



Crossbones Yard

Kate Rhodes

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Introducing Alice Quentin, a London psychologist with family baggage, who finds herself at the center of a grisly series of murders.

Alice Quentin is a psychologist with some painful family secrets, but she has a good job, a good-looking boyfriend, and excellent coping skills, even when that job includes evaluating a convicted killer who's about to be released from prison. One of the highlights of her day is going for a nice, long run around her beloved London - it's impossible to fret or feel guilty about your mother or brother when you're concentrating on your breathing - until she stumbles upon a dead body at a former graveyard for prostitutes, Crossbones Yard.

The dead woman's wounds are alarmingly similar to the signature style of Ray and Marie Benson, who tortured and killed thirteen women before they were caught and sent to jail. Five of their victims were never found. That was six years ago, and the last thing Alice wants to do is to enter the sordid world of the Bensons or anyone like them. But when the police ask for her help in building a psychological profile of the new murderer, she finds that the killer - and the danger to her and the people she cares about - may already be closer than she ever imagined.

With gripping suspense and a terrific new heroine, Kate Rhodes's *Crossbones Yard* introduces a powerful new voice in crime fiction.

Crossbones Yard Details

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Author : Kate Rhodes

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From Reader Review Crossbones Yard for online ebook

Debbie says

i just cannot believe that Louise Penny actually said this book as 'an atmospheric, smart, of ten terrifying read." If you read mysteries then you will know exactly what is going to happen in this book - THERE ISN'T ONE SURPRISE...NOT ONE.

And to even make it even worse is the lack of depth and development the author gives to the police characters...they are like cartoons.

SPOILERS AHEAD>

We have a shrink who is extremely claustrophobic and a killer who kidnaps and locks women into small tight boxes - so does anyone think that our shrink will be captured and locked into a box? - Check

We have unsympathetic and apparently stupid cops - her brother is a suspect (to everyone but the reader), she is being stalked, getting threatening letters, her house broken into, and women are being dumped where she will find them...and then her best friend goes missing - but the above mentioned unsympathetic and apparently stupid cops don't take the missing friend as anything to worry about. Has the friend been taken by the murderer? check.

We have an ex-lover with apparently anger issues - is he the one? Do I even have to answer that..

Maybe it is her new mysterious lover- a cop with a past he keeps hidden, a cop that upset her drugged addled brother, a cop too good to be true..of course it's him.

I burst out laughing at her snarky jab at Starbucks - 'but at least they're easy to find, round signs on every street corner, the same dirty green as a US dollar.'" Her disdain for the US dollar didn't stop her from writing a cookie cutter paint by numbers mystery selling for \$24.99.

I was stuck in a waiting situation and this was the only book I had with me so sheer boredom is the reason I even finished it. In a weeks time I won't even remember what it was about.

Jane says

I'm wary of dark crime fiction, preferring to read just a handful of authors I know I can trust, but I read words of praise that made me think I might have found another name to add to my list. Now that I have read her first novel, 'Crossbones Yard', I can say that I have.

There are many elements that are familiar in this book, but the quality of the writing was such that I didn't mind. It made the characters, their worlds, their situations lived and breathed. And, as this is the first book in a series, and a first crime novel by the author, I see great potential for future books.

The central character, Alice Quentin, is rather like so many other women at the centre of crime fiction series;

highly capable in her professional life but rather less capable in her personal life. But she is much better drawn, much more credible, than most – if not all – of the others. She's a psychologist, and she is clearly driven, she clearly works hard, and so she has done well. Particularly since she didn't have the best of starts in life. Her father was abusive; he tyrannised his family. Now he has died, Alice's relationship with her mother is strained, and her relationship with her mentally ill brother, who she desperately wants to help and support, is strained. She holds people at a distance, and her relationships with men tend to be short term; but she is a loyal friend. And at night she runs. Coping strategies maybe, but she was coping with life not just with her past. As we all do. The point I'm trying to make is that there was cause and effect, that there was depth, that the psychology rang true, and that Alice was a credible, believable character.

