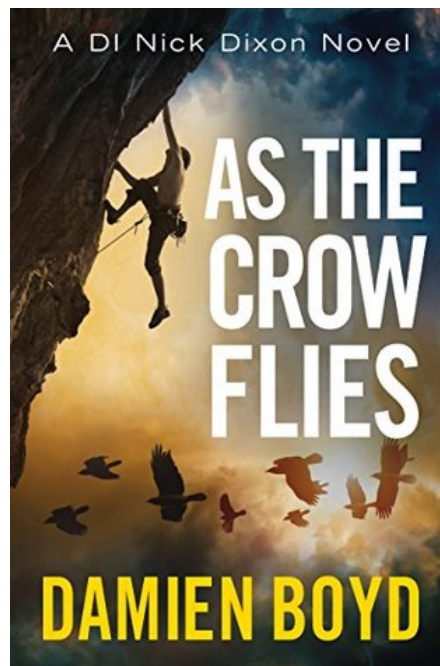




As The Crow Flies

Damien Boyd

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Rock climbing is now a blood sport.

Detective Inspector Nick Dixon's former climbing partner, Jake Fayter, is dead. Killed in a fall whilst practising a new route on High Rock, Cheddar Gorge. Convinced that Jake would not have made such a simple mistake, Nick Dixon starts digging and uncovers a web of intrigue and criminal activity that will rock the sleepy seaside town of Burnham-on-Sea to its core.

As the body count rises, Dixon is forced to break every rule in the book and put his own life on the line to bring the killer out into the open.

A fast paced crime thriller that will leave you gasping for breath, As The Crow Flies is a spine tingling introduction for DI Nick Dixon and a spectacular debut novel from crime fiction writer, Damien Boyd.

As The Crow Flies Details

Date : Published January 20th 2015 by Thomas & Mercer (first published April 9th 2013)

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Author : Damien Boyd

Format : Kindle Edition 173 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Thriller

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From Reader Review As The Crow Flies for online ebook

AngryGreyCat says

As the Crow Flies is the selection for the Kindle English Mystery Club on Goodreads for the month of April. This is the first book in which we meet DI Dixon. DI Dixon has relocated from a more prestigious posting to a small outpost, much to the dismay of his family and the confusion of his new colleagues. DI Dixon is a former rock climber and rock climbing is the back drop for this thriller.

Dixon is called to investigate a death of a former rock climbing partner, Jake, by Jake's parents. The opening scene of the book is actually Jake's death in a tremendous fall. The first few paragraphs worried me a little because of all the climbing jargon. I wondered if I would be able to read it, but it was pretty easy to catch on to and the pace of the book swept me along.

The mystery takes a few twists and turns and several probable theories of the crime are put forth. Dixon is an intelligent sleuth, who manages to be smarter than most of those around him but does not come across as arrogant about it. As a reader, I can understand his family's dismay at his apparently throwing away his shot at a more promising career for life in "the slow lane". On the way to solving the main mystery, Jake's death, there are other cases that may or may not be connected and that Dixon tackles proving his worth as a sleuth.

Very fast paced mystery making for a quick read. It definitely kept me turning the pages. My only critique is that the book is too short, I got to the end too quickly. However, better a little short than stuffed with unneeded filler.

Tori Clare says

This is the tale of a climber, but it has no real climax. In truth, it was a yawn.

Completely average, in my view. How generic crime books like this make it to the top of the charts and net a lot of five-star reviews is beyond me. Nothing in there at all to get my pulse racing or to pull me in emotionally. A climber falls off a rock face and plummets to his death. Was it an accident or an act of murder? I neither knew nor cared to be honest, but DI Nick Dixon takes all book to answer that question. There was a so-called twist at the end. I wouldn't describe it as such at all. It was weak.

