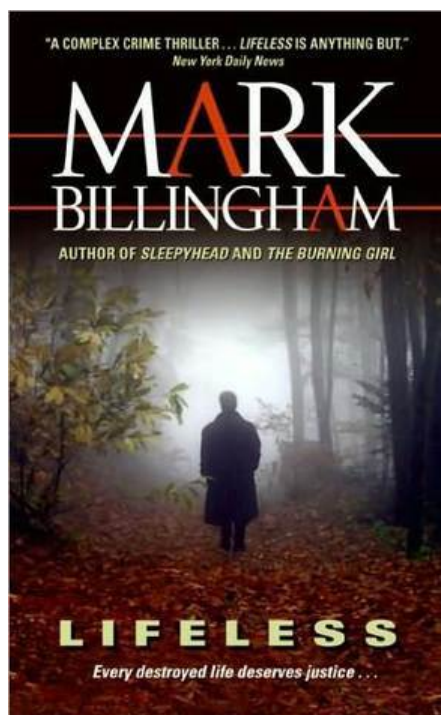




Lifeless

Mark Billingham

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A SERIES OF KILLINGS

Three men, sleeping rough on London's mean streets, have been found brutally murdered - each victim kicked to death and found with a £20 note pinned to his chest. But were they killed at random, or were they targeted for a reason?

A DEADLY MISSION

Tom Thorne is posted to the same streets - working undercover, disguised as a homeless man. In a harsh and harrowing underworld, Thorne discovers the horrifying link between the homeless victims and the perpetrators of a fifteen-year-old atrocity.

A RUTHLESS ENEMY

Those who know are keeping quiet. But the word on these streets is that the killer is a cop...

Lifeless Details

Date : Published (first published 2005)

ISBN :

Author : Mark Billingham

Format : Kindle Edition 481 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Thriller

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From Reader Review Lifeless for online ebook

Sarah says

This is the fifth book in the Tom Thorne series. This time Thorne goes undercover as a homeless person to investigate a series of killings.

This book is the best in the series so far, in my opinion.

It was an exciting read that had me on the edge of my seat- there was a very real feeling of danger as Thorne tries to stay safe while being undercover.

I enjoyed the change in setting a lot- most of the book was set on the streets.

The friendships Thorne developed with other homeless people was really touching-I especially enjoyed the friendship between Thorne and Spike.

Spike is such a great character and I really felt for him throughout the book.

As usual, the ending came as a complete shock, which was great.

I really can't fault this book, it was fantastic!

Fiona says

I actually gave up on this book, but I'm just going to include it in my 'read' shelf because I really made the effort to finish it. In fact, I think I've made too much effort and that left me thinking that screw this, reading isn't supposed to be torturous.

I've read another book by Mark Billingham before this. And it wasn't *that* bad. In fact, I remember some funny bits. But this one was completely different. The pace was excruciatingly slow, and I lost the interest to continue reading. I'm not putting the blame solely on the author and his way of storytelling. Part of the lack of motivation to continue reading this was also due to some other factors, most of them mainly because of my preferences in reading crime/thriller/mystery novels are heavily shaped by the suspense, action, and a little bit of humour in the story. Either I didn't pay enough attention to not notice any of those in this book, or they weren't there in the first place, I'm not really sure. What I'm sure is that some novels of this genre will entertain me and some won't, and that's just fine.

Gary says

The fifth book in the Tom Thorne series by Mark Billingham.

The more I read of this series the more I like it. Each book adds depth to the characters and only adds to the enjoyment. This novel is fast paced and gripped me so for me it was a very quick read.

Cate says

I liked this a lot. Brilliantly evocative - set in the streets of the West End amongst the homeless. This is part of a series and while the story stands on it's own, there is a subtext that clearly carries over from the preceding book. The story centres around the violent bashing deaths of homeless men, sleeping rough on the

streets. The police don't have a lot of leads, and the protagonist DI Tom Thorne goes undercover, living amongst the down & outs, with his ears to the ground trying to find out what's happening and why. Great characters and good dialogue. Possibly a little slow in places but not so much as to bore the reader, and the police really are coming at this from nothing, with one victim unidentified and no apparent connection between the those subsequently killed. I am planning to read more of this series.

Bodosika Bodosika says

This is an interesting read.
The narrative flows fluently,
The characters loveable,
Police procedures excellent and the relationship between ex soldiers or rather servicemen and homelessness statistically defined.
I will give this book 3 stars.

Jo says

Someone's killing homeless men on the streets of London so Thorne goes undercover as a 'rough sleeper'. I've realised that what I love about this series is that while Thorne is flawed, his flaws are pretty normal to the everyman unlike other crime fiction heroes and their curious peccadilloes. The other re-occurring characters in the novels have grown on me as well. This particular story had plenty of mystery to keep me entertained although I did figure out a few things before our intrepid detectives did but not the identity of the killer which I can never decide is a good thing or not.

Mark Harrison says

After a forgettable book four this was a great return to form. Guilt ridden after his father's death Thorne goes undercover with the homeless in London when someone starts kicking them to death. Very good story with plenty of regular characters featured and a keep you guessing mystery too. All in all very satisfying.

Ian Mapp says

This series of books takes a turn for the really interesting with this one.