Alice asked by the police to assess Maurice Cley – a known associate of Ray and Marie Benson, who had been convicted for murdering thirteen young women at the London hostel they ran – as he was due to be released from prison. Her assessment was that Maurice wasn't likely to reoffend, but soon there was another murder bearing all of the Bensons' trademarks – including some that had never been made public. And it became clear that Alice was at risk

The story had many familiar elements, and the Benson case was clearly inspired by the case of Fred and Rosemary West, but the story played out well enough. What brought it to life though, was Alice's story. She ended one relationship and began another – with a policeman. She was putting up an actress friend. She was deeply concerned about her brother, who had parked his van nearby, and she feared that he might have seen things or done things.

It was a wonderful human story, and it was clear that Kate Rhodes really understood her characters and difficult mental health issues. The psychology was pitch perfect, and her view was clear and unflinching. And I see so much potential here for a series.

Alice did, to some degree, place herself at risk. But I did understand that she wanted – needed – to keep running, to stick to her usual routine. And I realised, near the end, when she paid the price, that what she did that night she did in the heat of the moment, without thinking it through. She wouldn't be the first, and she definitely wouldn't be the last.

That set up a dramatic conclusion. It felt inevitable, and I had identified the killer correctly, but it was the sort of book that made that not matter. I was caught up in Alice's story, in an excellent psychological drama.

And I must praise the writing – Kate Rhodes uses words very, very well, and she has the rare and wonderful gifts of being able to load a sentence with meaning and be subtle at the same time. That quality of writing, and fine creation and understanding of character and relationships, are more than good enough for me to want to keep reading her books.

Raven says

Now to London in the contemporary era in the company of Kate Rhodes' Crossbones Yard which has been languishing on my shelves for far too long. The first of a series introducing claustrophobia-suffering, relationship-fearing psychologist, Alice Quentin, who finds herself unwittingly drawn into the world of a serial killer by virtue of her consultancy work for the Metropolitan police. Using Crossbones Yard, a neglected piece of London ground that was used as a cemetery for fallen women as a locus, Rhodes weaves

an intriguing psychological thriller, with a sublime nod to the real life case of murderers Fred and Rosemary West. Alice is a likeable enough character, fitting wonderfully into the mould of psychologically troubled psychologist- physician heal thyself perhaps- who finds herself in some degree of peril throughout. Perhaps, because of my voracious crime reading, the identity of the perpetrator of the heinous crimes was a little too obvious quite early on, but despite this I had a resolute compunction to read on, as I found Alice a compelling figure throughout, and found the band of emotional misfits and miscreants she encounters both professionally and personally rather engaging. I have bought the next in the series so that's probably a good recommendation.

LeseMaus says

#Beendet

???

Kate Rhodes

"Im Totengarten"

-Thriller-

Ein fesselnder Thriller mit einer Psychologin in der Hauptrolle, der mich gut unterhalten hat. Ein Buch, das viel zu lange auf meinem SuB gelegen hat.

Christine says

Alice Quentin is a psychologist living in London. Alice likes going running alone and she is not afraid of the dark seedy parts of town. During one of her runs, she encounters the body of a dead female at Crossbones Yard. Soon Alice is receiving threatening letters from a killer, who seems rather attached to her.

A good solid first novel by Kate Rhodes. Although I felt at times, I had read it all before, I loved Rhodes' writing style and that kept me reading.

What stood out for me in this book was Alice. She is the kind of psychologist who needs a psychologist. She is complex. That made her very endearing and quite fascinating. She has her flaws and we see them clearly. She is strong and there is nothing that appeals to me more than a strong, well written lead character.

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

I deliberated between 3 and 4 stars for this book, I am settling on 3 stars in the end (I will explain why). So, I am a huge crime fiction reader, it's my most read genre, I have no secrets around that, and as the years go on I find I am getting fussier with this genre, largely due to some spectacular 5 star reads I have read in the last year.

What's this book about then?

Alice Quentin is a psychologist with some painful family secrets, but she has a good job, a good-looking boyfriend, and excellent coping skills, even when that job includes evaluating a convicted killer who's about to be released from prison. One of the highlights of her day is going for a nice, long run around her beloved London, it's impossible to fret or feel guilty about your mother or brother when you're concentrating on your breathing until she stumbles upon a dead body at a former graveyard for prostitutes, Crossbones Yard.

The dead woman's wounds are alarmingly similar to the signature style of Ray and Marie Benson, who tortured and killed thirteen women before they were caught and sent to jail. Five of their victims were never found. That was six years ago, and the last thing Alice wants to do is to enter the sordid world of the Bensons or anyone like them. But when the police ask for her help in building a psychological profile of the new murderer, she finds that the killer and the danger to her and the people she cares about may already be closer than she ever imagined.