Here's the real question: was a bloke coming off a rock a strong enough premise for a thriller? I didn't think so. Because I read the book on holiday round the pool, I persevered to the end. At home, I'd have ditched it as a dull read. Poor character development in my opinion. Not an exciting ending even. Fortunately, like the climber's death, it was over with quite quickly. There was the hint of a love interest which went nowhere. I'm sure Damien Boyd is saving that for subsequent books, but he's lost me at the first hurdle. A man's book really. Nothing in there to entertain me at all. I couldn't tell you what Nick Dixon looked like. If Boyd described him it escaped my attention. I'll have forgotten the entire plot by tomorrow.

Jillian says

I admit this took me by surprise. I expected a geographically interesting mystery and got a ripping good yarn with a great geographic context. I liked the English rock- climbing setting and the unravelling of the mystery.

Detective Dixon is smart, polite, reasoned and strong - with a dash of instinct. The writing is engaging and competent, driving the story along smoothly while laying hooks for the future. A series to follow - wahoo!

Denniger Bolton says

Okay, I'm now a Damien Boyd fan. I wasn't really sure what to expect with Damien's book "As the Crow Flies." I knew I loved the cover depicting crows flying about an early morning or late evening sky, with a rock climber cantilevered obviously very high up from the edge of a rock. I believe I've dreamt of that rock, and it wasn't a good dream either.

It didn't take long for me to "get into" the fast paced page turning story of a police investigator who is investigating the death, by falling, naturally, off that rock, of his old rock climbing partner. Nick, the cop, is investigating Jake's (the fallen climber's) accidental death where his rope came undone on a dangerous section of the climb.

Seems the knot holding the chap to the wall had come loose. Bummer. Nick is not buying the accidental theory. Says the inspector: "It's not a mistake Jake would make... We've always used to use a reef knot with a half hitch either side."

It's a beautiful but serious police procedural story in the British style that Damien is offering us, and one I will keep recommending every chance I get. It's not to be missed so I'm giving it the highest marks possible. Denniger

Joan says

So close to four stars but there were a few niggles that made me hesitate. I couldn't get a 'grip' on Dixon, he never came 'alive' in my mind, (I couldn't work out how old he was for example). One or two moments didn't ring true, (like keeping his only suit packed in a suitcase for two months) but the actual plot was intriguing. I know nothing about rock climbing and there were a lot of technical details but not so overly technical that I lost interest. The ending was totally unexpected and yet believable and in some ways, very satisfying.

Oh dammit. My conscience is nagging me! Four stars then. after all, it's a book I will re-read and enjoy a second time. I will also definitely get more of this series. ;)

Victor *we were on a break!* says

Experienced climber falls to his death due to a rookie mistake and the parents ask Detective Inspector Nick Dixon, a friend of the victim who is an ex-climber to keep an eye on the investigation so that no stone is left unturned. The officer investigating the accident is made to look like an idiot, bumbling his way through and opening the door for Nick to insert himself into the investigation.

A lot of technical jargon kept knocking me out of the story. I kept looking for footnotes or anything that would help decipher what I was reading, but I was left wanting. Was I really expected to know this or to research this while in the middle of a story? Apparently. I did what any reasonable reader would do, I ignored it. Climbers would probably find this riveting and breeze through this stuff.

Other than the climber-speak that went unexplained the only other thing that was memorable was the fact

that Peregrine falcons made an appearance in this story.

"Um, why is that memorable Vic?"

Glad you asked. This book came on the heels of Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children. That's pretty much what I remember off the top of my head. Onto my notes...

There was a point that it started to get good but didn't quite make it. I won't mention the page so you don't expect it if you decide to read this.

As far as the mystery, there really wasn't one. I guessed who the villain was early on. This is an easy read. Not very layered with sub-plots but what do you expect from 178 pages? You can easily read this in one sitting. Flows easily and dialogue that makes sense.

I might give the series another shot with book #2. We'll see.

Woofas says

A reasonable non-taxing read. My only criticism was the author's need to flaunt his knowledge of rock climbing terms to point of sheer frustration. Once that was out of the way, I quite enjoyed the book although the final explanation did not really ring true.

