



River's Edge

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The body of a girl washes up on a mud bank along the edge of the River Medway amid a litter of poisoned fish and sea birds, casting an accusing shadow upon the deadly secrets of the Majestic Paper Mill and its wealthy owners. Simple answers to the mystery begin to suggest insidious secrets, and very quickly Langdon St. Ives and his wife Alice are drawn into a web of conspiracies involving murder, a suspicious suicide, and ritual sacrifice at a lonely and ancient cluster of standing stones. Abruptly St. Ives's life is complicated beyond the edge of human reason, and he finds himself battling to save Alice's life and the ruination of his friends, each step forward leading him further into the entanglement, a dark labyrinth from which there is no apparent exit.

River's Edge Details

Date : Published September 30th 2017 by Subterranean Press

ISBN : 9781596068384

Author : James P. Blaylock

Format : Hardcover 213 pages

Genre : Fiction, Fantasy, Science Fiction, Steampunk

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From Reader Review River's Edge for online ebook

Kath says

This is the first book I have read by this author although it is book ten in the series. I am not sure how much that affected my enjoyment of the book but I do think it contributed to my initial struggle to place all the main characters.

We start with a Hasbro and St. Ives collecting samples from a river near by a paper mill. They are attacked and just manage to escape. We cut to the mill itself and see the conditions that the workers are in and the steps that the owner is taking to keep things quiet. The owner is getting on and not long for the world as he is sick himself and so he is trying to sell shares. This obviously angers his son.

And so the scene is set for all sorts of shenanigans as, along with the characters, we investigate all the bad guys' exploits, how they protect the innocent and wrongly accused as they endeavour to bring those responsible to justice.

Oh, and then there are the witches...

This was a delightful book for me to read. A little bit bonkers at times - but then I am a great believer that bonkers should have its own genre - but for the most, although predominantly a mystery, it was different enough to my usual read to be a bit of a breath of fresh air.

Also, unlike the majority of the books I read, most of the violence and was implied, reminding me of the old Hammer Horror films where there is atmospheric build up and the actual action is implied and only the aftermath is seen. I much prefer this sometimes cos, if you're like me and your imagination is quite vivid, this can be more horrific than actually reading about it.

With nine previous books in this series and a rather healthy back catalogue by the author besides, I am not sure I will be able to play catch up. But, on the face of what I read here, I would definitely dip into this author again.

My thanks go to the Publisher and Netgalley for the chance to read this book.

Dennis Murphy says

Not his absurdist steampunk fare but I'm a fan.

Ruth Feathers says

St. Ives takes on industrial pollution in this latest episode.

Alysa H. says

This book was just okay. Nothing really wrong with the writing per se, but the plot was boring, the characters thin and also mostly boring, and there was no worldbuilding or atmosphere to speak of beyond a general sense of 19th Century English country village. I am also confused that this book was purely historical fiction, where I was expecting fantasy of the gaslamp/steampunk variety.

Apparently this book is part of a series that normally features more fantastical elements but they are nowhere to be found in this installment. The "series" factor also goes some way to explaining the lack of character or

setting development: I guess we are supposed to know these people and places already? But in my opinion that doesn't wholly excuse the lack within this volume. Nor does it excuse the fact of readers having to watch St Ives et al. spending pages and pages working out the plot mysteries that we already know. There is an utter lack of suspense.

This book did very little for me, except perhaps kindle a mild interest in checking out an earlier book in the series just to find out what I was missing. Well, alright.

**** I received a Review Copy of this book via NetGalley ****

Andreas Flögel says

Mystery in Victorian Setting

River's Edge is a moody mystery and victorian adventure. But it differs from earlier novels of the series, because there is up to no steampunk in it.

Please do not see this as a complaint. It is meant as an observation.

We revisit here the cast of many of the other St. Ives adventures and the mystery to solve is murder, treachery and the destruction of nature. Especially the last theme is a very "modern" one, packed in a victorian tale.

You do not have to know the earlier St Ives stories to understand, what's going on. This makes this book an ideal choice for readers, who are not into steampunk, do not know the series, but like mysteries in a victorian setting.

And the fans of the series will digg it none the less.

As always, Subterranean produced a beautiful hardcover and the illustrations by J.K. Potter are great.

Joe Slavinsky says

A well-told tale, to be sure, but the last two "St. Ives Adventures" have disappointed me somewhat, as I expect a lot more from Mr. Blaylock. BTW, Goodreads lists this book as, "Narbondo #10", which is not true. This is one of the first St. Ives stories NOT to include any reference to the evil doctor. This book was really more a novella, at only 213 pages, though no less of a good story because of it.

Ralph Blackburn says

River's Edge by James Blaylock- A slight change in the St. Ives and Hasbro cannon. Still a Victorian adventure, but without much of the steampunk influence that flavors previous entries. This matters little as there are familiar characters and new threats galore to the gentle countryside far from bustling London. This is a tale of deception, murder, and thievery of more than just money but of lives and the very land they inhabit.

A paper mill along the river Medway is polluting its waters, killing its fish and birds, and making people ill.

Langdon St. Ives is investigating this with his friend Hasbro when they are set upon by persons unknown. Something about this paper mill is dark and unsavory. From different points of view, we meet the owners and the workers and see gradually how very dire the situation really is.

I found it interesting that an ecological theme could be tied to a story of intrigue and foul play, but then history is littered with disastrous affronts to nature. The story moves along from scene to scene, character to character, very smoothly. Not much violence and what there is happens usually off stage or is more implied. Might be a little bland for some, but I found it an entertaining quick read and look forward to the next installment

Deborah Ross says

Ecological issues, in particular the relaxation of government's role in reducing and cleaning up pollution, are much in the headlines today. It's easy to forget that not too long ago, the dumping of toxic chemicals into waterways, abusive labor practices, the outlawing of attempts to unionize, and the sexual exploitation of women workers were common and largely unchallenged. This world forms the setting for James P. Blaylock's short murder mystery novel, *River's Edge*. I found myself as interested in how all the various characters were going to survive such condition as in the answer to who had committed the crime. Without in any way belaboring the point, Blaylock gently reminded me that we are all products of our time: the wealthy owner of the paper mill that poisons the land and people but produces exquisite paper; his spoiled, arrogant son; the young women who work in the factory until their health breaks down; the activists bent on bringing an end to industrial slavery; and so forth. The beautiful watermark drawings lent a touch of elegance to an otherwise grim story.

Seizure Romero says

[where is the hand (or any other extremity) of Dr. Narbondo (hide spoiler)]

James says

This was strange, a hard-boiled English countryside mystery and unlike the normal Blaylock offering, containing no fantasy or horror elements. I found much of the action improbable but there were some decent characters. A novel experiment gone awry.
