



Cruel Justice

M.A. Comley

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The headless body of a wealthy widow is discovered decomposing in Chelling Forest. Detective Inspector Lorne Simpkins and her partner, DS Pete Childs are assigned to the case. A few days later another victim, this time a young girl, is discovered. Who could the killer be and what's the connection between the two victims? Then after a third murder, the killer contacts Lorne with a grisly surprise. It looks like Lorne has a serial killer on her hands - and one that has become fixated on her. As she tries to solve the crimes, Lorne is also coping with a failing marriage and new, unsympathetic boss with whom she has a secret past. Then, as she begins to despair at the lack of clues, help arrives from an unlikely source.

Cruel Justice Details

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From Reader Review Cruel Justice for online ebook

Li'l Owl says

The pain intensified from the welts on her naked back. The woman had no concept of time, no idea how long she'd been tied up. Her hands, tightly bound to an old wooden chair, had lost all feeling. Was this how her life would end?

When a decomposing torso is found in Chelling Forest, DI Lorne Simpkins and her partner, DS Pete Childs, lead the investigation. All that can be determined so far is that the victim is female, was killed somewhere else, and time of death was approximately one month ago. Identifying the women and determining cause of death isn't possible as the head and right arm are missing and the digits of her left hand have been removed. There's only one thing that is certain is the manner of death. HOMICIDE.

Then, a sixteen year old young woman is reported missing.

"The desk sergeant says a girl was reported missing last night in the vicinity of Chelling Forest." Suddenly the case has spun off in an ominous direction.

Is it a coincidence, or do we have yet another murder on our hands? Could we be dealing with a serial killer?

Cruel Justice by M.A. Comley is the first in the *DI Lorne Simpkins* series.

I'm not sure how to review this book other than to say it wasn't for me. I had a number of difficulties with the storyline, so many in fact, that if I hadn't been reading it for a couple of challenges I probably wouldn't have started reading it in the first place. I'm not a fan of writing negative reviews but I do honor my responsibility to give my honest thoughts about a novel. So, I'll just say a few things that I did and didn't like about it.

What I Didn't Like...

I had difficulty liking any of the characters but what I had the most problem with were the inconsistencies in the storyline.

Lorne has just been promoted to a Detective Inspector. She and her partner, DS Pete Childs, have been together for four years and have a high percentage of solving cases. But in this story Lorne and Pete don't seem to be taking this case seriously considering the brutality of the murders.

I'll not lay it out but the lines of inquiry, evidence, potential suspects, etc. seemed amateurish at best. The facts surrounding the case kept changing chapter to chapter, often becoming inconsistent as the investigation progressed. It was pretty confusing. The forensics of the case didn't hold up to reality in any sense either. Example: The pathologist gets a DNA result overnight. It's the pathologist who compares the fingerprints with no mention of an automated fingerprint system that is standard world wide.

The other part of the storyline that was confusing to me concerns Loren's struggles at home.

Loren's marriage and family life is suffering from all the overtime she works. However, there wasn't much evidence to back this up. When they get some lines of inquiry to start with, Loren, Pete, and her team call it a day (around five pm) and go home. This is in the middle of a triple homicide investigation with a dangerous

and ruthless killer on the loose. Then, when they finally get a solid lead they all head home for the night, again. Everyone, including Lorne.

It's not really for me to determine how to run a murder investigation but crime thrillers, both fiction and non-fiction, have been my favorite genre for over thirty years, and forensic science is one of my passions. So...

What I liked...

Honestly, there wasn't a lot in the book that fits this category but I was interested enough to see it through to the very end. And, as this is the first in a series, the reader was left with quite a juicy cliffhanger.

So, overall, this is a generous 3★ rating for me. Not horrible but not very good either.

Isabel says

This book started out as being the book I would read as I walked on my treadmill. This book was so interesting that I started reading it in between my exercises. The closer I got to the end, the more I was unable to put the book down. This book will keep the reader guessing or trying to figure out who the killer was. This is a great read, highly recommended. It was rated 4 stars because the writer failed to develop all of Lorn's staff, what happened to Jacque and how did her husband feel after he learned what she had been up against.

Pamela(AllHoney) says

The first book in the *Lorne Simpkins* series by M.A. Comley. Detective Inspector Lorne Simpkins is called to a homicide of a headless woman. She and her partner DS Pete Childs investigate. They discover the woman was a rich widow and not long after another woman is murdered. Meanwhile, her marriage is in peril and this case is not helping.