Marita says

Meet Dixon and Monty. And Jane. That is Inspector Dixon, a qualified solicitor who chose a career in the police force, and his Staffordshire terrier Monty. Dixon is smart, pragmatic and has good leadership qualities. Monty goes along for the ride. Jane is a bright young colleague with enthusiasm to spare.

How awful to discover that a friend, once a mountaineering partner, had died during one of his climbs. And in the capacity of friend, mountaineer and cop, Dixon is roped in by the bereaved parents to find answers. Perhaps there are occasions when it is better to be ignorant of the truth or the facts. Perhaps this is one of them.

This is quite a nice debut novel with interesting and likeable characters and I read it in a single evening. I guessed the identity of the main criminal fairly early on and some ends in the plot were left untied, but it did not detract from my enjoyment in reading this novel. I'll be happy to read more books in this series which probably, hopefully, improves and develops.

Phillip III says

I purchased a copy of Damien Boyd's, As the Crow Flies, during a promotion. I had not heard of the author, yet the premise seemed intriguing and unique enough that I wanted to give the novel a try.

Detective Inspector Nick Dixon's former climbing partner, Jake Fayter, is dead. Killed in a fall whilst

practicing a new route on High Rock, Cheddar Gorge. Convinced that Jake would not have made such a simple mistake, Nick Dixon starts digging and uncovers a web of intrigue and criminal activity that will rock the sleepy seaside town of Burnham-on-Sea to its core.

Dixon is a great character. If you visit the author's website, you can read all about him. However, if you read the book, you will learn a lot of the details on your own. I am used to reading detective and legal thrillers where the main character is on his/her last leg. Down and washed out. One chance to make it work. One last chance to turn the tides in their favor. I appreciate those tales. It's a rooting for the guy down on his luck thing. However, they do grow tiring. Dixon is a breath of fresh air. He's not a drunk, nor is he feeble. He does not owe loan sharks money, nor is he about to lose everything he owns.

Dixon has a dog (Monty), is in his 30's, and was once an avid rock climber. He's a detective that is good at his job, and seems to enjoy the responsibility of putting together pieces to solve a puzzle. In short, he is truly a likeable character that readers can care about, and root for.

When Fayter is killed, Dixon can't just let the incident be brushed aside and ruled as an unfortunate accident. Loose ropes is a rookie mistake. Fayter was no rookie at rock climbing. Promising the family he would look into it, Dixon slowly uncovers truths that indicate Fayter was not squeaky clean. Mixed with dealing drugs and other illegal activities, Dixon soon realizes that there are many motives for wanting Fayter dead . . . the problem is, who is behind the multiple motives? In charge of a team of detectives, Dixon puts together a plan to flesh out suspects. The clues accumulate. And the twist at the end (that I NEVER saw coming) . . . will leave readers speechless. Jaws open-saliva dripping-speechless.

Boyd's writing is just shy of gritty noir. There is a poetry to his prose. It is not overdone, and flowery. It is, however, smooth and leading. I enjoyed the book. Very much. I read it quick. And as soon as I can, I will be sure to download more of Boyd's work. I am now a fan!

Phillip Tomasso
Author of over 13 Novels
philliptomasso.com

Olga Kowalska (WielkiBuk) says

Seria o komisarzu Nicku Dixonie rozpoczyna się nader obiecująco i z pewnościami miłośnicy powieści kryminalnych odnajdą w „W linii prostej” coś dla siebie. Co prawda element wspinaczkowy może z początku sprawiać niemałą trudność – nie przez przypadek autor dodał słowniczek na końcu książki – jednak interesująca zbrodnia rekompensuje jakiegokolwiek ból czki niewiedzy. Co więcej, głównego bohatera nie sposób nie polubić, a okolica, w której przyszedł mu pracować, tylko nadaje coś ciękiego, a jednocześnie zowróbnej atmosfery. Odnajdziemy tu klimat brytyjskiej prowincji, malowniczej nadmorskiej okolicy, ale także tajemnic, które ukrywają się na każdym kroku. Damien Boyd umiejętnie łączy kolejne wątki, podrzuca fascynujące tropy, sprowadza czytelnika na manowce. A to w kryminale jest przecież najistotniejsze.