My Review:

Alice Quentin has had a traumatic childhood, not surprisingly she is now a Psychologist, helping others heal their trauma. She is asked to become involved in helping the police after a murder occurs that bears the hallmarks of two horrific husband and wife serial killers who are both out of action now. Do they have a copycat killer? Alice is asked to assess.

Very early in this book, a few chapters in I picked out the killer, unfortunately the author left too many pointers and clues and although I had doubts here and there I hung on to this early instinct and was right.

The bad thing about knowing early is you look at the entire book differently, the interactions, the conversations, it's almost like the mystery is taken away. For me this dropped my rating to 3.5 stars, as I don't want to guess the killer a couple of chapters in please.

So, I tried to put that aside (but could not), and read on. It's a pleasant and easy read, easy on the brain, no need to concentrate intensely, I read the book in less than two hours. Nothing complex about it.

I found Alice's character annoying a bit as a professional woman, she shows some very gullible traits for a woman versed in the world of psychology (like letting in an ex-con who is being watched into her home and offering a cup of tea!) Um. No. You just don't do that, even the average woman knows that. I mean, why? Anyway, you get what I mean. Maybe I am being picky, but that just sounded weird to me.

She runs a lot too, you get a tour of London, street names, famous landmarks, buildings whilst she is jogging around town, she runs even though women are being murdered on the streets. Not sure if she is fearless or stupid.

The plot starts to pick up pace with events coming close to home for Alice, things are NOT making sense to her at all (it did to me because I had guessed the killer). She suddenly finds herself in danger and a target and has no idea why.

One of the better characters in this book was Lola, her housemate, her bouncy personality and zest for life came across as very genuine in the book, I liked her. She was fun. And the opposite in personality to Alice, so a good balance for each other as friends.

Alice digs into the old case files from the murders of the five girls who have not been found, she is trying her best to piece it together to help the police. Meanwhile her love life is all over the place, hot and cold, will she ever let anyone close to her heart again? Don't worry, it's not overflowing with flowery romantic moments but we do get insight into her heart and mind.

There are some scenes that did not ring accurate to me in relation to police procedures like the police allowing Alice to close the eyes of a murder victim she views *at the crime scene*, even though the police comment forensics won't like it. Of course they won't, she's contaminating a fresh crime scene. Ahem?

It's not a bad book, I did like it overall, I think if I did not read so much crime fiction my rating might be higher but I saw too many flaws in the killer's identity being hinted at too early and inaccurate procedural details.

The positives are that I was pushed on to keep reading, and whilst I felt the ending was too quick and could have stretched on a bit longer to create more tension and suspense, it was okay. A middle of the road crime thriller. I will try another book in this series to see how it may be improved upon.

Mark says

This is actually the first novel read this year and it is at the same time the debut novel of this writer who has done well in the field of poetry. Which is an art form I am not very comfortable with even if I can enjoy them on occasion.

The main character Alice Quentin is not your average easy going female with a smart lip. She comes from a traumatized family where violence was common. Her brother being the genius suffered a psychosis and lives from his van and his sister who became a psychologist tries to help him and does a really poor job.

Alice is not very good at relationships but can help other people very well, she is more of a solo person who trusts nobody really well. During one of her long distance runs she needs to get her head clear she finds the corpse of a lady of the night. It will prove to be the first of many and she and her brother get far more involved than they really want or need. When Alice gets pulled into the police investigation as a professional she gets over her head. And if that is not enough the killer has found out about her and really wants her.

As a thriller it was a rather nice first attempt but nothing spectacular, however the world according to Alice is actually quite well done and you get swept away with the heroine of the tale. Kate Rhodes does write an interesting leading character and gives the people around her a real-life feeling of being a person that actually is more than a description. I really liked that aspect.

I will visit Alice Quentin for sure in the near future (having the next two books on my shelves somewhere kinds does help)

An interesting debut with an interesting female perspective on the genre.

Lizzie Hayes says

‘Cross Bones Yard’ by Kate Rhodes

Published by Mulholland Books, June 2012. ISBN: 978-1-444-73875-9

Psychologist Alice Quentin is approached by DCI D on Burns of Southwark police to visit Morris Cley who is being released from prison the next day owing to a technicality. Cley's mom was close friends with Ray and Marie Benson who had killed 13 women before they were caught, tried and imprisoned. Five of their victims were never found. What Burns wants to know is how much of a threat to society is Morris Cley.