I got this as a freebie. The mystery of the story kept me reading but I confess I didn't care for the heroine. I felt she could have worked harder for her marriage and daughter. The story is set in England and written by a British author, making some of the lingo unfamiliar. That wasn't really an issue, though. Overall, I did find it an entertaining read.

Lisette Kristensen says

Cruel Justice was my introduction to Ms. Comley and she did not disappoint. I am a sucker for a troubled female protagonist that fight through a personal hot mess to show their strength and come out on top. Every element of the mystery was on target. The pace was quick, dicey subplots and tightly woven characters that brought a twisted ending.

Don't miss this one ... now to book 2!

Sean Talbot says

the starting of a series about Lorne Simpkins which I have heard about for quite some time. I waited a long time to read this and I wish now I had read it sooner.

the book had so much in it. what a tale one full of pain and revenge. the characters felt so real. Lorne fighting for her life and her family.

a great start to the series. can't wait to see what the author does next to Lorne.

Lorne Simpkins is recently promoted and she is a cunning lady that seems to have the grip of a pit bull. she is so strong yet also has a tender side to her as well. this is a winning combo as the character is just amazing.

Pete the partner who seems to be the helpful hand behind Lorne. he keeps her on track and uses true police work instead of intuition the way Lorne does.

Sean the new chief and one with a past dealing with Lorne. does he have an axe to grind or will he be the helpful boss that is needed to solve the murders.

murders are happening that are very gruesome and for some reason this killer has a special like for Lorne Simpkins. what happens when these two butt heads is anyone's guess.

Amanda says

I was asked to read & review 'Cruel Justice' by Mel Comley?? . All I can say is wow what a book. I read it in slightly less than 24 hours which for me is good going. I won't post many spoilers. The book had me gripped from start to finish. The characters were certainly believable and indeed I have known people in the past who display similar traits. The story follows policewoman DI Lorne Simpkins as she investigates a series of crimes. As with all crime fiction heroes she has her faults and has problems both at home & at work. The book was written in a style that hooked you from the beginning and as soon as I finished it I wanted to start the next one. You could say it was like a TV soap as in you can't wait for the next episode. The book finished with a duff duff moment (a la Eastenders)- a dramatic cliffhanger so to speak. I would award this book five stars as I loved it so much and I will definitely be reading the rest of the series as I need to know what happens!!!

Joseph - Relax And Read Reviews says

Cruel Justice by M.A. Comley is the first novel in her highly acclaimed Justice Series. I have read all the novels in this series, all wonderfully written, but in my opinion this certainly remains one of the best.

This novel starts off with a horrific scene of torture and execution-style murder. The victim is a woman and from the dialogue it is obvious that she and the murderer had had some sort of history between them but we are not yet given any further information. The woman is held tied up to a chair in some filthy place. This

appears to be some sort of revenge being carried out by the perpetrator for something this woman had done or more properly not done to him in the past.

We are then introduced to the star character of the Justice series, D.I. Lorne Simpkins. She is at home with her husband Tom intending to pass a relaxing evening with him but which unfortunately quickly turns sour as they begin to argue. Tom is a stay-at-home husband, he does all the home chores and takes care of their only daughter Charlie while Lorne spends long days at work. Tom is fed up with this situation, they have been increasingly drifting apart and their marriage has reached its breaking point.

Lorne is called to Chelling Forest where a headless woman's body is discovered, this being the same woman from the torture scene. There she meets her police partner D.S. Pete Childs to begin their investigation. Lorne and Pete are really close and I liked the banter going on between them. Pete is also a close friend of her husband Tom.

As more bodies are found, Lorne and Pete find themselves in a race against time to try and find some connection between the victims which may hopefully lead them to the murderer.

With a bunch of great characters and loads of suspense, Cruel Justice is a highly enjoyable thriller which will take you on a breath taking roller-coaster ride. I highly recommend it !!

Suzanne says

Sorry, but it's hard for me to get into a book when I absolutely cannot sympathize with the main character.

I'm okay with flawed characters. Okay with recovering drug addicts who slip, bitchy women, guys who can't commit. But this main character is straight-out mean, and clueless.