Dla fanów gatunku jak znalazł.

Vicii says

This was only a short book, 200 pages compared to the much longer ones that I have been reading recently but this was a conscious decision to get through some of the books on my "reading" list.

Being so short it was obvious that the story was going to get straight to the point and not digress. There was a build up to the story but this was quite concise.

Overall I enjoyed the book and it was a really quick read. Perfect if that's what you want but with the lack of pages, there wasn't the character build up and "world build" that I am used to. Perhaps this is just because I have been reading a lot of fantasy recently.

Richard says

This is an excellent debut novel with a credible investigation team led up by DI Nick Dixon.

It is the best tension packed climbing scenes since The Eiger Sanction and a real crime mystery that has a few twists and belays before the "murder" is solved.

Great locations and passionate writing from an author who has realised his dream of putting his ideas in book form. I think it has enough promise to invest in other books already produced in this series. I liked the no nonsense investigation, the clarity of the story line and the brief insight into the world of climbing. I appreciated the relationships explored through grief, loss and betrayal of our impression of friends, family and colleagues.

I loved the potential back stories to mine in future novels and I thought the passages with Monty were excellent and refreshing to allow processing of the more detailed plot driven text.

A book worth reading and author worthy of your attention and time.

Nick Davies says

This was recommended to me by a friend who likes action thrillers a little more than I tend to, but it is essentially an interesting police procedural set in the South West of England, with the slightly unusual focus-point of rock climbing.

It was quite an enjoyable short read, a good pace, a couple of interesting characters and a clever plot.. and for a first novel it certainly showed the author's got plenty of promise. For me though I was left slightly frustrated by the shortness of the novel (160 pages) and the sense that we were skimming the surface of things a little - as if there was enough there to develop into a book twice the length had the tale proceeded a bit more slowly with a greater attention to description of the characters, situation and surroundings.

As it was, I felt that I had read half a story, and a story which never had the chance to fully develop to its potential.

Jennifer says

2.25 stars.

Trish recommended this series to me since I've enjoyed the DCI Ryan series thus far. What I can say is this: the plot was interesting and the characters were likable enough, but the overall story was a bit bland. I think it's the author's writing style that makes the whole book a bit monotone. There's a lot of dialogue and very little descriptive language in between. There was also a lot about rock climbing and for someone who has no idea about any of that, it was a bit boring. From what I understand, this is the author's first book, so I will read the second book of the series and hope for the best.

I do have to say that I really did like the H of this series. He might be a little bit dull, but he just comes across as a good guy. He moved out of the city because he liked the country and not because of any traumatic event. He drinks beer after work and likes to take walks with his dog. He has a dry sense of humour and is just really sweet. I'll admit that I'm reading the second book to see where the relationship between him and Jane goes. :)

Nancy Steinle gummel says

As the Crow Flies (DI Nick Dixon #1) by. Damien Boyd is a first reads win and I'm giving my honest opinion. Inspector Dixon was good friends with Jake Flatey - was it an accident or murder that led to his death? Meanwhile, the station is investigating a series of burglaries in homes where the owners recently passed away. The only thing missing is personal papers, birth certificates, driver's licenses, death notices, things used for identity theft. Jake's father calls Nick Dixon to tell him of Jake's death and if he could look into it. Dixon discovers Jake was selling drugs and a young girl died ; and Jake was stealing peregrine falcon eggs. illegal worth 10,000 pounds per egg in Dubai. Jake's new climbing partner was the contact with the Arabs over the eggs. Dixon finds an other couple who were climbing. They saw the accident and thought they saw someone running through the trees. Was it an accident or murder? Read for yourself to discover the truth.