A few days later running off a difficult telephone conversation with her boyfriend Sean, who is making her feel suffocated, Alice finds a body at Crossbones Yard, now a waste ground partially cleared, which was the site of Crossbones Cemetery where over a thousand prostitutes were buried between the 1850's and 1994.

Later DCI Don Burns contacts Alice to look at the body as he says the wounds are similar to those on the victims of the murders committed by Ray and Marie Benson and he suspects Morris Cley. Then Don Burns brings in DS Alvarez, the bad-tempered detective whom Alice had met the night she found the body, a man with a permanent scowl, who feels that Alice maybe able to help.

In the midst of this Alice is dealing with her brother Will who is bipolar and lives in a van in her drive, refusing to move into the house. Will is unpredictable alternating between docility and violent episodes. Into this uncomfortable situation arrives her friend the actress Lola who despite being exotic and excitable seems to be able to calm Will.

Soon the letters start and then another body - someone Alice knows, so is the killer someone close to Alice?

The book is beautifully written with many atmospheric descriptions of London. Alice is an interesting character with issues, the history of which is slowly revealed to the reader as the book progresses. This is a fast paced compelling story that has a stunning climax that left me reeling. I just didn't see it coming. Put this on your 'must read' list.

Lizzie Hayes

Cheryl says

Alice Quentin is a psychologist. Alice has a routine. She loves to run alone at night. This is a bad combination, especially running through a bad neighborhood filled with gangs and murders. During her run, Alice spots something on the ground at Crossbones Yard. Crossbones Yard is a former location for prostitutes.

With the murder, it brings back an reference to an old case of the Bensons. The Bensons were a husband and wife couple who killed about a dozen prostitutes and buried them all over their property. Alice helps with the case.

Crossbones Yard is a very nice debut novel from new crime author, Kate Rhodes. This book did deliver on my expectations. Kate Rhodes delivers up a nice sampling of what she has to offer as an author and why she is making a name for herself with Crossbones Yard.

Alice is a strong female lead. She can take care of herself. Even among lots of male testosterone. I had my mind made up between two suspects as to whom the real killer was. Let's say that I was wrong and did not

put it together until the last part of the book right before the killer's identity was revealed. While there was a possible romance trying to start for Alice, I like that it never fully blossomed into anything serious. Alice may fall for a guy quickly but she still has her guard up. This book is milder in regards to crime novels go. There is not a lot of gore, so readers of this genre who do not like lots of blood or swearing will enjoy this book.

Jade Hoggins says

This novel hits all the tropes in a mostly fulfilling way.

Alice is a high achiever with a terrible past, which, of course, makes it difficult for her to let anyone get close to her.

As usual, as protagonist she makes a lot of stupid decisions in order to advance the plot. Going for runs at night in East London when there is someone killing young women in the area and sending her death threats. Escaping those whose job it is to protect her. Having sudden bursts of lust for men who are aggressive and controlling towards her. So far so female protagonist of any romance/crime/UF/paranormal romance.

However, I think Rhodes made a strong case for Alice's bad choices being a result of her 'terrible past'(tm). Psychologically, she hit a lot of the main criteria for someone with those kinds of experiences, and it was conveyed without being too heavy-handed, which was refreshing.

That being said, Alice Quentin was a terrible, terrible psychologist. Certain things stuck out to me in particular: her positive prognosis for recovery in a patient suffering from anorexia, based on behaviour that was fairly standard for someone suffering from an eating disorder. Her belief in a convicted murderer's innocence after a brief conversation that made me wonder if she was hearing and seeing an entirely different exchange to the one printed on the page.

At the very least she was a terrible judge of character, but the whole book was her using her skills as an accomplished and celebrated psychologist to make snap judgements about people that were consistently and completely proved utterly wrong.

I also got tired of reading about her scorn for people's weight problems, eating habits and television watching. Yes, you run every day, congratulations, you're better than everyone else. Even if you do it because standing still might mean you have to face up to some of your problems for once.

Which is to say that Alice was an engaging, well-written character with dimension, who confounded, irritated and amused me at various different points.