After the nonsense of the last story, this one has a theme - homelessness - which the author paints with a sympathetic viewpoint - we are all two pay checks from the gutter is the sobering message.

This is a constant in the book and some fairly decent characterisation as Thorne sort of goes under cover after a breakdown following his fathers attack in the last book and joins the down and outs as three of their members have been kicked to death and he attempts to find the killer.

The story is ludicrous and involves members of a tank regiment in the gulf war and a video of torture and

eventual killing but this is secondary to another good portrait of the city of London and better all round story telling.

I will continue with the series.

Feergus says

A little bit preachy/'researchy' in places, (the main character is undercover as a homeless person and plucks stats regarding the issue out of the air with no explanation about where this information has come from during his stint on the streets), too many characters who play half a role and aren't distinguished enough from each other to be of any interest, a plot that drifts along in places, with some obstacles seemingly put in the way just so there are some, prose that is severely lacking in places (x picked up the paper then he turned the radio on, sat back, took a bite of his sandwich... boring), many chapters end with no great impetus to start the next. Ending was good, if a little out of left field and not foreshadowed enough.

Kelly says

I really, really could not get into this book. The only reason I managed to get as far as I did was because I love the Thorne character and I wanted to know about him, his life and the developments to him as a character for the sake of the series. The murders were sporadic and seemingly placed just to fill out huge chapters which just seemed concerned with telling me where Thorne was eating or sleeping. There was barely any real investigation which wouldn't have been too bad if we were getting some facts or an insight into the killer. I didn't fully finish the book but I just couldn't face picking it up again.

Tracey Walsh says

The fifth in the Tom Thorne series.

"Three men, sleeping rough on London's mean streets, have been found brutally murdered...Tom Thorne is posted to those same streets - working undercover, disguised as a homeless man."

I've thoroughly enjoyed the earlier books in this series but I found it hard to get into this one. I think the main reason was that I found it hard to believe that Thorne's undercover assignment could have gone ahead.

Consequently I spent most of the time muttering 'That wouldn't happen' and similar to myself. I actually put Lifeless aside three times to read other books, but there was no way I would abandon it completely - I have faith that the next books in the series will grab me as Mark Billingham's books usually do.

Bev Taylor says

some lives r cheaper than others

tom thorne is on unofficial gardening leave, penpushing in a cupboard after a work related problem

he then persuades his boss to send him undercover amongst the city's homeless where a rough sleeper murderer has claimed 3 victims, attaching a £20 note to 2 of them

this is dangerous but thorne looks and feels the part. he finds a link between the victims and an atrocity that happened 15 years ago but in trying to right this wrong he puts his own life in danger. also just whom can he trust and is a cop involved?

a master in story telling u really have to read this slowly to appreciate the prose. his use of words really resonates and sometimes u have to go back a couple of sentences to reabsorb

just one question - did they not consider it could have been one of the original victim's friend or relative seeking revenge ?

bev

Susan says

This is the fifth Tom Thorne novel and it sees him struggling both at work and in his personal life. After the death of his father, Thorne has been struggling to come to terms with his loss and finds himself shunted into a miserable desk job for which he has no interest in or patience with. When a colleague sounds him out about a string of violent murders of homeless men, on the streets of London, Thorne rashly suggests that he go undercover.

Once on the streets, Thorne begins to search for a link between the victims and eventually discovers something in the past which has led to the killings. However, apart from the actual crime story, this is also an exploration of why people end up on the streets. When Thorne muses that many people are literally two pay cheques away from ending up homeless, it is no exaggeration, and the author does a good job of portraying the life of the homeless in London – the boredom, the discomfort and the fear. I have to say that the character of Thorne himself is what makes me return to this series and I find him more likeable every time. Well plotted, with a good cast of characters, this is a well above average crime series.

Best Crime Books & More says

I like Tom Thorne, really I do...but for some reason this latest instalment was slow going. The premise sounded pretty good, but with the recent loss of his Dad, it seems Tom is somewhat on the edge. He is on Gardening leave, but when the opportunity comes up to go undercover within the London homeless community he can't resist. The writing is fabulous and to be honest this book made me realise just how bad the homeless situation in this country really is. From that perspective Billingham has done a stellar job, however when it comes to Thorne, by the end all I wanted to do was slap him around the chops and tell him to get a grip.

The crux of this latest book is that it seems a killer is targeting homeless people. With the homeless community closing ranks Tom Thorne elects to become 'homeless' and befriend some of the people on the street with the hope of getting clues on what people know and have seen. I really like recurring characters and Tom's colleague Dave Holland is no exception. It seems that even Holland is becoming tired of Thorne's transformation. The story rumbled along and there were moments that the suspense ratcheted up, but then it seemed to die off and I didn't feel the same oomph that I did when I read his first book Sleepyhead.

Overall, this latest instalment was a decent read, but certainly not enough to grab me by the short and curlies! I love the characters and MB's writing is great, I just felt like this book lacked its normal magic, so I will hope that the next book recaptures that by the bucketload.

Peter O'Connell says

As usual, terrific stuff from Billingham. Great writing, brilliant charcters, interactions and police procedure, lead by the always entertaining maverick DI Tom Thorne. Some interesting insights as well into issues around homelessness and the problems of ex-soldiers adapting to civilian life.
