characters and didn't warm to them. For all these reasons, I'm giving this book 3*.

Ann says

This is the ninth Cooper and Fry novel. It's a little different as Cooper has been promoted and Fry has a new partner. This is a murder mystery that has strong connections to a traffic accident from 10 years ago. This was not my favorite book in the series but it was another great addition. Ben Fry has grown and is now a strong lead in this police procedural mystery.

Suzan Lloyd says

This is the 15th in the excellent series featuring the brilliant Cooper and Fry.

Ben Cooper is making the adjustments to being a newly promoted DI; waving off Gavin Murfin to his retirement; having a new DS join his team and then there's the change in his relationship with Diane Fry. Diane doesn't feature heavily in this novel. Just as I thought I was warming to her, she reverts to type and I'm annoyed with her again!

The novel starts with a fatal accident 8 years earlier. Then moving forward a lorry driver, following his sat nav, gets his vehicle stuck under a railway bridge to a village that only has the one road in and out. The driver disappears and there is blood left in the lorry cab. Ben and his team investigate and along the way there are clever twists to keep the reader guessing.

I'm sure it will be picked up with those who have eagle eyes that there are a few typing/editing errors in the first half but this really can be forgiven as this truly is an enjoyable mystery that is well plotted and well written. Whilst there is murder and other horrific events there is no graphic detail.

Stephen Booth's books always feel more than just a mystery to solve for me. There are the wonderful descriptions of the Peak District, so vivid you feel that you are there (or stimulated enough to look it up/visit) and interesting information about the area. He also conveys convincingly the team dynamics with believable interaction. Maybe Ben will need to toughen up a bit.

Recommended - this is a pleasure to read.

Laura says

Ok, I'm a little confused: are we heading for some sort of love triangle with Cooper torn between Fry and Villers? If so, what's going on with Diane? She made the briefest of appearances in this book - and possibly won't even appear in the next one. And this after I thought Booth was finally figuring out what to do with the couple.

Mystery-wise, the opening really reminded me of another book (turns out it was *In the Dark Places* by Peter Robinson) but quickly turned into something else. The "why" was satisfying, but the "how" didn't quite work for me. And the "why" isn't as telegraphed as it might have been, but it is there for those closely following. What didn't work for me was the inclusion of far more Peak District information than usual, at times just sounding like a history brochure rather than organically arising from the plot.

ARC provided by publisher.

Dannii Elle says

Actual rating 3.5 stars.

I received this book for a Goodreads Giveaway. Thank you to the author, Stephen Booth, and the publisher, Sphere, for the opportunity. This has in no way impacted my judgement and all opinions are my own.

The Murder Road is the 15th installment in the Cooper and Fry crime series and the first book I have read from it. It did not impact my enjoyment or understanding and, from what I have gathered, each book serves as a standalone crime with only the same characters linking each book together.

The disappearance of a lorry driver and the blockage of the one road in and out of Shawhead is not something the occupants of the small farming village in the Peak District are used to. Their reluctance to cooperate with the police and mingle with each other is something Detective Cooper is unaccustomed to either. While attempting to solve one crime, it seems a whole can of worms has opened and it is now Cooper's job to discover where the driver went, and why, and what exactly the citizens of Shawhead know about it.

The setting for this novel was evocatively described and yet, for some reason, I found it hard to imagine my surroundings. Perhaps, in parts, there was an element of this being overly descriptive and historically and geographically accurate that it deterred from the story and impacted my utter alignment and involvement with the tale.

This book has a great set of characters and an interesting story line and my only reason for not rating it higher is that I have just binge read Mo Hayder's more shocking crime fiction and am unaccustomed to, and was not expecting, this slower-paced rural crime story.

Jen says

This is my first Stephen Booth book, as usual I happened upon it by accident at our local library and based on reviews here on Goodreads, decided to give it a try. Just annoyed that it happens to be No. 15 in the series first, but that won't stop me catching up on the previous ones.

The reading by Mike Rogers was excellent, just love hearing those wonderful British accents.

4.5 stars!

Deanne says

Do enjoy this series though I'm beginning to worry about Ben Cooper, he needs a life outside of his job before he takes to drink and turns into Rebus. As for Fry, where is she? Nottingham, really Diane what were you thinking, a job in the peak or the city, hmm.

As for the crime it's fun trying to work out what is going on before Ben.

Gary says

With this series, as I have indicated, before, I, sometimes, feel that I am reading a travelogue for the Peak District, but the core story was very good, perhaps, because the Wicked Witch of the North, Diane Fry, played little part.

Kate says

Loved this! A fantastic setting, great characters, intriguing mystery. I don't know why this series has passed me by but I intend to correct that. Just bought the first three.

Clare O'Beara says

Another good look at crime in the historic Peak District. Landscape comes to the fore again in the tale of a truck driver whose sat nav and diversion signs take him off a route and get him stuck under a rural bridge. When a woman of a nearby hamlet drives up and finds her way home blocked, there is no sign of the driver, bar a bloodstain. In other hands this might be a lead in to a horror story but with Stephen Booth we can be reliably assured that a painstaking police operation gets under way.

Ben Cooper the country cop is unsure whether to buy a cottage, since his life was overturned a little while ago. Diane Fry makes a brief appearance and is concerned with her work in Nottingham. She pulls away from what might have become a deepening friendship. Cooper has a recent promotion, and is still coming to

terms with his new role.

Watch out for a roadside truckers' café, a sweet factory still making Refreshers, pygmy goats, a new Asian officer and the usual moneyed blow-ins who wanted a house with a view and were prepared to spend. This vibrant mix makes this fifteenth story in the series quite distinct and still a fresh addition. I enjoyed the read; and the message that we can't expect police officers to lead uncomplicated, happy lives is apt, given the horrible jobs they do.