For instance: She and hubby have a bit of a dustup because she works late. By way of apology he asks if she wants breakfast. She says she'll grab a shower first, and then he actually apologizes (even though she hasn't). And then? "Half an hour later, she found him at the hob frying bacon and eggs. 'Not for me, hon, I'll just grab a bowl of cornflakes and head off. Sorry...'"

He has a temper tantrum, and what does she think? Does she think, "Oops, maybe I shouldn't have asked for breakfast and then rejected it." Does she think, "Oops, I have rejected his peace offering."

No. She thinks: "Why do I bother."

Oh, did I mention she's supposed to be a detective? Yeah, there are professional detectives with tunnel vision who don't see cause and effect in their own relationships when they see them perfectly well elsewhere. But what the hell, this is so straightforward, how could she possibly miss it? He asks if he can cook her breakfast. **SHE SAYS YES.** Then upon finding him making her breakfast she says she'll just have cornflakes, and she doesn't understand why this upsets him?

She may redeem herself later. At some point in the book she may come back and say she realizes how awful she's been on account of she's the only one who can solve terrible crimes. I'll never know. I'm done with her. It wouldn't surprise me at all if she's the next victim, and in that case I'm guessing there would be way more

than just the one suspect.

Caleb Blake says

This review is cross-posted from Papyrus Independent Author Reviews
(<http://papyrus.calebblake.net/2013/10/25/cruel-justice-by-m-a-comley/>)

A headless body, a follow-up murder that appears unrelated until grisly evidence arrives in the mail. A serial killer is on the loose and as the body count rises, DI Lorne Simpkins finds that she is short of clues and time is running out.

Cruel Justice is the first book (chronologically) of a series of crime mysteries featuring DI Lorne Simpkins. I have to say up-front that I did not like this novel at all, but before I launch into a list of things I didn't like I thought I'd cover the one aspect that I thought was admirable – the prose itself.

Not only was the book I read completely error free, but although I might have had an issue or two with the effectiveness of the writing in certain scenes, there was nothing amateur-ish about the sentence construction. I thought, overall, it was effective and of publishable quality. It might seem like an insignificant aspect of the novel to praise, but for me, it's worthy of mention.

That stated, not much else about the novel delighted me. I had noticed that this book was labelled by some as a police procedural. It was a terribly unfair label for this novel and I wish I hadn't seen it before reading. I would have lost all faith in any police force that had operatives functioning the way DI Simpkins did in this novel. The most noticeable aspect of her investigative procedures were that they did not exist – at all. She was a muddle of impulses and gut feelings to the point where she would simply ignore or refuse to investigate the most obvious leads – not even to ensure that they were logically eliminated.

She could not have come across less like a real DI if she had followed leads from a psychic. Oh wait – she did! Not only that, but when the psychic's visions were actually concrete, there was no questioning of said psychic as a suspect. Our intrepid investigator instead decided to try and get her added as an ancillary resource to the case. I'm serious.

If the detective's lack of credibility wasn't bad enough, the book also felt a bit like an impostor. It is pushed by the author as a gritty thriller. Although there is an obvious effort to make the story dark and disturbing, it seems a little bolted on. The first scene, in particular, tries to take the reader to a dark place, but it felt totally lifeless to me. I felt no atmosphere, none of the fear or horror I should have felt with such a scene. It read like an express train to disgusting in an effort to quickly guarantee the classification of the novel.

So if I didn't think it was a gritty thriller, or a police procedural, what did I think it was? In my opinion, this novel felt like a romance that attempted to cross genre boundaries. Simpkins seems to play the part of a "woe is me" woman whose husband is selfish because he doesn't continue to shut up and support her regardless of the impact on his own life. Her marriage is threatened because of his selfishness and completely beyond her control – hmmmm. At this time, she suddenly develops a strong attraction to a work colleague. Apparently, she had nothing but distaste for him, but is now all aquiver; his handsome appearance and his French accent turning becalmed waters into a choppy sea of confusion – and hormones. To top it off, her superior retires to be replaced by a man with whom she had a "past". Complications abound in Simpkins' life. How is she going to cope with all these men? How is she going to save her marriage? How is she going to solve this

crime?

In fairness to the author, I'm exaggerating the romantic melodrama for effect. For a romance suspense cross-over it could well be that these elements were on point. Unfortunately, it came across to me as a romance in a clumsy costume, which brings me to my conclusion.

