

THE BODECIA BOOK CLUB REVIEW

Dead Simple by Peter James

Five young men go out on a stag night. The groom-to-be has always been a practical joker and his friends are determined to pay him back. All are the worse for drink when they bury the groom alive in a coffin and leave him, intending to return in an hour or two, but within minutes three of the young men are dead in a traffic accident and the fourth lies in hospital unconscious. Detective Superintendent Roy Grace investigates the disappearance of the groom and he's convinced that the bride-to-be and the groom's business partner know a lot more than they're telling.

Stupid things do get done on stag nights, but this really was more stupid than most! The lads are meant to be reasonably sensible, successful people, but they put Michael in the coffin, fasten the lid down and then put the coffin in the ground despite the fact that there's water in the hole. Then they put soil on top, even in a drunken state how must one feel to have that happen to them – you would soon sober up. We found the passages about the time Michael spent in the coffin terrifying and if reading about someone trapped in a claustrophobic situation is likely to bring on a panic attack you might want to avoid these bits - some of us skim read the parts when he is in the coffin!

When we were given this book I must admit we all thought it sounded very intriguing and wanted to dive in a get reading. We all found it a really good read and for the first time in book club history we all individually finished the book!

This is the first of a series of books featuring Detective Superintendent Roy Grace; this might be why he's burdened with a wife who disappeared completely some ten years earlier. We can only assume that this will be brought into play in a later book as it had no relevance to the plot of this one. We warmed to Roy Grace and his story, longing for there to be some happiness in it. It has all the hallmarks of popular detectives - Colin Dexter's Morse, Ruth Rendell's Wexford and Ian Rankin's Rebus.

There is a great twist at the end that came out of the blue; most of us did not see it coming! Fantastic and kept us gripped until the very end. We did not like the paragraphs that described Michael in the coffin, really really scared some of the group. It was great how Peter James described the feeling and used his expertise in writing horror! We did like the characters in the book and it was a roller coaster of our emotions and feelings towards the characters when finding out more about who they were. We would definitely read the next in the series.

The group contacted Peter James and asked for a quote and he kindly replied: "*The inspiration for this book came from that eternal question, how much can we trust anyone, even our best friends? I loved the idea of putting that to the ultimate test - when Michael Harrison is left buried alive after a stag night prank that goes disastrously wrong, he is sure that his best friend and business partner Mark Warren will rescue him. But Mark sees an opportunity here. By keeping quiet and letting Michael die, not only will he get his shares in the business, but his bride, too!" I'm very claustrophobic myself and had myself put in a coffin for 30 mins during my research, with the lid shut. I nearly died of fright during those 30 mins!!!*"

We gave Jump! **8 ½ / 10** (Now top of our reading list!)

The book we are now reading is **The Girl With A Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson**

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Don't forget the first rule of Book Club!