I predicted the killer quite early in the book, but to be honest, it was pretty easy to separate the good from the bad by seeing how Alice felt about them and believing the opposite.

Olivermagnus says

Crossbones Yard is the first book of a series featuring Dr. Alice Quentin, a psychologist who comes from an abusive background herself. In the prologue we see Alice as a child, hiding in a closet while her drunken father beats her mother. Then we leap forward twenty five years where Alice is consulting for the police to determine how closely they need to monitor the soon to be released Morris Cley, a suspected serial killer. One night while jogging, Alice, who is an obsessive runner, stops for a rest at Crossbones Cemetery. She notices the remains of a naked woman with knife cut crosses all over her body. Alice tries to help the police with the investigation but before long she is trapped in the middle of a horrifying escalation of murders and anonymous letters.

Most of the characters in this story are unsympathetic. That includes Alice herself, her obsessive surgeon boyfriend, Sean, and Will, her drug-addicted and mentally ill brother, who lives in a van outside her building. We also get a chance to meet Marie Benson, an imprisoned serial killer, who along with her dead husband killed visitors to the hostel they owned.

I didn't like this book much in the beginning but eventually I became intrigued by the story. It is the author's debut and I see there are four other books in the series. I always like to give a 3 Star book a second chance so I'm planning to pick up A Killing of Angles sometime in the future.

Susan says

I read this in 24 hours! I couldn't put it down. A thriller that draws you in and won't let you go.

Thanks to Goodreads for my copy, it came with Winter Foundlings which I am to start now.

Sara says

This is a story about damaged people and the damage they inflict on one another; it threw me for a loop, but I won't say why. Although the story has a formulaic plot and predictable structure, there is a refreshing aspect that turns the damsel-in-distress genre on its head. There are some rather tired plot points, obvious red herrings and many of the characters seem to come from a writer's stock catalogue, but Rhodes manages to do some interesting and surprising things with them.

The actions of Alice, the main character, are designed by the author, to have her run (sometimes literally), into the brooding Alvarez who manages to turn up in some pretty contrived circumstances; there are times when one questions if this is a mystery/ thriller, or a harlequin romance. While Alice is a more interesting character than usual, she still makes bonehead choices and is frustratingly uncommunicative and lacking in personal insight for an admired psychologist who is supposed to be at the top of her game. Alice's character is emotionally stunted and often lacks credibility, but Rhodes does a good job of depicting her restless nature, need to run and feel physical autonomy.

I also applaud the author's descriptive passages of London; she brings the city to life in a meaningful way and proves that she can be a capable and thoughtful writer, and despite some clunky passages and unrealistic

action, there was enough substance to this novel that I felt it deserved three stars.

Carol says

Thanks to Goodreads for the chance to read this book.

The story line was a bit predictable. It felt more like a TV series than a novel. I did not feel that there was much character development or much of an interesting plot. The main character was a Psychiatrist which could have been written with a lot more enthusiasm. The concept of the novel could have made a chilling novel and am disappointed in the lack of effort.

Marcia Ferguson says

It was a no-brainer to choose this book ... gorgeous cover and Louise Penny recommending it in her 'blurb'.

Now I'm wondering if Louise read it. I appreciated the intelligent way author Kate Rhodes depicted each of the detectives. They were unique and interesting people, with plenty of small details to bring their personalities out to the reader. And it was a page-turner because I suspected red-herrings half way into the book, chose my 'culprit' and kept reading to see if I was correct. I wasn't. And yet my choice made much more sense than 'whodunit'. One reviewer on Amazon said that it was as if Ms. Rhodes put all the men's names in a hat and drew one out as the murderer. Sounds about right to me.

I view reading books as an investment in time. If a book has a great sense of place, it's usually good enough for me ... a main character I can relate to or cheer for, I'm in ... a tedious book until the very end when it's redeemed, and I'm satisfied.

This however, featured a main character that was unlikeable and foolish to the nth degree. And a very bizarre ending, with seemingly unexplained bits all through it, particularly the main character's brother.

Let me say, though ... I purchased another book at the same time I bought this one. A Terry Shames book ... and as soon as I finished Crossbones Yard, I began reading The Last Death of Jack Harbin, and it's terrific! In the vein of William Kent Krueger, it's well-written and a joy. So that's my recommendation - not this, but that.