Grain of salt time. This was, quite clearly, not a book for me. I don't have much exposure to romance suspense cross-overs and usually avoid them. It was perhaps an error of judgement on my part to choose this book for review and I can't guarantee that I'm giving it the most appropriate perspective. Additionally, it seems that this series is quite popular, with plenty of fans who are obviously getting something out of it that I am not. However, if you happen to be more aligned with my tastes when it comes to crime mysteries and gritty thrillers, perhaps this review is useful.

Fiona says

This was reasonably well written and I read it fairly quickly. The plot was quite good and as a psychological crime thriller it pressed all the buttons. My main problem with the book was that I didn't like the main character. I understand that the author was showing the flip side of the normal 'man so caught up with his work that he neglects his family', but I would equally dislike the character if it had been a man. Lorne sees nothing of her husband and daughter but wallows in self pity and self justification when she is challenged either by her husband or her sister. Meanwhile she goes from hating the pathologist to going weak at the knees every time she sees or hears him in the space of a day. It stretches credibility and makes her appear very shallow and weak when we all know that a woman has to be incredibly strong to succeed in this profession.

Leaving the relationships between the characters aside, my other niggle was the actual police investigation and procedures. If someone turns up claiming to be a psychic, who not only leads them to a body but also knows specific details of the case, wouldn't the police investigate them not just assume that they really must be psychic?! When the killer is finally introduced, very late in the book, and Lorne goes to speak to him at his home, how could she, as an experienced Inspector, 'forget' that they are looking for a house next to a railway line? She blasts a second year police constable earlier for incompetence in not reporting a blood stain but then shows complete incompetence herself.

This is an easy read and it goes along at a good pace so if you like this genre then you'll probably enjoy it. It was ok but I don't think I'll be reading any more of the series.

Misfits farm says

Wow!! I am hooked! Lorne is a DI investigating a murder of a woman found in the woods. She has issues at home, but at work has a very trustworthy and dependable partner in Pete - a DS. I won't give away too much of the plot but what ensues are twists and turns in a very well written tale that keeps you gripped from beginning to end. Short, punchy chapters keep you turning the pages in scenes that you could picture as a TV series. I couldn't help but love Lorne and Pete, even though at times Lorne could have done with a few choice words- but then again we have Pete for that! This is the first in the series and hence stands alone. A brilliantly written book that will keep[you hooked. Off now to find where I put the next two .

Best Crime Books & More says

I was looking forward to reading the first in the Justice Series by Mel Comley as I keep seeing such great things about it. I am however very behind considering I think she has now released book 10 in the series' most recently. Detective Lorne Simpkins is the main lead of this series and it seems from the very beginning that all is not well in her marriage. Along with her partner DS Pete Childs they seem to work long and laborious hours. When a headless body is found, it seems their next long and arduous case has been found.

I certainly liked Lorne however although she was a good character and the writing was pretty good, there were parts of the story that felt a bit too stilted and maybe not as realistic as they could have. We meet additional characters but none that leave you wanting to know too much more. The story was interesting and certainly kept me reading, but there were parts that just weren't authentic enough for me.

Having said all of that, the writing was great and flowed well and although Lorne may not be a favourite character she held my interest. I think that this is a great start to a series, and am pretty sure that Mel Comley, like other authors has just improved with each book she writes. I am actually looking forward to how this series progresses and have already ordered book 2. Certainly a series that has a lot of potential and is great for people looking for new authors.

Rosalind Black says

Fast paced and gripping, a great quick fix for thriller / procedural fans to get their teeth into! Will definitely be reading more in the series.

Tara Lyons says

What a brilliant read - I was hooked from the very beginning, my heart was racing with the crimes committed.

Love the main character, Lorne. MA Comley writes her with real truth - strengths and flaws and I felt really drawn to her. I'm excited to read nor about her.

It's a very clever written book: short chapters (which meant I found it hard to put it down) that keep the momentum going. Horrific scenes and empathy for all characters concerned. Real detail in all the scene - I could really imagine the different parts of the book. I loved it.

So glad I've started my Justice Journey - for those of you that haven't, do it now!

Joan says

[The twin sister of the murdered woman is portrayed as an elderly (VERY elderly) woman who seemed to be in her eighties. *..the old lady asked, her voice high and squeaky..... her thin, weak arms..... frail old lady....* She is SIXTY-FIVE for heavens sake, not in her dotage. This is SO annoying. It's clichéd and inaccurate and also insulting.

There are pointless moments in the story - the retirement of the Chief is mentioned several
